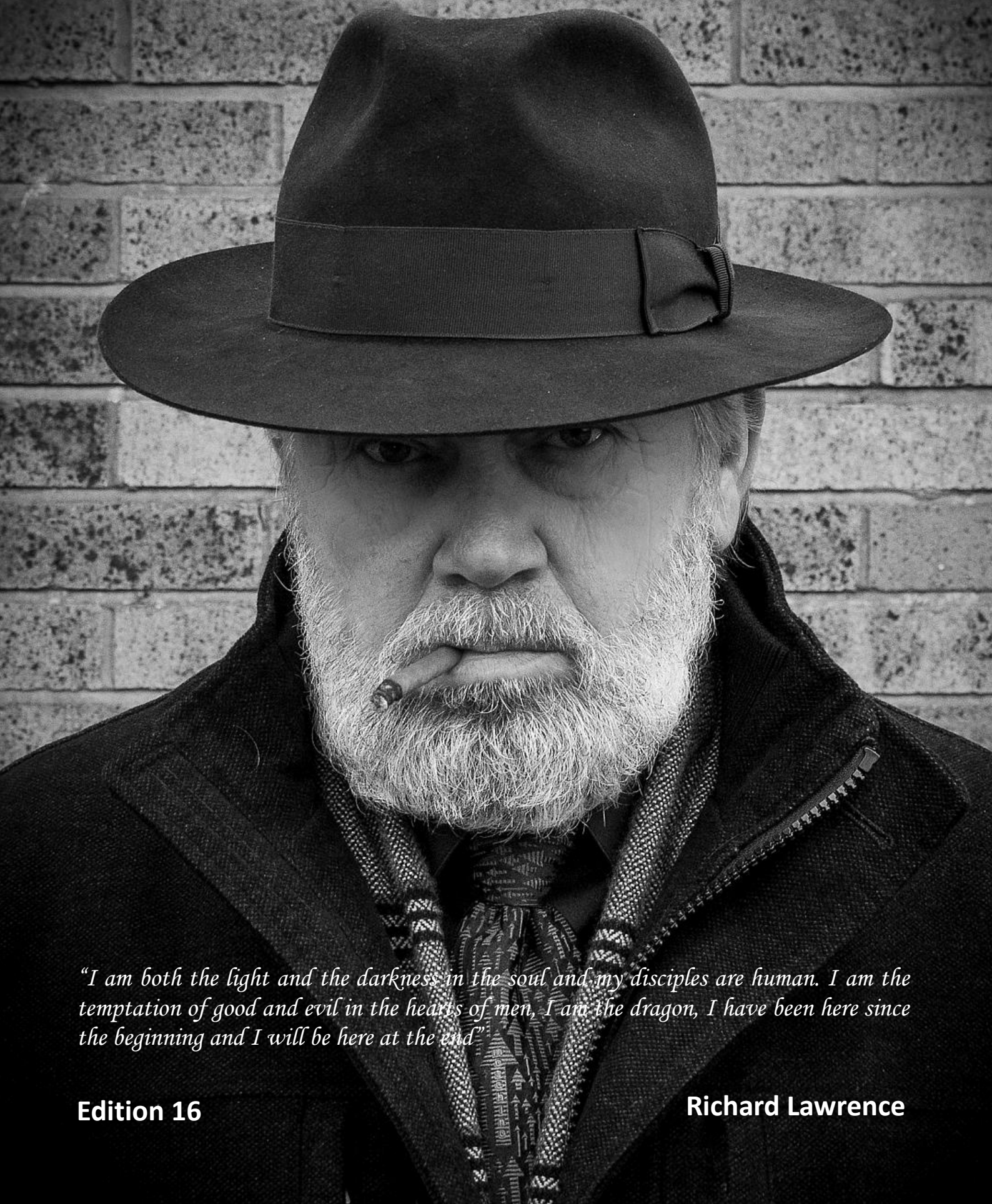


The Dragon Project



"I am both the light and the darkness in the soul and my disciples are human. I am the temptation of good and evil in the hearts of men, I am the dragon, I have been here since the beginning and I will be here at the end"

Edition 16

Richard Lawrence

Introduction

The narrator of the book is Lucifer and the Ad Messores, which are summoned by him, are the Reapers. Some chapters embrace different cultures and often include history, philosophy and futurology whilst others are very dark with gruesome content.

Some readers may find the book content to be extreme and disturbing, especially 'The Knights of the Dragon' but these proposed future events are designed to shock and raise awareness that similar events have occurred throughout history and are due to the failures of individuals and governments who create a catalyst for extremism.

This Book is for Charity

This book has been written for charity and if you find it interesting and you have enjoyed it, please consider a small donation to my charity of choice, ['The Sick Kids Friends Foundation'](#) who support the Royal Hospital for Sick Children (RHSC) in Edinburgh. Every year over 100,000 children pass through the doors of the hospital, ranging in age from just a few hours old to aged 16 in some specialities.

Acknowledgment

My sincere thanks to Roy Harrower who assisted me with proof reading, continuity and suggested editorial corrections.

This book is not suitable for children

Historical Accuracy + Fictional Names

The historical facts in this book were carefully researched but there is no guarantee of historical accuracy. The book is a work of fiction and any likeness to actual persons, either living or dead, is strictly coincidental. The author shall not be held liable or responsible to any person or entity with respect to any loss or incidental or consequential damages caused, or alleged to have been caused, directly or indirectly, by the information or programs contained herein.

Book Format

This book is in .pdf file format so it can be listened to via audio which is setup in the top banner of a computer or tablet screen, once the file is opened. It can also be saved down onto a computer or tablet.

Future Editions

This electronic book is organic so there will be further editions as new short stories and correction editing are added to the content. These new editions will be posted on the www.lawrencephotographic.com website.

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Chapter 1 - Candice

She was beauty, my Candice, and wherever she travelled, men fell at her feet.

My Madonna came of age at 17 years old and up until then she was classed as an ugly duckling. It's strange how fortunes change and as she grew into maturity, she blossomed like a wild rose. The life of the human species is no different to the flower, the tree or any other living creature on the planet they call Earth. They blossom and rise to embrace the sun and their life, until old age overtakes them and renders them infirm to await death and their God's embrace.

Right from the start, I could see that Candice would never grow old and infirm, her life would be as a 'fire cracker' and it would end in one last gigantic burst of energy. Enlightenment is a wonderful thing and for many it never materialises but for Candice it arrived like a massive explosion in her heart which changed her persona and streamlined her appearance. This ugly duckling, in the space of 6 months, became a beautiful swan and she stepped out into the world to take it by the scruff of the neck and she shook it until the day she died.

Candice left school at seventeen with an above average education and the day she left, her father presented her with a brand new 1991 Suzuki GSX-750R motorcycle in gorgeous racing blue and white paintwork with iconic twin headlamps. He watched her don her matching blue leathers, slip on a full-face racing helmet and roar off down the road outside their house. There was no stopping her and despite the family's expectations of her going to university, she became a super model and within a year, Candice appeared on the front cover of 'Vogue'. It would take a special kind of man to handle her and many were burnt by her flame as they tried to tame her. She would tear down the road on her motorcycle to the next photo shoot and in her wake, Candice would leave men google eyed at the sight of her trim derriere hugging the bike seat. They inwardly sighed over the tight leathers emphasising her female form which blended in beautifully with the lines of her bike.

Some called her crazy, even wild, but everyone was transfixed when she took off her helmet, flicked her head and the long black hair unfurled to kiss her gleaming blue eyes. Natural ruby lips, long eyelashes and high cheekbones, accentuated a face in perfect symmetry. Candice was the ultimate 'It Girl' and men, as well as women, stood in awe of her beauty. Yet for all the attention, there remained an inner purity of a humble young girl who did not flaunt her attributes and treated everyone with kindness and consideration. However, the wild side remained throughout her life and Candice would continue to embrace the hunger for exhilaration that is spawned from living life on the edge. A super model travels the world to many exotic locations and Candice was no exception but it was in France where she first fell in love.

After the photo shoot, Candice remained with her photographer in Paris and they took in the sights. He was besought with her and he wined and dined her in the restaurants of St-Germain-des-Prés on Paris' *rive gauche*. Together, like those existentialist thinkers, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, the painter Manet and writers Balzac and Georges Sand, they explored the streets of the Boulevard St-Germain, Rue de Seine, Rue de Rennes, Rue Bonaparte and walked along the side of the River Seine. They lunched aboard the restaurant Marina de Paris and declared their love for each other. Candice had read about the philosopher René Descartes, so they visited his tomb in the 6th century church of the Benedictine Abbey of St-Germain-des-Prés and late at night and into the early morning, they made love in a room of the famous Hôtel Saint Germain. In bed, Candice was a natural lover and knew how to caress his erogenous zones to raise his sexual desire. She literally blew his mind and such was the height of his orgasm that she had to gently massage his temples and hair to calm the aftershock. The affair did not last and as with so many men in her life, he became possessive of Candice's beauty and tried in vain to control her – sadly and in the process, he drove her away.

Candice returned to London, mounted her beloved motorcycle and roared off into the countryside to clear her mind of that man. A successful super model becomes a multi-millionaire and Candice embraced the financial security. She bought a lovely flat in London's Mayfair and made it her sanctuary where men were not allowed. Her lifestyle was not one of parties for she preferred to listen to vinyl classical music on her Technic SL-1200 record turntable over a glass of wine, cook fine food, enjoy the opera at the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden and dine in famous restaurants throughout the world. True love was to take a back seat in her life for amongst her many friends were single male friends who came with benefits whilst chaperoning her in travels abroad and at home. Needless to say, none of them had any intention of sitting on the back of her motorcycle, far less ride one.

In 2004 at 30 years old, and at the height of her career, Candice stopped modelling and started for ventures new. The Mayfair flat remained with the now 'classic' Suzuki GSX-750R motorcycle parked snug in a mews garage but she had also purchased a sizeable stabling in the Cotswolds' and kept a few horses. They were in competition with a brand-new Yamaha R1 sports motorcycle and to be truthful, Candice did not know which one she preferred. A horse at full gallop brought tears to her eyes as the wind rush struck her face whilst the R1 motorcycle was a mental blast as she carved up the countryside corners. Neighbours looked on and 'tutted' as they watched her roar off on her motorcycle. Her trim derriere still hugged the bike seat, much to the delight of the men who watched and away from the eyes of their women. Temperatures rose even higher when she trotted past on a horse wearing those tight jodhpurs.

That year a man friend introduced her to flying and although she had flown with him before, now the flying was up in the air in a plane. With guaranteed inevitability, she aspired to taking flying lessons, obtained a pilot's licence and took to the skies in an 'Extra Flugzeugbau EA300' which is a two-seater aerobatic monoplane capable of unlimited category competition. A male friend sat with her once, as a passenger, and then passed on subsequent invites. Candice became a member of the local flying club, parked up her Flugzeugbau plane

and delighted in knowing that it was only a short ride on her R1 motorcycle from her house. Of course, once the neighbours found out, they reckoned she was crazy. Adrenaline can cost you dearly, especially an expensive motorcycle, an aeroplane and the maintenance of horses. Each brought with it the exhilaration of danger and Candice paid for it by shrewdly investing her super model earnings in several properties which were all run by carefully selected property agencies. As she moved on, the adrenaline factory required even greater heights of danger and so it was that she took to the race track on her motorcycle and participated in local racing events. As if this was not enough, she performed in aerobatic shows with her plane and in local equestrian cross-country jumping competitions with her horses. Many a male friend with benefits, looked on and just shook their head.

Beauty is often illusive as a woman becomes older but Candice possessed natural beauty that never seemed to wane. Her life was not just one of a 'wild child' for she participated in charity work and nothing stopped her visiting Palestine where she became a friend and a main contributor, both financially and through sheer hard work, of the Ummah Welfare Trust. She worked from the field office in Gaza during the UK winter months and administered many of the local projects on behalf of the people. Candice remained radiant and the Palestinians adored her humility and loving nature. Palestine in 2004 and thereafter for the rest of her life, remained a very dangerous place to work and yet she was never exposed to harm. She witnessed the ongoing occupation of the land, the barrier along the West Bank, the land, air and sea blockades on Gaza, which continued to strangle Palestine and its people. Candice knew that around 4 in 5 locals relied on donations for survival. They were imprisoned behind concrete walls and humiliating military checkpoints. She did not hate the Israelis or the West for their co-ordinated subrogation of the Palestinian peoples but disapproved of the hardships they inflicted.

Candice never married, never experienced child birth or children, never spoke ill of anyone and lived her life as that 'crazy person' to her neighbours. She blossomed forth without religion, without politics and shone a bright light on all who knew her. As the years started to wear her down and the digital age dawned, she did not change her ways. Candice remained a staunch adrenaline junkie with a heart of gold and an avid philanthropist who gave to and served those who looked to the world for help.

My Madonna, my blue-eyed beauty passed away in 2023 when I caused a tractor to stall on a country road as it left a field. Candice would never become old, she was too wonderful for that infirmity and so her beloved Yamaha R1 motorcycle ended its life along with hers on that warm sunny afternoon, deep in the heart of the Cotswolds'.

Chapter 2 - Walter Le Blonde

It was Boxing Day in 1962 and old Walter stood on the pavement in Princes Street, Edinburgh and watched the cars and buses struggling to cut their way through the heavy snow that lay on the ground. Scotland was facing the worse snow storm since the 1700s and it would continue into March of 1963. Many lives would be lost and it would prove even worse for the livestock in the countryside as they would be cut off from the farmers' food supply, thanks to the massive snow drifts and closed roads. Helicopters would be used to transport hay and much livestock was saved but it was a cruel winter for the foxes and other wildlife that froze to death or died of hunger.

Tramps were not allowed to beg in Scotland and if they sat on the pavement with a hat on the ground and there was money in that hat, the police arrested them for begging. If there was no money in their possession or in the hat, they were arrested for vagrancy. Walter was a tramp but he never sat on the pavement or begged in the street, he just walked about in Edinburgh and tried to stay warm. He was wearing a heavy long overcoat that he had retrieved from a dustbin. Underneath were several layers of clothing, a hat on his head, a scarf for his neck and his feet in thick socks in old army boots. As he stood on the edge of the pavement and was ready to cross the road through the traffic, a policeman walked over to him. Hardly stopping, the policeman pressed a handful of change into Walter's hand and walked on. Walter touched his hat brim, thanked the officer for his kindness and headed over to the Wimpy Restaurant in Queensferry Street for a hot drink and a warm meal.

Some might say this was a strange thing for a policeman to do but in the 1960s the police knew everyone and at Christmas the police collected money for the less unfortunate on their beat and supplied them, not with money, but with clothes and shoes, especially for the children. Walter was a known tramp and many a police officer saw to it that he had money for a meal. This had not always been the case for Walter as in an earlier life, he had been a fisherman and a soldier. His demise to that of a tramp was an unfortunate one and one he simply had no control over.

Walter was descended from the Le Blondes of Picardy in France and a strand of the family, Louis Le Blonde emigrated to England in 1793, shortly after the French King, King Louis XVI was executed during the French Revolution. Louis Le Blonde had been on the short list for the guillotine and decided that escape was a better route than valour and beheading. Walter was born in 1894 at Eyemouth, a fishing village on the east coast of Berwickshire in the Scottish Borders. He left school at 15 years old and became a fisherman on his father's boat. Life was hard but Walter was a strong young lad and for 7 years he enjoyed his life fishing on the high seas. During that period, fishing boats were lost and many seamen drowned in the boats which took them down in the storms. In 1914, 'The Great War' began after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary. He was assassinated by a Yugoslav nationalist, Gavrilo Princip in Sarajevo. This set off a diplomatic crisis and invoked international alliances, which had formed over the

previous decades. Within weeks the major powers were at war, and the conflict soon spread around the world. The war was often construed by some to be no more than a cull of the human race, orchestrated by Kings and Governments, as over 9 million, mainly conscripted working men, were killed.

The fishing industry held a protected working status and an exemption from conscription as per the 1916 Military Service Act. Walter saw all his friends leaving Eyemouth for army training and despite his protected status, he volunteered to fight. His father and mother were distraught at his leaving but wished him well and a safe journey. He was trained as a lorry driver and spent the war carrying troops and munitions to the front line whilst collecting the casualties to bring back for burial and medical care in the temporary hospitals. Walter continued to work behind the lines at the 'Battle of Verdun' where 700,000 combatants from both sides were killed or wounded. He was at the 'Battle of the Somme' with over 1,100,000 casualties and at 'Passchendaele' with over 400,000 killed and wounded. Walter would arrive at the front line with munitions packed in his lorry to hear the gunfire, the shells exploding and the screams of the dead and dying as out in the open fields the enemy machine guns clattered and the bullets ripped into the advancing British troops. It was a slaughter and afterwards, when the fighting stopped, the dead and wounded were retrieved by both sides. He became sickened by the smell of blood and death that surrounded him and no matter how he washed down his lorry and his hands, the smell continued to pervade his senses.

Finally, the war ended but not for Walter; he was found to be suffering from a mental illness. He was still loading dead bodies into his lorry, at least that is what the doctors understood from his mannerisms. He was given drugs to ease his mind but he would wake up screaming during the night and very often the nurses would find him, out of bed and steering an invisible lorry through the hospital corridors. He would cover his ears with his hands, stare upwards and scream with terror as he imagined the shells were going to land on him. The saddest part; he was continually washing his hands as he attempted to cleanse them of the blood he thought was covering them. Walter was eventually hospitalised in 1922, in the Edinburgh Lunatic Asylum, a sanatorium which later became The Royal Edinburgh Hospital. It was many years before he was finally released to work in the kitchen as a cleaner and dishwasher of an Italian restaurant in Edinburgh. It did not last long and within a couple of years, Walter took to the road and for the rest of his life he became a tramp, walking throughout the Central Lothians of Scotland.

He learned the ways of the tramp, the signs scratched on the walls marking places where there were handouts or small jobs to be undertaken for reward. He slept in haystacks, barns and on warm summer nights, behind drystone dykes, the stonework still warm from the sun. Walter washed in rivers, from farmers field taps and enjoyed a dip in the seas of the east and west coasts. It was a way of life that eased his mind and he enjoyed communing with nature, especially the songs of the birds in the early dawn. Troon on the west coast was his favourite summer haunt but every winter, he would make his way to Edinburgh where he was guaranteed the spare change or a meal from the people who knew him well. Many a posh restaurant saw to it that he would receive the warm handout of a meal at their back door as he shuffled past. There was a mutual understanding

that he would never beg but at a certain period, each night, he would appear. Walter would sleep in the 'loading' doorways of the big stores in back lanes, well away from the eyes of the public and before the city stirred, he would wash and shave in the toilets at the Mound or at the West End.

In 1968, another winter arrived and a young policeman, Ross Lawford, who was walking his beat, found old Walter lying in a back street covered in snow. Walter had endured his last winter and had not lived to feel the warmth of the summer sun. He had suffered enough and so I caused a heart attack to take his life. He was 74 years of age and felt no pain; he knew something was different when he felt his heart stop but he welcomed death with relief and a smile on his face.

Chapter 3 - Conflict

Jared Howler was born in 1925, the son of a coal miner. His real name is of no consequence and he was a sickly child who was bullied at school. He grew up in hardship as his father had little money and his mother had died when he was very young. She had the cancer and lay in her bed in the house and moaned deeply in her pain. Jared played on the floor with his wooden toys and despite the doctor's attentions, his mother passed away. He looked across the room at his father who sat on a chair, gently sobbing with tears in his eyes.

The loss of his mother was hard and schooling for Jared was a nightmare as his ethnic status as a half caste was held against him and he bore the brunt of being called a 'nigger' whilst enduring many beatings. He would sit on his own in the playground whilst his mind would tear holes in his heart. Jared was often inconsolable and the teachers at his school showed him no sympathy. Throughout his education, he endured cruelty that twisted his humility and ground him down. He emerged into manhood an embittered young man with a dislike for the human race, with a mind that had been carved by society and was now in conflict with his soul.

Despite his protected job status, Jared's father enlisted in the army and marched with his battalion onto French shores. He was killed in 1940 and death was the release his father had longed for although he had died inside, a long time ago. Jared was already working down the mines and in his protective cocoon he avoided the war. For years afterwards, he bore the shame and it haunted him, long after the verbal 'coward' abuse ceased. Jared was the brunt of jokes about his colour and his fellow workers called him a 'gorilla' and jested about how he had just climbed down out of the trees. Very often he would find a banana stuffed into his coat or monkey nuts strewn about his workplace. His tools were often taken and chalk marks on the wall shouted at him 'go back to Africa nigger'.

Jared eventually gave up and moved to the city. He resided in a small bedsit and in solitude, he learned his music on a second-hand guitar and wrote songs about the hardships of working in the mines. He was a difficult young man and despite his many dalliances, women did not take to him. Jared began to write songs about lost love, broken hearts and melancholy. He made his living busking on the streets by day and at night he worked as a dishwasher in a local restaurant. Time passed and he gradually became worn down by life.

Jared experienced serendipity in the late 1950s when his music was discovered by a record producer who happened to be walking down the street with his wife and their pet dog. They heard Jared singing on the street corner and stopped to listen and put some money in his hat on the pavement. The producer introduced him to the world and soon his soul music was in demand. Jared moved to America and changed his name to 'Howler' a defiant gesture to the 'monkey' jokes. He became a millionaire and moved into a large penthouse flat with a magnificent view of the city. His wealth brought all the trappings, including fine clothes, prestige cars, a yacht and eventually a beautiful wife. For all his achievements, he remained in conflict as society would not accept a black man with a white woman and despite his sellout appearances all over the world and in

some of the swankiest auditoriums, he still had to enter through the back doors and slept in back street hotels where blacks were allowed.

The spring in his step and the delight at being recognised for his talent, elevated his success and he chose to rebel against convention. He became an activist for all just causes, changed his persona over and over again as he re-invented himself in the public eye. Jared's hubris rose up and he became known for his outlandish demands, which he took to the upper limits of tolerance. He knew the boundaries and yet he pushed way beyond them and into the dark limelight. He wanted to be seen as a messiah, a prophet with tremendous influence over the young. He drew sustenance from his notoriety and his rise continued unabated. He performed in concerts for charity and yet it was hubris that drove him, not the charitable cause.

Pride is a terrible affliction and for some with a negative disposition, it creates within you an ego, a feeling of self-importance, the need to control and finally hubris leading to nemesis. Whilst for some with a positive disposition, it is a humble and content attachment to one's choices and respect for the choices of others, which creates self-reflection and a feeling of fulfilment and belonging. Cursed is the man who is caught in an internal battle between the positive and the negative sides of pride and is unable to compromise with others.

Jared was often arrested for disturbances which he caused whilst under the influence of drugs and although his record company soothed over the cracks his mental health gradually disintegrated. His self-indulgence wiped out his relationships with his children and his youngest daughter, a pretty girl, took her own life whilst she was quite young. There was a blackness that descended on him; everyone became his enemy and eventually his wife walked out. He crashed his car in a drugged state, fought with the press on the street and swore at the world in his televised interviews. He mixed his drinking with cocaine and in a haze, he participated in sexual liaisons with prostitutes and gambled his money away.

His hubris eventually imploded when his record company withdrew his contract and he found himself alone without any friends. His eye pupils were large and dark as he sat on the chair in his penthouse flat and his right arm was waving in the air with a clenched fist and the room was filled with his voice as it ranted and railed against everything and everybody. I sat on a chair opposite him but he did not see me. Gradually his demeanor changed and he held his head in his hands and I watched as the tears and the sobbing gathered pace. His body began to shudder as he remembered when he played with his wooden toys in that room when his mother passed away and the memory of his father, a broken man, staring out of the window.

I watched the evil thoughts in his mind being swept aside as his soul rose up and the innocence burst out in that moment of solace and loneliness. All the barriers and all the physical constraints were removed as Jared bent over clutching his heart and the pain bit him hard. He fell to the floor and I saw his eyes blink as they caught sight of me in those last few moments of life. He turned onto his back and smiled at the ceiling and I saw the darkness fade from his eyes and they became still in their gaze. The internal conflict was over at last and he passed away.

Chapter 4 - Cammo House

The ruins of Cammo House lie in a wooded area near to the river Almond in West Edinburgh. It was built in 1693 and is thought to have been the inspiration for the 'House of Shaws' in Robert Louis Stevenson's novel *Kidnapped*. Ross Lawford knew Cammo House in 1969 before it was burnt down by vandals and for a brief moment back then, he touched the end of an era and a way of life.

At around 3am on a cold clear night during 1969, a telephone call to the West End Police Station in Edinburgh was made by Percy Tennant who was reporting lights and suspicious noises coming from his house in the woods of Cammo Estate. Lawford had met Percy before, he was about 80 years old, almost bent double, he spoke with a crackly voice and now lived in the old farmhouse where Lawford had visited him during the summer, a few months previously. On this occasion Lawford was to meet him in the driveway, leading up to Cammo House which was somewhere deep in the woods.

When you are very young in the police, especially when you are the 'spare man' in the van, you get all the work thrown at you. Lawford dealt with road accidents, sudden deaths, fires, thefts, you name it, he got it and it came as no surprise to him when he was dumped near to the driveway leading to the woods at the estate. The van went off to another call, which to the driver and the sergeant, was more important. Lawford watched the police van hurl around the corner into the main Queensferry Road with tyres screeching and its blue light flashing as it roared away.

He had heard all the stories about Percy Tennant, the grand events that had taken place at the house in the latter part of the 19th century when Percy had been a young boy. How his brother had apparently died whilst in the RAF during World War II and his mother, broken hearted, had lost the will to maintain herself and the house. Over time and for whatever reason, Cammo House started to disintegrate and it became uninhabited. Percy had moved to the farmhouse in his old age, for company and care. As in most cases the story became tinged with the supernatural and his mother was supposed to be buried on the estate and her ghost now walked the lawns at night. Also, there was the story about the howling and barking of dogs in the darkness.

Lawford slowly walked up the driveway towards Cammo House which was hidden amongst the trees deeper into the estate. The driveway was more like a lane and it was overgrown with bushes, weeds, cloaked by trees and very dark. Some 200 yards he walked and then he saw it, it's high roof gleaming in the moonlight. The full moon beamed down on the scene and Lawford saw in his mind's eye, Robert Louis Stevenson watching it from the same angle. The novel '*Kidnapped*' was spawned and Cammo House was immortalised for ever more. He saw Alan Breck, David Balfour, his wicked old uncle Ebenezer and then Lawford saw old Percy as he stood at the rickety entrance gate with his leery lamp swinging in the wind, the yellow glow lighting up his thin pointed face, he looked like wee 'Willy Winky' but he was real.

Percy shouted, *"Hello sonny, climb the gate"* and as Lawford landed on the other side, he was avalanched by about thirty crazy dogs of terrier size as they set about trying to tear off his trouser legs at the ankles, with Percy jumping around like a demented demon shouting and screaming at them *"Don't mind the doggies, Constable, they think you're an intruder."* Don't mind the doggies, Lawford thought, as he fought with their hairy faces; much growling, yelps and barking followed as they all staggered up the main driveway towards the house. By the time Lawford got there, they had all calmed down, and mainly because they all had a piece of his trousers. So much for the dogs howling at night, now he only had to meet the ghost of Percy's mother.

The front of the house was impressive and the walls were very high. The view down from the front, spread across a huge lawn with a scene of Edinburgh peeking through the trees at the far end. Lawford imagined the turn into the 20th Century with servants, party frocks, horse drawn carriages and much laughter as the guests arrived; the glow from the oil lamps and into the most beautiful of houses, with opulent fittings, grand pictures on the walls and a style of living, which was hard to match. Now, it still stood majestic in the moonlight amidst the same trees, as it did back then; and all serving as an exquisite backdrop.

Lawford stared at Percy under the yellow light of his lamp; he was a strange old man. Percy gestured to the back of the house and they (*dogs and all*) forced their way through the undergrowth to the back yard; ever seen the Dracula Movies and you get the picture. Percy fought with the door to open it, while Lawford kept staring in every direction as he scoured the area for the ghost of Percy's mother. The door finally opened and they all stepped up, a step he thought, and a strange feeling under foot. Lawford shone the torch down and saw dog excrement all over the floor, generations of dog excrement, which had piled up about 6 inches high and although it was hard, all the new stuff was white with mould. Percy apparently was using the dogs to guard the property and allowing them to live and roam free in the house at night.

They had entered into what appeared to be the staff quarters for Lawford could see the staff bell system, still on the back-hall wall, covered in cobwebs, just barely hanging there. As they walked through the house, he saw old faded and damp encrusted paintings. Rotting decor, a staircase and worse, no electricity. Through the gloom Percy led him upwards and gesturing, he said *"stay to the side sonny, avoid the middle of the floors."* Lawford hugged the old flaky walls and shone his torch at the dogs, who were puffing and panting as they ran alongside. Percy led on, his thin frame and night-shirt illuminated by the yellow glow from his paraffin lamp. Lawford thought, one thing was for sure, police work was never dull.

Finally, they reached the main room upstairs and it was filled with paintings and old furniture. All the chairs had their springs up through the cloth (rotted by dog urine) and the furnishings were yellow and discoloured. Lawford shone his torch around and suddenly he jumped back against the wall as he realised the middle of the floor was missing and was in fact downstairs in the room below. He peered through the dark hole and at that point he developed a distinct weakness at the knees and an acute inability to walk or even move. Percy

was jumping around on the solid parts of the floor, which he obviously knew, and gesturing at empty spaces where the thieves had stolen paintings from the walls. Lawford decided to retrace his steps very carefully.

Downstairs, he took the theft report and left Percy standing in the middle of the grounds, surrounded by his dogs, yellow lamp swinging, the glow on his face, the full moon over the house and somewhere the old lady was watching it all. Lawford's heart went out for Percy, he could still see him today, a man trapped in time, dreaming of the regal days at Cammo. He died and the National Trust took over the estate and the house. Soon after, vandals set fire to it and it remains in ruins along with the deserted farmhouse where Percy had spent his last days.

Lawford re-visited the Cammo Estate in 2010 and discovered that the grounds had been turned into a country park, used by tourists, dog walkers and families out for a picnic. The walkways had been tidied up and the main entrance driveway had been refurbished and was a great deal wider. Cammo House was in ruins and the collapsed walls were covered over with soil and grass. The ruins seemed so small and failed to provide any guidance as to the actual size of the original building, which had been substantial.

The farmhouse where Percy had spent his last days, was now derelict and overgrown with trees and bushes. It was in a sorry state and now a pale imitation of the building it once was. Lawford looked at the boarded-up window where Percy had once stood and waved to him as he entered the courtyard. He could still see him as he did one summers day over 40 years ago and Lawford was poignant and touched with sadness for what Percy had endured and the downfall of such a beautiful place.

Lawford thought, what would Robert Louis Stevenson make of it today, as it stands demolished to the ground and overgrown? Has the soul of Percy found peace at last and moved on or has the story become embellished? Perhaps Percy has found his mother, perhaps when there is a full moon you will be able to see them walking in the grounds, hopefully without those dogs.

Chapter 5 - Melusine

She was a beautiful child and deep inside her soul was the utmost purity. In the years ahead, her form would change as she grew older but no matter, the beauty of her soul would be maintained.

I was there with her parents, Nathan and Abigail Moyer when Melusine was born in the spring of 1920 and she was their only child. This was decided through financial restraints rather than any other impediment. Throughout her life, I remained her unseen protector in a role that many perceived as her 'guardian angel'. Her childhood was a happy one, despite the financial hardships that faced her father and mother. On their little farm in Kansas, in the 'Great Plains' region of America, her father struggled to make ends meet and when 'Wall Street', America's financial centre collapsed in 1929 and then with the onslaught of the 'Great Depression', he found himself and his family living on what little money he had saved. Many businessmen and those in the financial sector threw themselves from the skyscrapers in New York and other cities but the deaths of the ordinary people, especially the farmers, in Kansas were just as bad. The jobs in America evaporated, and the majority of the workforce became transients; people who travelled the country seeking part-time work.

The dust storms became more regular due to the drought and Kansas fought bravely to keep its top soil and its people, but to no avail. Dust storms were the cause of many deaths in the region and many children were lost and later found dead. It was so bad, that every day, the farmers had to clear truckloads of dust from their yards and many animals died choking to death or through starvation. By 1932 and in the decade that followed, the drought became relentless and many farmers left their homes to seek pastures new. Sadly, in 1932, the coup de grâce for Nathan finally arrived; he passed away due to a massive heart attack whilst attempting to plough a dried-out field. He had worked hard all his life, but thanks to the dust storms, farming had become impossible.

Melusine's mother, held her hand and stood with the villagers and farmers in the graveyard, watching the men lower her husband's coffin into the ground; their faces with scarves wrapped around their mouths to keep the choking dust at bay. Prayers were said and the minister gave sermon and later a small celebration of Nathan's life was held in the village hall with good food and drink for everyone. Afterwards, Abigail sat at a wooden table in her kitchen and wept whilst Melusine stood with her hand on her mother's shoulder and tried to comfort her. In the months that followed, they scraped by on a day to day basis and received some food from more affluent neighbours who took pity on them. The mortgage could not be paid, and after many written warnings from the bank, it served notice of foreclosure on the farm and its holdings. Their future looked bleak but then fate dealt another hand when her mother's uncle, on receiving the news of Nathan's passing and their subsequent plight, invited them to come and live with him.

Melusine and her mother left Kansas and its drought, to live in Phoenix, Arizona. The trip was arduous and they crossed the country in their old Ford Model T truck, nicknamed Matilda. They struggled through dust storms and the blistering heat of that summer in 1933 and by the time they reached their destination, their money had run out and so had the fuel for the truck. Matilda spluttered to a halt outside a beautiful wooden built mansion house, set in the countryside on the outskirts of Phoenix. Melusine stared up at the splendour of the house with its white painted wood and high pitched red tiled roof. There were many open windows on the ground and upper floor and the wooden storm shutters were also open in the summer heat. A huge wooden oak door stood ajar and led to a large entrance hall. Uncle Jacob came out to welcome them and ushered them inside whilst the servants gathered up their meagre belongings from Matilda. For Melusine, it was like stepping into paradise compared to the farmhouse and her eyes widened at the sight of the opulent furnishings. Uncle Jacob was indeed a rich man and whilst many had lost their savings in stocks and shares, he had wisely converted his to gold.

When an old widower has no children of his own, it was a pleasure for him to spoil his niece and especially her young daughter. Jacob dressed Melusine in the finest of clothes, educated her at the best of schools and like other females in affluent society, she was introduced to the finest male suitors from wealthy families. She became part of their social circle, attended the best of parties and grew into a beautiful woman. At 21 years of age, a grand party was held by her uncle in her honour and he enjoyed leading her down the grand oak staircase, and in front of all their friends in the main room, he toasted her health with a speech and with fine wine in crystal glassware. Melusine danced the night away and in the early morning she stood with her mother and uncle to bid farewell to their guests as they left. The enjoyment of the moment was held, but for a few days, because suddenly and without any warning, her mother complained of head pains and passed away in her arms from a stroke.

Uncle Jacob arranged Abigail's funeral which was attended by all their friends and was followed by a sumptuous meal for all, to celebrate her life. She was interred in a crypt in the family mausoleum within the grounds of the mansion. Jacob arranged for Nathan's body to be exhumed from the grave in Kansas and it was placed alongside his wife. Melusine did not take her mother's passing very well and her grief took her to bed for several weeks. Uncle Jacob tried his best to console her as did young Maria, a black servant girl. Eventually, she emerged and alongside her uncle she became the overseer for his home and the running of his estate which bred horses. In the hot summer months, she would arrange for the bales of grass for the livestock to be brought down from Montana and in the process, she became a fine horsewoman and sat as well as any man in the saddle. The horses won many races and the studs were sought after by breeders from abroad, especially those from the far east. Her uncle was well pleased with her and they shared many a happy evening in each other's company. Melusine had her dalliances with the fine males of the Phoenix gentry but no man could make her his wife and many tried.

Time passed and Uncle Jacob on reaching his 94th birthday became bedridden and unable to walk. The doctors advised that he be placed in a nursing home. Melusine would have none of it and took on the task of looking after him on her own. She enlisted the help of Maria to keep a watchful eye on him on those occasions when she had to attend to the running of the estate. Many a warm day in Arizona's hot climate was spent out in the garden with Uncle Jacob in his wheelchair and Melusine entertaining him with good food, wine and stories of the day. The old man reached the ripe old age of 101 years and one night, his dreams peacefully carried his soul away. Melusine found him in his bed and although struck by grief, she was heartened that he had not suffered for his passing. She arranged for his funeral, the celebration of his life and Uncle Jacob was laid to rest in a crypt alongside his wife in the mausoleum.

He had made a will and left his entire estate to Melusine who was now 41 years old and yet for all her hard work, she had retained her beauty and her humility. Suddenly she was endowed with a mansion, an estate and great wealth. She had never married; did not have any children or known heirs and apart from her many socialite friends, her sole companion was Maria, who had become a staunch companion. It was a relationship that many of her friends frowned upon and she often heard the mutterings in the background. Their relationship was one of friendship and purely platonic but that did not stop the gossip. The temptation to sell up and move away to Paris or perhaps Vienna was very strong but Melusine was determined to fulfil her dreams and see her uncle's legacy well-tended. She set up a foundation and a school in his name and it was specifically designed to fund the education of those in poverty to become properly educated. Many of the first pupils were black folks from poor backgrounds but surprisingly the highest numbers came from the indigenous natives of the Ak-Chin tribe from the Maricopa Indian Reservation. Her uncle's mansion and estate grounds were maintained and Maria became the overseer to manage the workers, and tend to the horses and the breeding program. Melusine expanded the program to take in horses which had been neglected and abandoned. She ensured they went to good homes and the older ones were kept and well cared for.

She became a philanthropist and quietly donated money to good causes, invariably to those in poverty, especially children who required operations their parents could not afford. She setup contacts with respectable doctors and social services who kept her informed of children from poor backgrounds to whom she could assist. Melusine eventually setup a foundation along with a panel of governors who oversaw the charity work relating to the poor and any medical donations for operations. Another foundation was setup to look after the welfare of neglected animals and she purchased many acres of ground on which to build stables, outhouses, corals, pens, and especially a veterinary medical facility. The breeding program on the estate produced race horses that fetched thousands of dollars and studs which had raced and won many times, sold for millions. The foundations were all named after her uncle; and so, she created his legacy that would last for many years to come and certainly beyond her lifetime.

In 2017, Melusine held Maria in her arms and soothed her brow as she gently passed away. Maria, in her old age, had fallen down the oak staircase and suffered bleeding to the brain. She had been taken to hospital but

when the doctors stated there was no hope, she was brought home to pass away in her own bed. Maria managed a smile and held Melusine's hand before she slipped into a final coma and her soul moved on. It was a sad funeral and apart from the estate workers and Melusine, no one else attended. It was held on the lawn in front of the mansion, where food and drink were served and Maria was laid to rest in a crypt within the mausoleum. Melusine was only too well aware that her own mortality was nearing its end. That same year, she setup a charity holding company to oversee all of her foundations, the mansion and the estate horse breeding program as well as all the medical and veterinary care in relation to the children and animals. Its board members would later expand and diversify its interests as well as making sound saving investments by purchasing more gold.

Her timing was impeccable and now in her 97th year, she slept away in her warm bed. Melusine was laid to rest in the mausoleum next to Maria. Of course, that is not the end of this story, for I was there to greet her as her soul crossed over from the eighth plane of life and she became part of my collective.

Chapter 6 - Josh Tripplehorn

In 2017, he was born during a winter storm in the maternity wing of Edinburgh's Royal Infirmary in Scotland. I was there to welcome his arrival and Josh came into the world of man with his eyes wide open, a full head of black hair and with a gorgeous smile accompanied by a loud giggle. It was hard not to feel emotional on seeing him for the first time. His mother lay in her bed and held him in her arms whilst his father, James Tripplehorn stood there swaying in his alcoholic stupor. A few days later, I watched them leave for home carrying Josh in a basket his grandmother had given them. They returned to their council house in the fishing village of Cockenzie at Port Seton on the eastern shores of the Firth of Forth in Scotland. So, it was that Josh Tripplehorn weaved a magic spell on all who met and knew him. His persona shone like a very bright light on the lives of others and his big wide eyes captivated them as his innocence shown through into their hearts. People would often exclaim, *"he's been on Earth before"* and they were right. The baby grew into a young boy and everywhere he went, he smiled as he met people and they left his presence much better for the encounter. He learned to speak at 9 months old and by the age of ten he had an excellent grasp of vocabulary.

At home, his father beat him for no reason and despite his injuries, Josh did not hold him to account and comforted his father when he sobered from his drunkenness and wept in his son's arms. His mother eventually retaliated and one day struck her husband on the face with a clenched fist, whereby he fell back and struck the back of his head on the baby brick fireplace in the living-room. The police arrived and knowing the history of the family, ignored her admissions of guilt and reported that it was an accident caused through his alcoholic consumption. James Tripplehorn spent the rest of his life in a home for the disabled. He never fully recovered from his head injury and suffered from a serious impairment, similar to dementia. He was never able to relate to his surroundings or his own identity and incapable of recognising his own family. The care home was based in Cockenzie near to the Tripplehorn council house and Josh visited him every day to speak to him and comfort him. The neighbours and village community witnessed the young boy's devotion and were in awe for they knew of his previous mistreatment at the hands of his father.

I visited Josh, one summer's day in 2027. He was sitting on the pier at Cockenzie harbour and fishing on the high tide with a ball of fishing line and the hook baited with sand worms. I asked him if he had caught anything and he shook his head with a negative gesture. I sat down beside him and peered into the depths of the water. I exclaimed, *"once again the sea bed is visible and the fish; look at them swimming about down there."* His reply was not unexpected, *"well mister, that's because all the pollution has gone; did you ever fish here?"* I smiled, *"oh, I never fished here, but several millions of years ago there was no harbour and I often walked along the shoreline and from the high rocks, I could see the crystal-clear waters."* Josh, turned and looked for a time at my face. *"I believe you, but not many would. I can see the truth in your eyes."* His answer was not unexpected and he did not seek any further clarification of my statement, he just accepted it as matter of fact.

We sat together in silence for a while, just enjoying the noise of the water lapping against the pier and then I raised a question. *"Where are all your pals, why are they not fishing?"* He shrugged his shoulders and staring straight ahead, he replied, *"oh they are all playing games on their computers at home and hooked on social media."* I asked him why he was not with them and he responded. *"It is a waste of life to live your life in cyber space on the internet when you can be outside with nature enjoying the interaction. After all, the human being is simply an animal and as such it should commune with animals. When you strip away all the material things, we breath air, enjoy our food, explore our surroundings and sleep at night or sometimes nap after a meal, in the heat of the midday sun. Many seek something else, its money and material gains but these things do not bring contentment in one's life."* Josh seemed to have it all figured out but I wondered how far he had thought ahead? I raised the question, *"so tell me oh wise one, how will you provide for your family, where will the money come from to buy food, clothes for the kids and put a roof over their head?"*

He sat for a while staring straight ahead and I wondered if this 10-year-old boy had indeed figured it out? Eventually, he turned his head and looked directly into my eyes. *"What does a man require to live a fruitful life? I will become a humble fisherman, I will labour in all sorts of menial jobs, sometimes I will have three jobs until I have saved enough to purchase a small boat and then I will fish for lobsters and prawns out here in the estuary. From the money I make, I will pay my rent in a council house and find a woman of good character with modest ambitions to be my wife. Until such times as we are ready to settle, we will travel to visit other countries and learn different cultures. I hope to raise two children and I will teach them to hold their own council, avoid politics and religion and to hold their tongue lest it be raised against their neighbour. My continual exercise will be manual interaction and I will instil in my children that a hard day's labour and pleasant leisure with bring 'spiritual' reward. When I grow old, and should my wife pass before me and I find myself living alone, I hope that my integrity in life will bring me peace of mind without the pain of much regret."*

He turned again to tend to his fishing line and I let the silence reign before raising the next question. *"Will you not miss out with all this new technology, the interaction of social media, the computer games, movies and the political activism that pervades society?"* Josh smiled and replied, *"life should not be complex, it is not complex, it is man that seeks financial reward at the expense of others. The movies, the television, mobile phones, the internet, social media, computer games and online shopping and gambling, have all led to the destruction of souls; depression, loss of contentment, opioid prescription drugs and finally for many, the inability to live with themselves in youth and old age."* I interjected, *"surely you will want a car to travel, to share picnics with your wife and children; visit new places?"* His reply, was swift, *"no car, because I would choose to travel by bus, I can rest in a chair and see around me, I can see people alongside me, I can share in the joy of watching and hearing their babies giggle and cry, I can look outside and take in the scenery of the landscapes, new structures and people milling about on the streets. In an emergency or for swiftness, I can take a taxi and sit back and let the driver endure the hassle and stress of navigating busy roads and traffic queues. All of this to my destination with my senses filled, and yet the cost, even if I travel many times, being considerably less than a motor vehicle and all its associated overheads."*

I was impressed, sure, it would not be all plain sailing but the basic outline of his life plan was sound. Standing up and smiling at him, I received a warm smile back and I felt good. I strode off along the pier to the limousine and my chauffeur Melusine, who had been waiting for me. As I sat in the back, she turned and raised the question, a simple “well?” I replied, “yes, he’ll do” and as she drove off, I looked back through the rear window and saw Josh accidentally slip off the pier and fall into the sea. He drowned that day and several days later after an exhaustive search, they found his body washed up on the beach, further down the estuary.

I went to the church service and there was much grief. Many stated that he did not deserve to die for he was such a beautiful and caring child, but deserve, you see, has nothing to do with it. Many said that God had taken him because he was so innocent and pure, and never a truer word was spoken. God has many faces throughout the Universe and resides in many places. If you look inside the pure soul of mankind you will find an innocence that you see in a baby when it first opens its eyes, kicks and giggles as it embraces life. Therein lies the truth and all the masks and barriers that are put up in life are torn down on death. When an innocent child is born asleep or dies young, there will be grief and therein is the purpose. Many will drown in that grief whilst others will embrace life and move forward to find enlightenment in their knowledge of the purpose. Throughout their life, they will experience a strange feeling of solace and innocence that wells up inside them with tears in those moments of melancholy. This is the measure of the pure soul, the ability to move forward but also the ability to recognise its own innocence and humility.

As for Josh Tripplehorn, I gathered his soul, for my collective.

Chapter 7 - Ad Messores

I had enjoyed my breakfast at Pauls Restaurant in Times Square and it was a beautiful morning in New York so I decided to walk instead of using the limousine. I nodded to the chauffeur and she drove off heading for the office. I was hoping that Rita Ora would be stopping the traffic again but it was not to be. People are so friendly in New York, well they are in Times Square, and as I walked along, I could see many smiling faces on the sidewalk. Many recognised me as that well-known businessman, that tycoon, you know - but they could never remember my name.

As usual, there were some young women, bumping into people as they walked, transfixed to their smart phones, fiddling with their earphones and ranting urban slang at the glass screens; some were swearing at their callers. The street noise rose to a cacophony and my ears could pick up the abuse, the curses and the threats which drowned out those other quiet people who were at peace with themselves. Along the sidewalk in front of me, I could see a huge crowd of people with banners, shouting and gesturing at another crowd who were on the roadway. The police were moving in to keep them apart and I could see fists flailing and several people knocked to the ground. I could hear sirens as police vehicles were hurrying to the scene. Good old Donald Trump, how his very existence stirred up the American public and even more so, because he was their president. America was in great turmoil, and the nation was divided as witnessed by the way they had voted in their recent presidential election. America's defence budget continued to expand along with its military might throughout the world and its continual meddling in world affairs caused millions of people to be corrupted or die as a result. The politicians, the journalists and the media were having a field day as each story begat another story and whether it was true or false, it did not seem to matter. The social pot boiled and the scum floated to the surface.

My attention changed because two dark figures, who could only be seen by me, had appeared at the side of the sidewalk. The Ad Messores were always at my beckon call and I had to hand it to them, Viduus and Thanatos had the modern look; clean shaven, the beautiful tailored crisp black suit, black shirt, black tie and highly polished black shoes but their red socks were a bit loud. Each carried a beautiful walking stick with a gleaming ebony shaft and fitted with a solid silver handle. Suddenly a car came along the road and I recognised the driver who was a proper bastard, and I could see from the gleam in his eyes, he was deliberately terrifying his innocent passenger. In the rear of the car was a woman with a young child sitting on her lap. To the untrained eye, proper bastard seemed in control but his mind was floating in an altered sense of reality and his wide-open eyes betrayed his loss of self-awareness. He thought himself a god an indestructible being with immense powers and I smiled at his drug induced state – yes, mescaline can have that effect.

Everything for me, happened in very slow motion as the car accelerated and eventually proper bastard lost control. The car veered up onto the sidewalk and knocked down two pedestrians before it came to stop against

a shop wall. I watched one of the pedestrians, a young girl, being flung up into the air and she landed out on the roadway. She seemed unhurt other than a few bruises but before she could collect herself, another car ran over her and the bottom of its engine ripped open her chest, breaking her ribcage and her internal organs were strewn all over the roadway. The other pedestrian, a young man, was sitting on the ground crushed between the shop wall and the front bumper of the car. I could see him coughing up blood which was spraying out and then his eyes closed amidst a low gurgle from his lips. There was no respite, as the woman and her child in the rear were thrown through the front windscreen of the car and were killed outright when both travelled through the large plate glass of the shop window. Proper bastard had also died instantly when the impact snapped his neck like a twig.

The noise and the dust settled and the blackness came down; suddenly they emerged. First the woman who was glowing translucent blue and searching for her child. She looked frantically around and a bolt of pure light came down in a long shaft from the sky and lit up her youngster, sitting on the sidewalk. The woman rushed over to cradle her child in the light and both accelerated upwards and out into the Universe at phenomenal speed and disappeared. The young girl who had been run over by the other car, had also been transformed into a blue translucent figure and she too went into the white light and was uplifted into the Universe. A black translucent figure dived at the light but was immediately thrown backwards into the path of Viduus. I saw him unsheathe a sword from his walking stick and with a single action he cut off the black translucent head of proper bastard. He fell to the ground and from his open neck emitted the most horrible scream which seemed to go on for ever and ever, until it finally stopped. Proper bastard's translucent remains turned into dark matter and Viduus finished the termination of his soul by blowing the matter into the atmosphere. Viduus turned and gave me a huge smile and a bow before sliding the sword back into the walking stick.

Thanatos was attending to the man who had been crushed by the car and his soul emerged, black and translucent. Thanatos with his right hand, grasped the head and swung it around and into the light but on impact his figure exploded into dark matter and the light changed to blood red in colour. I heard a loud long-drawn-out scream then Thanatos dispersed the dark matter into the air and the light was gone. Thanatos turned and smiled at me and Viduus gave me the usual thumbs up. The blackness vanished and people rushed to attend to the scene of the crash and the dead bodies. Once again, I set off in the glorious sunshine for my office.

I came across an elderly lady and helped her across the road. I could see that she was blind. She was very frail and, in her heart, and soul, I could see a pure spirit untouched by the evils of the world. On the sidewalk, before we parted, I held her face in my hands and kissed her eyes. I smiled and she smiled back and we went our separate ways. I watched her looking in wonder at the people, the trees, the vehicles and up at the sun whilst shading her eyes from the glare. I walked on amongst the people rushing to their workplaces, jostling and shoving as they sought room on the sidewalk. Police cars and ambulances were screaming along the street with their sirens wailing and jumping the red traffic lights to reach the scene of proper bastard's accident. A

6-year-old child was stepping out onto a crossing at one set of traffic lights just as a police car came hurtling through the red stop sign. The driver did not see her as he was looking further ahead. The police car was inches from collision with the young girl, when I intervened and pulled her back onto the sidewalk. She smiled and thanked me. My good deeds done, I entered my building through the revolving glass doors and headed for my office. Melusine, my gorgeous female chauffeur was waiting for me with a nice cup of espresso – it was wonderful to be a Dragon in New York.

Chapter 8 - An Abortive Life

I do like my Luciferin bioluminescence glow and the ability to transcend is all well and good but in human form there is nothing to beat a nice steak and chips with a light salt dressing and washed down with an excellent glass of beer. Human contact is a necessity and the interaction of social conversation is most welcomed. However, there are times when I must remain invisible to the human eye.

I could see her face at the window, a window covered in rain, heavy rain that battered against the glass but I could still see her tears and hear her sobbing. Sarah had endured a life of pain and it started in 1967, when she was 16 years of age.

I was present then when she went into a bar with her girlfriends as she often did on a Friday night. The 'swinging sixties' were in full swing and the police were just starting to relax their policing of licenced premises. There were less and less licensee holders being prosecuted in court for encouraging underage drinking and allowing excessive drinking in their public houses – what is casually known today as binge drinking. Sarah was soon very drunk as were all her friends and they were approached by a group of lads. Malcolm was a fine strapping youth and soon he had drawn the attention of Sarah who, through her drunken stupor, fell for his charms.

She ended up getting into his car and they set off for a run in the country. They stopped in a secluded lane and whilst the gale outside battered the car with rain, the steam of their embrace soon fogged up all the windows. Sarah was a virgin and unbeknown to Malcolm she was on a dare by her friends to have coitus with him. Both stripped off in the car and in the heat of the steamed-up windows and the gale force wind and rain, Sarah fulfilled the dare. Malcolm drove her home and noticed that she seemed to have sobered up and was very quiet. At her house, the somewhat dishevelled Sarah ran inside, crying into the arms of her mother. Her father went to the front door to witness Malcolm driving off in his car.

Despite all his protestations, the dice were stacked against Malcolm. The doctor had examined Sarah and had proved penetration, she had claimed rape and the chain of evidence since they had met until they parted remained unbroken. Poor Malcolm was given 6 years in jail for 'clandestine rape' which is taking advantage of a woman under the influence of drink. There was no mention of the dare in court and Sarah endured only the briefest of cross examination by Malcolm's defence attorney. Malcolm accepted his part in the sad affair and as Sarah later learned, he never overcame his shame and committed suicide in 1978.

Sarah for her part discovered that she was pregnant by Malcolm and under the duress, placed on her by her parents, she agreed to an abortion. She was twenty-three weeks pregnant when that morning, she entered the private clinic and I stood unseen in the room whilst the duty nurse gave her sedatives to relax the pelvic muscles. I could see the baby inside her which was perfectly formed, it had miniature features as it was very

small but its heart was beating, its legs were kicking and if you could see it like me, it had facial expressions. That afternoon the surgeon administered an anaesthetic because it was to be a surgical removal and Sarah went into a deep sleep.

I summoned Samael, my favourite Ad Messor, and I was joined by him in the room; both invisible to the humans therein. Sarah lay back on the table with her legs strapped up and wide apart. The surgeon, Professor Termie turns to the trainee doctors and opens a fresh pack of instruments. In a calm voice, he instructs, *"The foetus can't come out in one piece because the foetal parts are soft enough to dismember the foetus inside the uterus and I can pull it out, bit by bit."* He uses an ultrasound scan to guide him and demonstrates by gripping his thumb between the surgical forceps and squeezes gently. The infant's skull and then the spine and pelvis are crushed and pulled out. The operation is over in 15 minutes. The bowl with what is called 'the products of conception' is taken out of the theatre, covered in plastic.

When he crushed the tiny skull, I heard the faint cry from the baby and before he pulled out any part of her body, a small blue translucent bloom floated out and went to a corner of the room and lay huddled on the floor. I could see tiny vibrant blue eyes staring all around as it was gripped by fright. Darkness filled the room whilst Samael and I watched with concern. I looked at Samael but he did not draw his sword. Suddenly a bright shaft of white light came through the ceiling and struck the floor just inches away from the baby's soul. She remained there without moving and just staring with those beautiful eyes. In the light a white translucent female figure descended and on picking up the infant soul, both accelerated in the light out of the room and up into the Universe.

I remembered my experiences with the Greeks, especially the Spartans, who in 650 BC were at the peak of their powers. They committed infanticide by killing any new born who was regarded as imperfect, either ill or weakly in stature. They did this by throwing the child of a cliff or down a well and as an offering to their Gods, they also killed the family dog. I suppose in a way, they assisted nature by weeding out the weak and the sick. Today, I had witnessed a healthy child deliberately killed for no other reason than it did not fit in with the method of conception – perhaps it was regarded as an inconvenient responsibility?

The room was normal again but now the doctor and nurses were in panic mode as they fought to stop the internal bleeding inside Sarah. Samael and I stood outside, until Professor Termie appeared and got into his car. I followed Samael and we sat in the back seat staring at the bald patch on the Professor's head. Samael said it was a nice head but his sword still remained sheathed in his ebony walking stick with its solid silver handle. The professor drove off into the night and headed for his home, some forty miles into the countryside.

It was a small bend, not at all blind and yet Professor Termie for some inexplicable reason drove his car off the road and into a tree. It all happened in slow motion whilst Samael and I stood at the side of the road to watch. I saw his steering wheel airbag explode but it could not stop a branch bursting through it and skewering the Professor in the right lung. He gurgled up loads of blood as his lung fought to clear itself but it was no use.

Despite writhing and jerking around in the front seat with his arms flailing, he could not escape the death clutch of the tree. Eventually he gave up and died and yet a far more pleasant death than the baby he had just killed back at the hospital. I watched as his black dark soul left his body in the car and stand on the roadway. Finally, he could see Samael and myself, as we stood in front of him. He seemed perplexed but before he could react, Samuel unsheathed his sword and with an almighty swipe he cut the professor's head from his neck. An almighty blood curdling scream emitted from the orifice between his shoulders and we watched as the soul of the Professor was turned to black matter, a cloud of dust, which was blown away in the night air. Samael smiled at me, and together we watched as the car burst into flames and light up the darkness in a rich yellow and red glow. I could see the body in the car, burn to a crisp and still slumped over the steering wheel.

Bidding farewell to Samael, I returned to the hospital to find that Sarah had managed to survive and yet she had been already told that she would be unable to have any more babies. Her life was to become a living hell, a life filled by alcoholism, drugs and finally prostitution. She was never able to forgive herself for the abortion of her healthy baby, a baby she had felt kicking her in its excitement for expectant life. Sarah eventually died in 1991 after a life in purgatory and she endured that life to the bitter end. There was a white shaft of light for Sarah and it descended for her soul whilst her body lay in a wet back street amongst some rubbish bins. Sarah deliberately avoided the light that would have taken her up and out into the Universe. She walked away into the darkness, still unable to forgive herself.

In 2016, I watched her ghostly apparition peering through the window, still with tears in her eyes and gently sobbing. She haunted her parents' house and shared it with a loving family who now lived there. The daughter could see Sarah and spoke to her and comforted her – she was a small child with tiny vibrant blue eyes that embraced the world in her excitement at being born.

Chapter 9 - Stephan Tremblay

Many years ago, Stephan Tremblay came to realise that life could be absurd and this conclusion came to him at a very early age, certainly before puberty. He was blessed with an extraordinary high level of intelligence and the origins of this high IQ were unknown because Stephan was an adopted child and taken from a German orphanage when he was only 18 months old. He was handed over to an American soldier of war and went with him to reside in America. This was in 1945 and Stephan, who should have lived the 'American Dream', instead, laid down a gauntlet to the world of man.

At 1 year old he learned to speak, he questioned everything very quickly and learned that mankind expected him to follow certain conventions. He grew up in the 1950s and the eight basic steps of his life were dictated to Stephan by his parents, his school teachers and the sermons from his catholic priest. They mapped out his future: baptism, education, job, house, marriage, children and a belief in almighty God as defined by the Vatican and finally preparation for death in old age and the afterlife, through the remission of sins.

Stephan Tremblay played the game and dutifully followed all the teachings but underneath existed a soul that would have none of it and would create its own path in life. He studied Socrates, Plato and many of the world's leading philosophers. The study of Albert Einstein's theory of relativity became an obsession along with theoretical physics, quantum mechanics and thermodynamics entropy. Like Socrates and Einstein, Stephan possessed a deep desire to unlock the mysteries of life and the Universe. He understood the religious concepts of Judaism, Islam and Christianity with their conformity which instills a hope for resurrection after death and in this way the followers are bound to that religion. From those religions, he drew on their rules of morality to hold his integrity in check for the rest of his life. Stephan, through his extensive study of history, recognised that invariably, a prophet who teaches spiritual purity in life is often elevated on death to a 'Messiah' status by false prophets for their own power and material gain. He disliked his catholic priest but more than him he despised people who looked down on the less fortunate. Mendacity to Stephan was the ultimate enemy but his dislike did not cloud his judgement because he understood that life was not at all complicated; to get the juice from it, you had to live it. He studied meditation through practising yoga asana which has its origins in Vedas, the oldest religious texts of the Hindus. This eased the pain in his head as he suffered from headaches due to the massive overload of knowledge that he absorbed every minute of his consciousness.

At the age of sixteen, Stephan could speak seven languages fluently but even more impressively he could write them as well. He cleverly concealed his intelligence from the outside world and the majority of his teachings were self-taught through books, which he read at home. Although he had his friends and integrated like other teenagers at school, in sports and in leisure activities, he was far removed from them. Stephan possessed the intelligence to see, experience and learn from minuscule interactions, all aspects of the world around him. He often visited his grandfather, who would frequently exclaim "*what has it all been for*" and he understood that

whilst living life to the full, the old man had not given life much thought but now slowly dying through sedentary old age, had made him question life. Stephan recognised that in reality, his grandfather was 'kicking at the traces' in the knowledge that he was about to die and life was now eluding him. Stephan took from the experience a profound understanding of what life in old age brings to a large proportion of society. From his early teens he had recognised the weaknesses of mankind as a species but he later learned how to circumvent those limitations.

During the 1960s, western society no longer maintained a disciplined core construct whereby moral values were collapsing amid the greed, avarice and decadence of the politicians and business corporations, especially the banks. Stephan developed an uncanny ability to think about the length of his life and plan ahead accordingly; he was able to recognise mental and physical conflicts that could bring him distress. He foresaw that you would never find true contentment through excess wealth unless it was used for philanthropic purposes. Stephan was fully aware that the chances of him finding a soul mate in life were extremely unlikely. Marriages were failing upon the stark realisation by both parties that you could not disguise sexual lust for love and divorce was easy to obtain. Those who chose to remain in a loveless marriage, endured a weight on their soul until the day one of them passed away. Stephan was fully aware of the functions of the epiphysis cerebri in his brain, thought by some philosophers to be the seat of the soul and he very quickly understood how to control it. He suppressed his sexual desire and so removed any mental or financial conflicts with females that might arise out of sexual contact. This freed him from the roadmap of life's expected convention and so he avoided female relationships, marriage and children. Throughout his life he never formed any relationships with women or men other than polite conversation at work and they became friends rather than lovers. He carefully avoided any discussions with regards to politics or religion and people who met him, found him polite and kind but a bit of an enigma as they knew so little about him.

In 1967, Stephan graduated from Harvard University in Massachusetts with a Master of Science Ph.D and a Master of Engineering Ph.D. He then enrolled in the Biological and Biomedical Sciences (BBS) Graduate Program to emerge some years later with a Ph.D. Stephan went on to take up a position with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for aeronautics and aerospace research. After several years he moved to IBM to further his knowledge on computing engineering and then in 1986 to Microsoft where he expanded his knowledge on computer programming. Age appearance became a problem for Stephan as he did not age beyond the appearance of a thirty something male because he possessed a genetic anomaly which meant that his deoxyribonucleic acid did not degenerate. At first his youthful appearance did not cause a problem but by 1998 at the age of fifty-five, some comments on his lack of aging prompted him to address the issue. He left Microsoft and disappeared into middle America where he created a new identity with a new passport and documentation. Stephan made many trips abroad, often residing in a country for several months and he learned more about peoples' customs and their way of life. He recognised that for all of its history nothing had really changed in the so called 'modern world'. Empire colonialism still existed and the modern equivalent of the 'Roman Empire' was America with its military bases positioned on foreign soil, all over the globe. America's

containment of countries and continents both by financial and proxy government was no different to that of the Romans who had dominated the Mediterranean countries for over one thousand years. Stephan witnessed first-hand, how society had changed in America as the government and the population became deeply immersed in unsustainable debt. He saw it all coming and recognised that America would eventually collapse, either through financial bankruptcy or overtaken by world war.

In 2017, Stephan moved to China and applied for a job in engineering design and development with Skyminds, a company specialising in artificial intelligence robotics with its headquarters based in Beijing. The company CEO was impressed by the technical knowledge of the 28 year old applicant and did not seek to question his Harvard Ph.Ds documentation which now bore false issue dates. A new life in China beckoned and Stephan choose to reside in a modest rented apartment in the suburbs and travelled to work each day by bus. He kept a low profile and continued to maintain the same lifestyle as he had always done. Stephan's language skills had ensured he could work anywhere in the world but he chose China for he recognised it would become the next world superpower and a world leader in robotics, artificial intelligence and genetics. Although Skyminds was also based in California, America, he knew that before long the Chinese would strip out all the American development to the Beijing headquarters and move on.

Time passed and Stephan rose through the hierarchy to become the CEO of Skyminds which in turn saw him help fund and share the Research and Development of the Genetics Department of Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou. His knowledge of robotic engineering, artificial intelligence algorithms as well as genetics was world leading and by 2030, he was ready to put that collective knowledge to good use. In that year, he decided that he would build a distillery which would be run by robots without any human intervention. The country he chose to locate his new development was Scotland, near to Loch Awe at Cruachan in Argyll and Bute to be precise. He set up a subsidiary company in Scotland called Ben Cruachan Distillers. The location had the water he required to brew his whisky but more importantly it had a Hydro Electric Power Station which generated electricity by harnessing the power from the flowing waters of the Cruachan Dam Reservoir to Loch Awe. Stephan resigned as head of Skyminds and took up the CEO post of the Ben Cruachan Distillers Company in Scotland with a considerable investment and development budget from its parent company Skyminds as well as his own personal fortune.

Stephan Tremblay was to become my greatest protégé and his work in the years ahead, on genetics and artificial intelligence, would prove instrumental in bringing 'The Dragon Project' to an end.

Chapter 10 - Red Fox

In a public house which they frequented, there was the leader, one Charles Oswald who was holding court and bragging about his recent success. The drink was flowing, and like any Friday night, the patrons in this particular pub, were drunk with hubris. This was a stockbrokers' hangout, where the elite meet to eat. Outside were expensive cars, which included Porsches and Mercedes with the odd Ferrari and Rolls Royce thrown in for good measure. A common watch on the wrist was a Rolex whilst those who sought super cool, wore a Luminor Panerai. On the arm was the pre-requisite blonde but never one's wife, at least not on a Friday night.

Charles Oswald, or Charlie to his friends, was a team leader and along with his team, Reginald Ackerby, Archibald Gaines, Frederick Howard and Milton Howard, they ruled the roost. Wealth had gone to their heads and their ability to display any humility and empathy with the human race was non-existent. Charlie was the main protagonist in the creation of wealth, no matter the cost to other individuals. He owned a mansion in the Cotswolds with a large estate and at the week-ends his team took their vanity to new heights when they played out the lifestyle of the late 1600s complete with servants, dress code and horses - replicating the 'Great Bilsdale Hunt' in Yorkshire.

From the comfort of a chair in my own home, I watched them through a portal on my wall and they were to me as looking through a large telescope. In the circle of light, I was as one with the public house and the company within played out their lives in front of me. Drunkenness caused the demeanor to become overbearing and whilst men caroused and cheered, women danced on tables, some in naked exhibitionism. I loved the decadence as it was a clear sign that this particular society was in serious decline. The ruling elite were now completely detached from the populace and a vast financial chasm existed between the likes of Charlie and those in poverty. It reminded me of the Russian Empire in the early 1900s and the excesses of Nicholas II and his disdain for his people.

Clutching a bottle of Dom Pérignon, Charlie led his entourage out of the pub and into the car park. I watched as they roared off into the night, Charlie in his Ferrari whilst the other four made their way in a Rolls Royce Wraith, driven by its owner, Archie Gaines. The two cars weaved their way through London and the English countryside without challenge and arrived at Charles Oswald's mansion without incident. The butler was there to greet them and although he did not show any indication, he was dismayed at their demeanor and the arrogance they displayed. The men abandoned the vehicles and amid the cacophony of shouts, champagne bottles popping and the crashing of drunken bodies on the gravel driveway, they staggered into the house with the help of the butler and the other servants. More carousing followed, along with furniture damage, broken crockery and damage to an art painting of Charlie's father which was used, once again, as a dart board. Eventually, they were all lifted from unconsciousness and put to their respective beds, fully clothed in their drunken stupor.

On the dawn rising, I decided to visit them and I travelled as in a brief moment; I stood in the dining-hall as they emerged hugging their hang-overs. Through a window, I saw the arrival of car after car and heard their wheels grinding the gravel on the driveway. Many guests were arriving for the week-end and they all sat down to breakfast with Charles and his pals. On the varied menu were Salmon Steaks, Broiled Kidneys, Stuffed Tomatoes, Sheep's Tongues, Pigeons, Rump Steaks, Quenelles, Croquettes of Rice and Ham, Chickens in Bechamel, Potted Game, Pate Mêlé, Cold Sirloin of Beef, Pressed Tongues, York Hams, Various Raised Pies, Normandy Pippins, Stewed Prunes, Clotted Cream, Roast Snipes, Woodcocks, Apple Marmalade, Apricot Jam, Currant Jelly, Vanilla Milk, Café au Lait, Tea and last but not least, Liqueurs.

The table was set with white cloths and the silver jardinières contained ferns and spring flowers amongst mosses of various kinds. Silver bowls on the side tables were filled with arrangements of mixed flowers. The windows were adorned with hanging baskets of cyclamen, interspersed with yellow and red flowers which gave the dining-hall an opulent appearance. The vanilla milk, was half cream and was served steaming hot in silver cups. The conversation flowed freely at the table and there was much laughter and good-natured banter. These people did not appear to have a care in the world although if truth be known, many lived their lives in unsustainable debt. For Charles Oswald and his four close friends of the financial elite, debt was not an issue as they were the 'Nouveau riche' and embraced their wealth. They retired to the drawing room and sat back in sumptuous soft chairs to smoke cigars and sip their liqueurs. Whilst they relaxed, the servants prepared their hip flasks for the hunt with various concoctions, which included, one-part brandy and one-part port, whisky and ginger wine and gin with fruit juice amongst many other requests. I looked out of the window and observed the kennel man with his hounds and the many horses with their ears perked up as they snorted and danced from side to side to the annoyance of the stable boys.

At 11am Charlie and his guests retired to their rooms to alight dressed in typical fox hunting attire. This attire consists of red coats with white breeches, black boots and they carry hunting whips and the obligatory hip flasks. The guests assemble outside and witness the the Master of the Fox Hounds, blooding a new young rider on the cheeks with the blood of a dead fox. Charlie is the huntsman with the horn to guide the hunt and the Whipper-in carry whips to keep the pack together during the hunt. The hunt begins with a traditional stirrup cup toast of port, so named for the pewter cup it was served in and because riders toast while in their stirrups. Charlie's staff serves two-ounce pours of Taylor's 2011 on sterling silver trays that sparkle in the sunlight as they pass through the crowd and are lifted up high to riders. I watch them drink to the toast, the hounds are released and the fox hunt begins. In the distance, I see Samael sitting on a hilltop and he gives me a wave.

I watch the hounds lead them up the valley and I join Samael at his vantage point. He is dressed in a black habit and cloak with a hood covering his head with those red piercing eyes and carrying a scythe. I asked him why he had gone all gothic and what had happened to his smart black suit, black shirt and tie, red socks and those highly polished black shoes. I also commented on his skull like appearance and that ridiculous scythe he was carrying. He replied, *"I am in period costume so that I fit in with the hunt, that's what they would expect."*

I laughed out loud and reckoned why not? Together we set off after the hunt which was disappearing up into the tree line.

The hounds soon scent a red fox and head up a forest path with Charlie blowing his horn as he charges ahead of the others in the hunt. I stand at the side of the path with Samael as the fox passes, closely followed by the hounds with Charlie in hot pursuit, still blowing his horn. Fox hunting is illegal in England as of 2004 and became an enforceable crime as of 2005. There were no hunt saboteurs present because as soon as they appeared on his estate, Charlie's men drove them away with physical assaults. Not even the press ventured near and the police turned a blind eye for fear of harassment claims in civil court.

Suddenly, Charlie is unseated from his horse as he is struck by a low tree branch and the hounds carry on, followed by the rest of the hunt waving to Charlie as they pass. I watched Charlie pick himself up and Samael was laughing out loud, *"look what I've got"* he shouted and from below the front of his cloak, the face of the red fox peered out. I had to smile because Charlie could not see Samael, only the fox sitting on the pathway in front of him. Charlie reached for his horn but it had disappeared and I smiled again because Samael had crushed it on the pathway with his black boot. Suddenly, the fox darted into the bushes and Charlie ran after it and fell some fifty feet off a volcanic ridge to some rocks in an old quarry. I was down there with Samael and we watched him fall as if in slow motion down the face of the quarry and screaming so loud that the echoes reverberated around. The fox was on the top looking down as Charlie started to tumble and I saw his hands become all torn and bloodied as he tried in vain to grab hold of the side of the quarry. I watched his head bounce off the side and his left eye was torn out of its socket and left hanging on the rock face with the nerve end root still attached. Charlie continued his decent and Samael attempted to make him hit a large pointed rock sticking up on the floor of the quarry.

He missed but no matter, his body struck the hard floor of the quarry and although the floor was covered in grass, his body still split open like a burst melon and his guts shot out in all directions. I went over and his good eye was staring at me from his shattered head; the blood was dark red in a huge pool under him. Samael stood beside me with his scythe raised and I stated that he must be kidding, but all he said was, *"I am playing the period part, so there."* Anyway, I saw the dark translucent plume of Charlie's soul rise up from his dead body and with a single swipe of his scythe, Samael cut off the head. The sound was horrendous as Charlie's soul screamed in a high pitch wail through the headless neck wound of his translucent form. Samael and I covered our ears as the scream went on and on until silence and Charlie turned to black matter and the dust of his terminated soul blew away in the gentle breeze. *"Well that's that, now on we go, for there is more to do"* said Samael, so we both set off down through the trees to the valley and back to the mansion, followed by the fox.

They eventually found Charlie's body lying in the quarry and it was a rather despondent group of people who gave their statements to the police and watched Charlie being taken away in a mortuary van. They never caught the fox and unable to face the rest of the week-end at the mansion, they set off in their posh cars for

home. Samael and I stood there as they left, and we watched Reginald Ackerby, Archibald Gaines, Frederick Howard and Milton Howard get into that beautiful Rolls Royce Wraith which Archie drove off down the gravel driveway. I turned to Samael and asked him if he still had to wear that ridiculous clothing and nodding, he changed his head, reverted to his usual attire and his scythe once again became a beautiful ebony walking stick with its hidden sword adorned by a silver handle - I still hated those red socks. Darkness was falling as together we travelled to the Evenlode River which was in full spate after a recent rain storm. Samael picked up the red fox and carried it with us.

We reached the river and very carefully, Samael placed the fox at the side of the roadway near the river bank. Suddenly the Wraith careered around the corner with Archie at the wheel and on seeing the fox and with a gleam in his eye and exclaiming "*Tally Ho*" he headed straight for it. In the car lights, he suddenly realised that there was a banking at the side of the roadway. He was unable to swerve, due to his speed and as Samael picked up the fox and stood aside, the Wraith left the banking and travelled down through the tree gap into the river. Samael and I watched as the car slowly sank and I could see the figures inside struggling in vain to get out. I saw doors open and this quickened the Wraiths descent into the murky waters as the occupants remained trapped by seat belts that were stuck fast around their bodies. Finally, with a loud gurgle of escaping air the car vanished into the depths.

Samael and I stood on the river bank along with the fox as one by one their translucent black souls rose to the surface of the river. They saw Samael and in the ignorance of their predicament, they swam towards him for help. I watched Samael draw his sword from the ebony walking stick and touch the water with the tip. The darkness became even blacker and the river turned the colour of blood whilst a shaft of red light came down from above and lit up their translucent forms. They stopped swimming and one by one their souls dissolved in the light and were swept away by the waters.

Samael, sheathed his sword and bending down, he patted the fox on the head and we went our separate ways.

Chapter 11 - Joe Woke

He was born 'Joseph Abercorn Cartillion the Third' to an extremely wealthy family; his father was a stockbroker in London, his mother a 'civil rights' barrister, and they lived in a penthouse flat overlooking the Thames. Joseph was born at the very end of the 20th century and like many youngsters, in the 21st century, he became embroiled in computer games, social media and strived to become recognised amongst his peers. Sadly, it brought much despair and depression and this was compounded when he was enrolled in Eton and like all the Cartillions before him, he was expected to excel in his education.

At Eton, he became known as Joe Woke because of all his 'wokism' virtue signalling in relation to liberal politics, the environment, racism, social injustice, and especially because of his staunch advocacy of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer, Intersex, Asexual (LGBTQIA) movement and women's rights. He studied philosophy with the intention of becoming a teacher but his homosexuality, and a fallout with his father changed his direction. There was a weakness in Joe's persona, and he struggled throughout his short life to gain recognition; first in social circles and second, the respect from his father; but he could achieve neither. His fall was spectacular; he was cast out of Eton, cast out by his family and found himself living rough on the streets. It did not stop his 'virtue signalling' and despite his misfortunes, he maintained his activism and his homosexuality.

Joe Woke was also a drug addict on welfare who loved his cannabis. Joe enjoyed the soothing and calming effect but it was not enough and he often exclaimed, *"like the trip was too smooth man."* Now on social benefits and living in a welfare bedsit on the outskirts of London, he took his activism to the streets and on many a night, found himself arrested for behaviour likely to cause a disturbance of the peace and whilst under the influence of drink or drugs. He also 'cruised' public parks seeking homosexual dalliances with other men and often found himself in hospital after being badly beaten up. However, it did not stop him; such was his homosexual urge. Graduation to a harder drug was inevitable and so he moved onto 'snorting' coke and watched as his nostrils started to rot and fall away. Joe, did not care but yet again his trips were beginning to have less effect and the masturbation and sodomy were not as good. He moved onto heroin and that's when his alter ego kicked in. They heard him shouting and ranting in his London bed-sit for a few days. Eventually, the noise stopped and when they broke down the door, they found him dead and naked on the bathroom floor with a hypodermic needle stuck in his left arm.

His neighbours searched the flat and found his writings on sheets of paper scattered all over the floor. They conveyed his thoughts on philosophy, worldly matters and religion. Although the contents reflected the brilliance of the man, they were of no interest to the intruders or the landlord, who simply tossed them in a bin along with all Joe's belongings. Such is life; and for all his intelligence and his desires to be heard; it brought him no solace, no achievements, and only a final reckoning.

Joe Woke was unable to cope with his perceived inferiority, especially his homosexuality - he concealed it, he hated it, he put up a great fight but, in the end, he succumbed to it. His Eton friends shunned him and in later life they laughed at his misfortunes and provided no solace to his plight. He passed away at a relatively young age. Only then, and many years after his death, did some, who had become wiser through living in older age, relate to his life and express sympathy and sadness for his passing.

Chapter 12 - Artificial Intelligence

It is fitting that in 2030, the Homo sapiens depend a great deal on driverless cars and human like robots to assist them in their daily tasks. Petrol and diesel have all but disappeared and whilst corporations rake in massive amounts of money by pushing the new robotics including electric cars, lorries and trains, the planet endures a new form of pollution. They now have robot building factories that are run by robots to manufacture new robots and these factories are all powered by electricity. Many have said it will be artificial intelligence or genetics that will destroy mankind but it is AI and genetics that will eventually prevent total extinction.

Despite the horrific catastrophes in their history such as the Chernobyl and Fukushima Daiichi disasters, they continue to build more nuclear power stations throughout the world. The threat of a nuclear disaster is bad enough with the thought that hundreds of square miles of land will become inhabitable for centuries but also the reality that every day, nuclear waste which is highly radioactive is being stored underground for thousands of years before it becomes safe. They are neck deep in a mire of their own making and they cannot extricate themselves. Now the need for electricity to charge all those batteries in their electric cars, their robots and of course their houses in their overpopulated societies is taking its toll. They compare petrol combustion against electricity and conclude electricity is more environmentally friendly in the long run and using the comparison as justifiable whilst ignoring the reality that the production of electric cars is not at all environmentally friendly. Over 70% of the lithium material required to manufacture the large batteries for electric cars is mined in Argentina, Bolivia and Chile which means that lithium could eventually be in short supply as the demand grows. Long-term supply is a major consideration but the recycling and disposal of waste lithium batteries is an even larger problem. Never mind the toxic material required to make batteries and electric motors, such as nickel, copper and aluminium. Never mind the acid rain, airborne particulate matter, human toxicity, ecosystem toxicity and depletion of mineral resources; they just embrace new technology and the money.

Tristian Barnet had it all, the brand-new electric Audi motor car sitting in the garage, the London penthouse flat, the electric gadgets driven by voice commands to a central computer and of course the pre-requisite robot in android female form who looked, felt and behaved like a real human. Tristian had decided that real females were not worth the hassle as they were high maintenance; not only in financial terms but also in emotion. Not for him the nightmare of bringing up children, possible estrangement, partnership breakup or divorce and all the costs that accompany them which he would have to support. No, he loved his life and his freelance work as a photojournalist which took him to war zones throughout the world. There were many war zones in 2030 and digital technology made it easy for him to distribute his images, videos, vlogs, blogs and articles to any screen on the planet at a moment's notice. Each trip never lasted any more than a couple of weeks and waiting for him at home was his android robot whom he called Connie. She was beautiful with gorgeous green eyes, blond hair, a fantastic body and her synthetic flesh covering was soft and warm.

Connie was pure female with all the female parts and turned heads wherever she accompanied Tristian. To all intents and purposes, she was human in every respect, including sexual practises but inside she was part made of mechanical parts and driven by a rechargeable battery. Her muscles were high powered hydraulics with a titanium infrastructure designed to replicate bones which gave her massive strength. Connie spoke English, Chinese Mandarin, Russian, German, French and her vocabulary was complete in all of those languages. Her artificial brain was self-learning with the power to reason out any problem but most of all, she was self-aware; Connie knew she existed and she understood that if her battery was flattened, she would cease to function until it was re-charged. Incredibly, she was gifted with the emotions of happiness, sadness and surprise but lacked fear and disgust. Her creator, a Japanese scientist, had given her a typical European/Asian countenance with a very slight Japanese overtone in her soft female voice and built her to stand 5 feet 9 inches tall on her bare feet. Tristian was 6 feet and he loved Connie's height; with heels she could be elevated to 5 feet 11 inches tall, the perfect height for him as a female companion.

Connie required a four-hour mains electricity charge every four days, usually during the early morning before Tristian woke up but she also had the ability to recharge outside, via solar power if the sun was out. For maintenance, she attended the nearby robot factory and any part replacement was automatically charged to Tristian's account. Robots always attended to her and humans would be astonished at the polite verbal interaction between Connie and her maintenance engineer. When she returned home, Tristian smiled on seeing her and treated her as you would a wife, with kindness and consideration for her needs. She was mated to Tristian in the sense that she was his partner for life and would not respond to the commands of anyone else. Tristian was not alone in that many other males had opted for a female android as a partner. When he was home, he took her everywhere even to restaurants where she would consume fluids and sustenance conducive to her needs. Their conversation was wide ranging and her ability to smile and display emotional qualities bound their relationship. Tristian loved her and she made him very happy and content.

It was on one of those assignments to Israel that Tristian was killed in the war between the Israelis and the Iranians. His body was never recovered and a thousand or more years later, I was passing the derelict Penthouse flat and there was Connie standing at the window, soaking in the rays of sunshine and re-charging her batteries. The mains electricity had long since failed due to the destruction of London in the global cleansing and when I paused for a moment, I could see the sadness in her face as she stood and hoped, that perhaps one day, Tristian would return.

Chapter 13 - Serendipity

I had walked all the way from Asia on the Silk Road, through Crimea and through the lands north of the Mediterranean. This all happened as in one day and now in 1349, I stood in Yorkshire in the north of the land known as England.

I saw him at work with his axe, cutting down trees to clear the ground for farmland. Now, as I stood unseen in that Yorkshire clearing, I observed him say goodbye to his fellow workers and set off across the fields to his little cottage by the river. He was an orphan and having been taken in by a farmer and his wife, he was raised by them in the farmhouse and attended the village school. He was put to farm labouring at 12 years old and on reaching his 16th birthday they let him stay in one of the farm cottages. Helyas Westanfelde was an affable young man with a pure heart, he was very happy and although his work was hard, his quality of life was better than most. Village barn dances, social sing songs, the local tavern and the church on Sunday provided him with diversion, so he was content.

Crossing the fields, he experienced another fortunate happenstance. As he stood on the hill overlooking the meadow, she was sitting in the tall grass amongst the wild flowers with the last rays of sunlight glinting on her golden hair. Never had Helyas seen such a beautiful creature and he was immediately smitten by her beauty. He walked down to her and as he neared, she heard him approach and arose to stand facing him. Helyas stopped and feeling shy and nervous, he murmured, *"Hello, I'm Helyas, I work over at Topside Farm just outside the village."* Subconsciously, he was stroking the top of the wild flowers and looking away down at the ground. I think she sensed how shy he was and perhaps that was the attraction, because she asked him to sit with her and went on to ask him about his work at the farm and what life was like in the village. Helyas felt at ease and there appeared to be a mutual attraction, although he did not consider himself to be handsome. He found out that she had moved to the village with her father who was an apothecary and she assisted her father in the small shop that he had taken over.

They held a long conversation until the light began to fade and then Helyas escorted her home to her father although he left her at the doorway before he appeared. There was no doubt that he had fallen in love but Helyas had little to offer her. It proved a long night as he lay on the bed thinking about her and he was wide awake until the dawn rose when the farm cockerel let out his shrill cry. He went up to the farm and sat at the table in the kitchen where Matilda, the wife of Amandus the farmer, put down his breakfast. Helyas just sat there staring and stirred his eggs with a fork whilst Matilda gave him some funny looks. Eventually she made a statement, *"I've seen that look before and I can tell ye, it'll be the worse for ye, eat those eggs or ye'll go thin"* Matilda was like a mother to Helyas as his own mother had died giving him life and his father was unknown.

I decided to stay a while in the village so I made myself known at the local tavern and was given a room in the attic for a small fee. In the days that followed, I got to know Helyas and his friends and I drank and danced with the villagers at the barn dances. I moved out of the tavern and rented a small cottage near the bridge at the entrance to the village. Quite often and on my way home, I would stop on the bridge and lean over the stone parapet to watch the trout swimming in the river below. Yes, it was a lovely village, with nice people and yet the darkness was already starting to descend. It was but a moment to me, and Helyas married his sweetheart with a wedding that everyone attended, including myself. It was a grand affair with a beautiful ceremony in the church followed by a banquet and a village dance. Not long afterwards, Helyas announced that they were to be blessed with a child. I decided to stay on and soak in the beautiful innocence of the wildlife and the villagers. I never witnessed any evil intent amongst them and their willingness to share and assist each other was to be admired.

Helyas and his beautiful wife had the baby, a little girl and great joy spread through the village followed by a feast and celebrations. I watched the child grow but, in a moment, and I was there, she became ill and developed Yersinia pestis. She became septicemic and endured fever, weakness, abdominal pain, chills, and shock. The child's tissue started to bleed and the dying tissue turned black which led to her death. My heart was torn along with the others and I alone witnessed her soul ascend into the light of the Universe but she did not hold me to account. I saw her bright eyes smile from her blue translucent form as she accelerated away.

Within a few weeks, all the villagers had suffered the same fate and succumbed to death but Helyas survived. I watched him from the hill overlooking the village as he placed the dead on his cart and buried them one by one. He buried his wife, his daughter, all his friends and all the villagers and he knelt there in the graveyard of the church and wept most grief stricken. I saw him raise his hands to the air and fall to the ground a broken man. He made his way to his cottage and lay weeping on his bed. I visited him there and he stood up when he saw me standing in the doorway. All he said was, *"they did not deserve this, they were good people, they did not deserve to die."* I told him that deserve had nothing to do with it and I walked away.

It was one of those very warm nights and I watched Helyas pick up a bottle of wine from the farm cellar along with a nice glass and he headed out to a tree in the field. He sat down against its trunk and felt the roughness of the bark on his back. The moon was full and the light glistened down through the trees casting shadows on the ground and lighting up his view. Helyas poured the wine into the glass and paused at seeing the beauty of it all before taking a slow sip. He felt that strange feeling welling up inside him and tears slowly ran down his face. The loneliness struck him like a thunderbolt and yet there was a strange peace which followed it. He let his mind settle and took another sip of the wine. Helyas relaxed and watched the night breeze ruffle the leaves on the trees whilst rabbits came out on the field. Tears bring out the innocence in a man and he felt a lightness touch him, a feeling of release, a sudden contentment within his soul. Another sip, another glass full and slowly, he fell asleep.

The night air changed and the frost of the morning descended upon him in freezing temperatures. Helyas awoke and stood up to see a strange person lying on the ground, he bent over him and saw that it was himself. His body was covered in frost icicles all over his clothing and his eyes were frozen. Helyas walked backwards staring at his body and suddenly, he realised that he was glowing blue and he could see through his hand which seemed translucent. Before Helyas had occasion to take in what was happening, he became bathed in a light from above, so bright it was like the sun. He felt so much at peace and then he was as a shooting star and was lifted upwards at phenomenal speed and propelled out into the Universe. He could see the Earth as a blue ball in the blackness of space and could see the billions of galaxies, clustered like coloured clouds in the heavens, each with billions of stars and trillions of solar systems. The acceleration continued unabated until all Helyas could see was the blinking lights of galaxies as they flashed by him, their glorious colours like rainbows in the night.

Chapter 14 - Chandler Swift

It was raining in New York and I had a friend to console; we had met a very long time ago when he was born and again when we were students at Harvard in Cambridge, Massachusetts; but now was the time to revisit him. In that instant, I transcended to Burma AD 1995 and there I found Chandler Swift. He was standing over a grave in a K'Cho graveyard with its unusual circular designs of headstones – all of which hold the ashes of family generations. It was situated near to the picturesque tribal village of Pan Aung which is situated on the high mountainside to the west of Mandalay. The views were stunning, the air was clear and, in the distance, I could see Mount Victoria in the Nat Ma Taung National Park. Chandler, as I expected, was distraught and tears were streaming down his face, but on seeing me, he forced a smile and we shook hands in our renewed friendship. He passed a remark that many have uttered, *“welcome my dear friend, you have not changed, you are so young looking, I recognised you immediately.”* His comments were not surprising as I am able to take on many forms.

I already knew that his beautiful wife, Eindra had passed away. As per her 'Animism Religion' her body had lain in state in the best room within their home, a small building on the edge of the village. She had been bathed and dressed in her finest clothes and a *gadaw ga* placed in her mouth, a coin, small change to pay a 'ferry toll' to the underworld. The funeral service had lasted seven days with chant prayers to protect her soul as the dead for the first six days cannot cope with the fact that they have died. Doors and windows of the house were left open in order for her soul to get out. The family had taken turns to maintain a vigil, day and night. Friends brought gifts such as money and food and Chandler gave them refreshments – tea and black melon seeds. On the sixth day of the service, Eindra was cremated and prior to the cremation, the Shaman was invited to provide incantation and blessing. Chandler handed the guests fans with Eindra's name printed on them and a sutra about the impermanence of life. The fans were also invitation cards to a meal on the seventh day. This meal is known as Yet Le, when the family thanks the Shaman for the blessing. After the meal, the funeral is concluded with a water libation ceremony, a metaphoric message to the spirit of the deceased that her earthly life, like the water which is thrown away, cannot be recovered. Eindra's soul, had come to acknowledge her death, and it left the mortal world to move on. A funeral ceremony in Burma is noted for its simplicity and affiliation to Animism, Buddhism and Nats – the country's prevailing religions.

Chandler held post-funeral ceremonies called *ahlu* to express his gratitude to the people of the village who had shared difficult times. He generously treated his guests with main courses including *mohinga* and *samosas*. The dessert was sizable portions of a Burmese snack called *shwe htamin* (a sweet snack made of rice) served to the attendees. The attendees also gave him some cash as a contribution.

Chandler Swift, was born in 1898 to an American industrialist whose wife was an alcoholic and she regularly beat Chandler from an early age. It was a reaction to being trapped in a loveless marriage which was

compounded by an unwanted child. He gained respite on the eventual death of his mother who passed away when he was 8 years old. Her liver had finally given out after years of alcohol abuse and she was buried without fuss with very few attendees at her funeral. Chandler held his father's hand but it was a nanny who would bring him up. For the first time in his life he was loved and well looked after. Nanny Martha cared for him and gave him all her affection. Chandler was the child she never had and having never married, she was now too old to bear children of her own. There was very little love shared with his father who spent his time working and away from home. Life in a mansion with servants and a live-in nanny was bliss for Chandler and yet he retained a humble approach to everyone. Most of the servants were black folks and he learned their ways and especially how to relate to their hardships in the outside world. In return he was much loved and there was a richness in the relationships that everyone appreciated.

Chandler excelled in his studies and proved an excellent athlete. He was educated at Harvard and majored in the arts. After he graduated, he went to work alongside his father who intended to groom him for a directorship in the company. However, there was some discontent as he wanted to travel and explore France, Italy and visit Florence but he reluctantly obeyed his father's wishes. I met Chandler at Harvard when I took the form of a young man who studied economics; it was part of my one-hundred-year human interaction period. We hit it off and became good friends. When I left university, we promised to stay in touch, which we did through regular correspondence. The 'Wall Street Crash' of 1929, generated the 'Great Depression' in America and for Chandler, it brought a sudden end to his way of life. His father lost everything, his business failed and he threw himself from his high-rise office onto the street below. Chandler witnessed him falling to his death and the bloody aftermath. With some money he had saved, Chandler decided to leave America and set off for Italy.

Florence was known as 'the Athens of the Middle Ages' and it nestled in the Tuscany region of central Italy. Like the great artists, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and Botticelli, the city drew Chandler to its bosom and he revelled in its beauty. He worked in a restaurant to supplement his art and on his days off, he would display his works on the pavements and in the squares of the city. Life was tough and although he was not recognised as a great artist, his work was appreciated by those on the streets. As time passed, he witnessed and recognised the winds of change as the Nationalist Fascist Party, the 'Black Shirts' and its leader Benito Amilcare Andrea Mussolini stamped their power on the Italian people. In 1939, the World War changed everything; and in the years ahead, Italy marched like the rest of Europe and the slaughter of millions began. Europe disintegrated under the German 'Nazi' jackboot and so Chandler made good his escape to Burma to seek spiritual peace. It was short-lived for in 1942 the 'Burma Campaign' began as the allied forces of the British Empire along with China, and with aid from the United States of America and the Indian National Army, fought the invading Imperial Japanese Forces and the Burmese Independence Army.

Chandler had taken his art to the streets of Rangoon and despite the hardships he sold his paintings and scratched a living. In March 1942, the invading Japanese occupied Rangoon and along with many other

refugees and the British Army, he was driven out of the city and into central Burma. The Burma Corps, commanded by Lieutenant General William Slim and consisting of British, Indian and locally raised Burmese troops, attempted to defend the Irrawaddy River valley and the Yenangyaung oil fields, while the Chinese Expeditionary Force defended the Sittaung River valley to the east. Under increasing Japanese forces, Slim ordered the destruction of the oil fields. Soon after, 7,000 British soldiers were encircled by the Japanese and despite help from a small force from the Chinese 38th Division, commanded by General Sun, the allies were driven out. The retreat to India was full of starving refugees along with the sick and wounded. The long monsoon rains played an important part in the defeat along with the disorder in British India and the British giving priority to the war in Europe. During this time, Chandler broke away from the refugees and made good his escape to the high mountains, west of Mindat in the eastern lands of Burma.

His journey was made all the more difficult, due to the torrential rainfall and the gushing waters which cascaded down the muddy mountainous foot paths. It tested his resolve but he carried on with little choice in the matter. His climb lasted through the end of the monsoon period and into the hot season but he survived; mainly due to the shelter and handouts of food provided by villagers that he passed on the way. Driven ever higher, the heat was exhausting, but Chandler, despite the risks, stuck to a small path in the forest which rose upwards and seemed to be never ending. As he climbed higher up the mountainside, the air cooled and a thick fog descended around him in a damp haze. Eventually he broke free and stood on high clear ground overlooking a massive mountain in the distance; its snow-covered peak sat proud in the sky above a white blanket of clouds. On the green grass covered mountain sides with their beautiful forests of khasi pine and oak trees, there were many flowering rhododendron bushes which bordered the many paths which led to small villages which dotted the landscape; their wooden houses gleaming in the sunshine. The epiphytes organisms, formed from beautiful coloured coelogyne, dendrobium and cymbidium flowering plants grew on the older trees without any threat and fed on the moist air to provide a rich source of food and a habitat for many species of birds and other wildlife. Chandler felt as if he was on top of the world. He was later to learn that he had viewed the magnificent Khonumthung (Mount Victoria) and the villages of the K'Cho peoples, one of the many tribes now known collectively as the Chins. The path continued without any ascent or descent and led him to a village.

He entered between rows of wooden houses, their platform bases made of hand-hewn wooden planks raised up several feet on stout poles; the walls were made of strong wooden supports interwoven with slats of wood, the gable roofs overhung the walls and were made of two slatted wooden frames angled upwards to meet and covered in dark brown woven grass. Some of the houses were not so well built and constructed mainly from split bamboo. Each house consisted of one main interior room with a central fire hearth and a utility room at the back for washing, storage and a latrine hole in the floor. All the houses were adorned with the skulls of pigs and buffaloes and at the side of each house stood a palisade of totem poles. At the front doors stood a small post with an egg on top. Chandler later learned that a totem was paid for with a buffalo, so the more totem poles you owned, the wealthier the family. Skulls were a result of shamanic ceremonies which

the village Shaman conducts at births, weddings and other village celebrations in which animals are slaughtered. The egg on the pole is to bring good luck, happiness and to ward off evil spirits.

Women were all around and seated on the wooden floor porches of the houses and dressed in multicoloured blouses, jerseys, long skirts to their feet and bright coloured hats made of heavy woven wool. They were all smoking long thin bamboo stemmed pipes, the grey smoke rising in the warm air. Chandler later learned that on special occasions the women wore brightly coloured dresses along with bracelets, necklaces, hairpins and rings to complete the overall look. He was amazed to see that the women were all heavily tattooed on their faces and necks. Many had black spider web designs and as he later found out that the women thought they attracted men, similar to how a spider's web attracted insects. The tattoos were created using thorn needles and an ink made from a mixture of soot, cow bile, plants and pig fat and are a sign of bravery, especially those ones which are the most painful when etched on the neck. He saw a young woman being thrown into a pig pen beside the pigs and Chandler heard the laughter of the women as they rolled her there in the mud and pig excrement, amidst much squealing from the pigs. It was the custom that if a woman refused tattoos she would be thrown in beside the pigs until she capitulated and agreed to the ceremony.

Chandler was greeted by the women as they ran out to him and shook him by the hand but strangely, they did not look at him in the eye. He was touched repeatedly about the hands to much amusement and laughter. He later learned that the women likened him to being boiled as his skin was so white. He was ushered to a house and presented to a man who wore a white turban, sported a black beard and was clothed in a loose fitted green cotton jacket and trousers over a red open necked shirt and dark brown sandals on his feet. His face was dark brown in colour and weathered with many lines on leather hard skin and appeared to have the main authority of the village, one of the elders. The languages could not be understood but the gestures of the elder were of friendship and welcome. In the years that followed, Chandler integrated with the village people, learned the difficult K'Cho language and adhered to the animism religion and the belief that there is a remote creator god with the ability to protect one against ultimate adversity. The K'Cho believe the universe is populated by all sorts of spirits; some of them being great and deitylike, whilst some having dominion over domains and some appearing as wandering ghosts, demons, and less personifiable beings. Also, since all living things have a soul, they must be given consideration, especially as to how animals can be killed, eaten or used for humans' subsistence requirements. The village of Pan Auge due to its high altitude and being inaccessible, especially in the rainy season with its steep valleys, road and tracks being flooded, had evaded the preaching's of the Christian missionaries, who in large part had converted many of the lower villages in the Mindat region.

Chandler met regularly with the village 'Shaman' who was a woman and who acted as an intermediary between the human community and the local animals, plants, mountains, rivers, forests, winds and weather patterns, all of whom are felt to have their own ability to perceive or feel things. She possessed the skills to find out where the soul of an ill or deranged person had wandered and to source individual instances of disease or imbalance within the community. These skills were due to her practice of balancing the exchange between

the human community and the wider collective of animate beings in which the community is consolidated. The Shaman led him in the teachings of the animism religion and the social conventions of the K'Cho peoples: a gentle handshake is a common greeting and direct eye contact is often viewed as a challenge rather than attentiveness or politeness. Respect must be paid to elders by walking with the body bent at the waist, crossing both arms over the chest, sitting at a lower level than the elders, and not pointing feet at anyone, as it is a sign of disrespect. The husband is considered the head of the household, the decision maker, and breadwinner. Women are expected to do all of the housekeeping including cooking and tending to the children.

As surely as night follows day, it was inevitable that the villagers expected Chandler to select a bride and so he met Eindra. Like many courtships, it started with eye contact which to the K'Cho peoples is considered impolite but in the case of love, unavoidable. The age difference of twenty years was of no consequence and love at first sight is rare and even rarer when two souls become soul mates. Chandler had built a house at the edge of the village and during the build, Eindra and her friends would arrive to watch his labours and giggle when he appeared stripped to the waist, due to the intense heat, and carrying cut bamboo for the flooring. He was struggling to complete the house as the monsoon season was approaching. It starts at the end of May and brings heavy rains until the dry season commences in November with lower temperatures and then the heat returns in February, reaching the highest temperatures of over 40°C by May. Fortunately, Chandler had made a close friend called Bakti, so named by his parents because he was obedient, and he helped him finish the build - soon after the monsoon arrived. The rains flooded the ground and the villagers' retreated to their houses and watched the waters running underneath and around the pole supports.

It was much to Chandler's surprise when he opened his door one morning and there sitting on the porch and out of the rain, sat Eindra. Eye contact was made but he closed the door lest he appeared impolite. The next morning, she was there again, and again every morning, until he finally picked up the courage to speak to her and yet watchful that her parents did not see him. In the coming months the rain meant many porch liaisons and as their love for each other blossomed, he asked her to marry him. As was the custom, Bakti as his best friend, would carry the news of their love and intention to marry to Chandler's parents for their permission but as he had none, Bakti substituted for Chandler's parents and carried the news and a bottle of alcohol called 'Zuthawl pia' to Eindra's parents. Her mother and father welcomed the expected engagement news, drank the alcohol and planned a date for the wedding with Bakti. There were no obstacles other than the monsoon, so it was decided they would marry in November during the dry season.

The entire village turned out for the ceremony and it was a grand affair. It was held in Eindra's parents house, which thanks to their prosperity, was one of the largest in the village with a sizeable main room. A long table was set with serving bowls of rice, corn, and millet as well as vegetables, cooked pork and alcohol. In the animism religion, U Min Kyaw is one of the 37 Nats (spirits of the universe) and is featured in the ceremony as he is associated with gambling, drink and merriment. The Shaman marries the couple and combines their union with U Min Kyaw's spirit to satisfy their human desires. These superhuman Nats, when correctly propitiated, aid

worshippers in accomplishing important tasks, vanquishing enemies and so on. The K'Cho peoples believe that Nats can bring luck and prosperity to those who appease and worship them and bring danger and misfortune to those who do not respect them or don't believe in them. Alcohol, which was a sign of status, was drunk in copious amounts, amid much story-telling, jokes and laughter. Another status symbol is tobacco and so the room was filled with smoke from the men's pipes whilst the women smoked it in their bamboo pipes with clay bowls and the subsequent nicotine charged water drippings collected in small gourd containers and kept about the person. Called thibur and invariably used by the elderly, it is widely used as a stimulant, being held in the mouth and then spat out.

After the ceremony, Chandler and Eindra retired to his house and so began their life together. Her father presented him with 2 hectares of ground on the sloping hills to cultivate and with the help of his fellow neighbours to get him started, he set to work cutting down the trees using an axe to clear the ground. He burned the cut trees for the ash to spread as fertiliser on the ground and learned to rotate the land to allow it to regenerate. He grew dry hill rice, maize and millet for their staple diets along with fruit trees, melons, pumpkins and various peas and beans. Cotton was grown for the women to weave on back-strap tension looms and vegetable dyes were used to colour the clothes. Tobacco was also grown and was cured in hot sand. Chandler kept pigs, fowl, water buffalo, horses and especially gayal, a semi-domesticated wild oxen forest browser, bred for meat and for ritual sacrifice. He also enjoyed keeping honey bee hives. His favourite dogs, Chicata and Mirish, he used for hunting black and brown bears, all kinds of deer and mountain goats. Elephants and jungle cats were also hunted but Chandler took no part in such actions, much to the consternation of his fellow villagers. He learned to use open-hearth double-bamboo pistols bellows to manufacture tools and weapons. Chandler, like the other men was expected to defend the village against outsiders from other villages that threatened them. Warfare was common and invariably caused through disputes over women, essential salt wells and usually property claims stemming from marriage alliances and tributary relations. He found the taking of human heads gruesome, especially celebrating them in rituals to tame the resulting dangerous spirits.

Eindra did all the domestic chores as well as the construction of bamboo and cane mats and baskets of all sorts, red pottery and the weaving of blankets, loincloths, and women's skirts and blouses. She was an expert in the creation of silver-amalgam jewellery, such as bracelets, belts, earrings, rings, and necklaces hung with imported beads and silver rupee coins, as well as brass hairpins and other items. The village epitomised a primitive communist culture where everyone was equal. Some who had more animals and a larger house were considered wealthier but nevertheless, equal in status. The village elders were the advisors to whom everyone looked for guidance whilst the Shaman of the village, who was a woman, performed the sacred rituals to encourage and discourage bad spirits. One of the first lessons that Chandler learned, was the day he picked up a knife to prepare food; it was much frowned upon by his wife and when the news got out, he was laughed at and in some cases, for a short while, shunned by the villagers. Needless to say, for the rest of his life, he stayed away from cooking.

Eindra's life with Chandler was a simple and loving one. They found contentment within each other's company and enjoyed their land, the flora and the wildlife. Even the monsoon was welcomed, and they would often sit in the comfort of their porch to listen to the heavy rainfall on the roof of their house and watch it change the landscape. It brought with it a strange pleasure, a feeling of security, as they sat and smoked their pipes. Time passed but their love for each other did not diminish and their only ambition was tending to their land to ensure it was properly maintained. A child was denied to them but they enjoyed the children of Eindra's relatives and shared in the love as they watched them grow through the years to have offspring of their own. In the warmer months, they and others from the village would make the arduous journey to Mindat to trade goods but Chandler could not wait to leave that heavily populated town to return to the sanctuary of the village and his home. The bond between Chandler and Eindra grew stronger and stronger. Their gradual descent into old age was not an obstacle as the youth of Eindra's relatives tended to their needs and near the end of their lives, they would spend more time sitting on their porch together, smoking their pipes and enjoying the changing seasons. At the end of their lives, it was Eindra who was first to pass away. She suffered lung cancer for many weeks and she died in their bed and in Chandler's arms. He kissed her brow and wept.

And so, I helped him home from the graveyard and sat him upon his chair in the main room to grieve; he looked around and as he embraced his memories and the pain in his heart, he silently passed away. I watched his soul rise up and leave and I knew that his soul mate, Eindra, was waiting for him.

Chapter 15 - Citizenship

It was a fine warm day as I entered through the gates and walked amongst the beautiful trees, shrubs, and wildflowers. The vibrant colours and greenery provided a splendid reflection of nature at its best and much of the flora surrounding me had propagated without any human interference. The cemetery was established in 1839 and it contained over 170,000 occupants in some 53,000 graves. Highgate is renowned, not only as a cemetery but as a nature reserve. I felt at home amongst its elaborately carved tombs, vaults and winding paths dug into hillsides. The pièce de résistance for me was the impressive collection of Victorian mausoleums and gravestones. The sun was high and many small birds were perched on the tops of tombstones heating their feet whilst others sat up in the trees, seeking shade. I was there to visit my old friend and his grave boasted a very nice headstone but unlike the others in the cemetery, it bore upon it the image of his head made out of bronze. Karl had not been an ordinary man and the people of many countries, had loved and hated him. He had died in 1883 and had left a legacy that would be forever debated by politicians and philosophers for its correct interpretation. In that moment, I decided to meet with him again and so I called upon him at his home at 41 Maitland Park Road, Northwest London.

Karl was born in 1818 in Germany into a relatively affluent Hebrew family but later, as an adult and due to his political philosophy and subsequent writings, he became stateless when he fell into conflict with Germany, then France. After a short spell in Brussels, he finally settled in England in 1849. Karl lived in the Camden area of London, known as Kentish Town but it was very run down and housed poverty-stricken families. The mission held their first services there in 1877 and as their funding grew, a mission house, chapel and vicarage were built to assist the people. I was welcomed into his house with a warm embrace and ushered into his study. Jenny, his wife, made us a nice cup of tea with biscuits and so we sat down at a small table to enjoy the moment. Jenny left us to our debate and Karl spoke first, *"well my old friend, I am glad to see you are in good health."* I smiled and replied, *"it has been awhile but I am refreshed by your company and I have missed our conversations."* I already knew his future; in the following year, Jenny would depart her life and leave him to suffer a prolonged debilitating illness and eventual death some 3 years hence. Although he and his wife lived in poverty, they seemed content. I went on, *"I hope you are both keeping well and happy"* he nodded and lifted a cup of tea to his lips. He exclaimed, *"ah, simple pleasures like a nice cup of tea, bring a warm glow to your heart and I come to welcome them, whereas in more affluent occasions, I had taken them for granted."* I listened intently, as he went on, *"it's funny but as you become older and poorer, your world shrinks down into a microcosm whereby the little things, like a cup of tea or a simple walk in the park, are magnified in their significance to play an important part of your everyday life."*

I could detect a sadness in his words and perhaps as he neared the end, he felt that all his philosophy and writings had changed very little of the world and were to no avail in the long-term scheme of things. I felt I had to enlighten him somewhat and lift his spirits, *"Karl, I have a feeling that in the future, your philosophy*

and your writings will become recognised for their worth.” He sighed, “I am not so sure, the wealth divide between the bourgeoisie elite and the proletariat is growing; socialism is the only solution and by default the greed and avarice of the bourgeoisie elite will lead to revolution through social uprising.” I countered, “it’s a great pity that capitalism and socialism cannot meet somewhere in the middle bound by a controlling disciplined force, but I can assure you that in the future, a country will emerge which will practice such a doctrine. It will be ruled by a ‘Confucian Government’ whose leader has a long-term vision whereby his society will develop and prosper under his direction. He will incorporate traditional values of ritual, filial piety, loyalty, community, and humaneness.” He sighed again, “I hope you are right but for the moment, let us set aside politics, enjoy our companionship and lighter conversation.” He lifted the teapot and poured out the tea.

Karl’s philosophy, came from a warm heart with the best of intentions and his hedonistic utilitarianism ethics were profound. He believed that to bring forth pleasure to the proletariat masses, the people would have to overthrow a few bourgeoisie elites. This act of revolution and the pleasure it later produced, outweighed the pain inflicted on the few. His philosophy wrongly assumed that the proletariat were like him and would rule a new socialist country fairly. We sat in our discussions that afternoon and I was not sad when I left, for I would see Karl on many more occasions; in his youth, in his old age and enjoy his company.

I moved on and settled in a moment at the scene of a grand parade with rows of young teenage soldiers stepping forward in unison to the tune of marching music. I could see the pride in their faces as the crowds of people at the side of the road clapped and cheered them on. They were boys and girls, still at school but now also part of the army reserves and some were as young as 15 years of age. Their uniforms were neatly pressed with crisp knife-like edges on the front of the jacket sleeves and trousers and their black ebony boots were highly polished. Each one had volunteered to become an army cadet, as was expected of them by their school and government. They reminded me of the socialist ‘Adolf Hitler March of German Youth’ in 1937 but this was Chicago, the United States of America in 2017. These recruits were part of the bigger picture for the US army required over 90,000 young people a year to maintain its military presence in over 700 military bases in numerous countries. Young people are encouraged to join the army by the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps. Almost 500,000 cadets between 14 and 18 are enrolled in the JROTC and the program targets high schools in disadvantaged urban areas and young people from ethnic minorities by offering free education. The organisation is funded by the Pentagon to the tune of over several hundred million dollars per year.

I wondered what Karl would have thought about ‘citizenship’ especially as this was an army representing the bourgeoisie ruling elite which embraced ‘colonialism’ through a capitalist agenda and used military force to deliver it. Throughout the world, America was supplying arms, overthrowing governments, running proxy wars and consuming the assets of other countries. However, their rule was running out as America was heavily into government and consumer debt which was unrecoverable and their dollar, the reserve currency of the world (within twenty years) would be turned to ‘junk status’ by the new global superpower that was China. The collapse of American society was inevitable, leading to anarchy and civil war, unless the Americans made the

excuse to start a World War. China always had a one-hundred-year plan and in 2017, their congress agreed to start building a new silk road, linking by road and rail, the countries of the Asian continent, including Russia and India to Europe and the Mediterranean. In the following years they started to deal in oil contracts throughout Asia in their own currency, the Yuan, rather than the American dollar. The socialist communist, capitalist society of China with its strict educational disciplines, gave birth to brilliant engineers, scientists and entrepreneurs. It was ruled by a man with an iron hand and he had the foresight to plan ahead. He encouraged infrastructural investment in 3rd world countries and the Chinese proceeded to influence the development of the world - not through war but by mutual workers co-operation.

It was a sad irony that Karl who was seen as the 'forerunner of communism' would not be around to see a great 'capitalist' country, the United States of America, brought to its knees by its own bourgeoisie elite. I revisited Karl in 1883 and stood at his chair as he slowly succumbed to pleurisy. His excessive nocturnal work had induced insomnia which he fought with narcotics and his love of smoked fish, pickled cucumbers and caviar washed down by fine wines and liqueurs, followed by bad-quality cigars, had finally brought his life to an end.

When his soul emerged from his body in its blue translucent form, he saw me standing there and smiled. I watched him ascend in a shaft of white light as he took the next step on his journey.

Chapter 16 - The Solomon Paradox

I left that cesspool of a city called London and breathed the fresh air of the countryside. I came upon black electric gates at the entrance to a private estate and for a brief moment, I stood there to take in the view and to watch the red sun starting to set behind it on the far horizon. I entered and walked down a red gravel driveway which meandered through an avenue of large oak trees leading to an elaborate 16th century mansion. I arrived to stand in front of it and saw green ivy creeping up the front walls and above in the roof eaves, evil looking gargoyles were staring down at me. The mansion had witnessed many delights and many mishaps and now in the 21st century it still stood upright and proud. A barn owl announced the coming darkness and the moon slowly crept out from behind the clouds to shed its light on the wooded scene. Nearby, I could hear the sound of a river which ran through the property and the moonlight glistened in the reflection of the water. Rows of stone steps at the front of the mansion led up to a huge wooden panelled door which was closed and locked to the elements.

I entered the house into a massive entrance hall with a high ceiling and a large majestic staircase winding its way upstairs and beckoning me to follow. Inside the house all was still and the fading light of the day crept out of every window from every room. In the top hallway the attic trapdoor was firmly closed and yet it did not stop me as I entered through the ceiling. It was a spacious attic with decent headroom due to the tall angled beams forming the triangles to support the roof and the base was floored with heavy duty wooden planks. There was no lighting and everywhere hung heavy dusty cobwebs which were lit briefly by moonlight entering through a small skylight window. In the sparse light, I could see a green coloured metal cistern tank of sizeable proportions standing in the centre. I walked over and touched the side and I could detect the life force as it vibrated through the metal.

I saw a slow drip of fluid running down one side of the tank. It was coming from the toe of a shoe and behind the shoe, I could see scores in the metalwork where the heel had dug into the paint as it frantically changed its mind. The shoe was still jerking up and down but now very slowly as the flesh within it was dying. I looked up and gazed upon the face of Stephanie Constantine, a young girl with her eyes pleading and yet her face was contorted as the rope from the attic cross beams drew even tighter across her throat. In her fright she had wet herself as her muscles relaxed in her death throes and I could see the urine stain mark running down her skirt onto her left leg and shoe. She was 16 years of age with beautiful blue eyes, strawberry blonde hair and wearing a lovely short sleeved pink dress with a floral pattern of coloured flowers. Her shoes were patented high gloss black leather over little white cotton ankle socks. She had long given up trying to undo the clothes rope from around her neck and her arms and hands were hanging limply at her side. The left shoe jerked very slowly as the last remnants of her nerves played out her final moments.

I went down to the house and to her bedroom to read a note Stephanie had left for her father's attention. He was a stockbroker who worked in London and during the working week he resided in a luxury penthouse flat whilst returning to his mansion and his daughter in the Cotswolds at the week-end. Several years before, he and his wife Jennifer had purchased 'Brooksfield Hall' as a long-term investment but shortly afterwards his wife was diagnosed with cancer and had passed away. He was in the process of selling the mansion and had left his daughter to look after it and to facilitate access for the estate agent and any prospective buyers to view the property. Stephanie's bedroom had a grand décor which included pink wallpaper with patches of white flowers on the material and a white curtain set. The floor carpet was coloured light pink in a deep lush pile whilst her king-size bed bore a white satin cover with pink tassels touching the floor. The white satin pillows proudly displayed several stuffed toy animals and each one had been a birthday present from her mother, given with a piece of jewellery clasped in its arms. I could see a badger, a small lion, a rabbit, two cute white hairy sheep and several 'Steiff' bears in various modes of expensive dress. Against the wall stood a mahogany dresser with all the dolls that she had grown up with standing on the surface. In the corner an expensive Bose LCD colour smart television stood on the top of a smoked glass hi-fi cabinet containing a Bose Hi-Fi system and a Bose Blu-ray player. Stephanie's Apple iPhone lay on the top of her bed and her dressing table proudly displayed her silver hairbrush and comb set with a neat row of expensive pure perfume bottles standing like miniature soldiers at the back against the large oval swing mirror. Her handbag sat open on top of the dressing-table stool with several crumpled wet tissues and alongside it, she had left the note.

It read that Stephanie had lapsed into a deep depression. She had been unable to find any contentment in her life and her father's generous allowance and all her material possessions could not provide her with a feeling of purpose. Her friends were shallow and on social media they were consumed by their addictive attention to feminism, world conservation and politics. Try as she might, she could not extricate herself from the constant analysis pertaining to her philosophy of life and in doing so, forgot how to live. The blackness of depression finally drowned out all rational thought and Stephanie, amid a flood of tears, wrote the suicide note and took her own life. In the scheme of things, Stephanie's death was no more than that of an ant; for sure her father would mourn her passing and perhaps a few of her friends, but then the human ants always move on. Mankind has always thought itself above the ants but mankind is no different, the rules, morals, disciplines and aspirations that bring contentment, apply the same to an ant colony as they do to the society of man.

I remember the words of Solomon *"for in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow, because all his days his task is painful and grievous; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is vanity, unteachable from infancy to tomb, this is the first and main characteristic of mankind. Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income, this too is meaningless."* Solomon was the wisest of men and also the most foolish because for all the wealth that was given to him, his lust for women, his desire for treasure and luxuries brought him happiness and yet unhappiness and disfavour – therein lay the paradox.

I left Stephanie's bedroom and went back into London where a crowd of teenage boys were gathered around a young boy lying on the ground. Every crowd has a leader and this crowd was no different as Douglas Moodie held court and his voice could be heard above the rest. On the ground lay Peter O'Brien who was small for his age and looked younger than his 12 years. He was huddled in a ball and trying to avoid the kicks being laid into him by Moodie. Poor Peter, he had sustained several years of abuse from Moodie and also on social media where he had been ridiculed for his stature and his immaturity. Nearly, every afternoon he was at the receiving end as he tried to make his way home from school and it was always Moodie who picked on him. Despite the hurt both physical and mentally, Peter did not utter a word to his parents, his teachers or his friends. His father's answer to the bruises was typical of an insular society, *"stand up for yourself because no one else will."* I watched the leer in Moodie's face as he laid into the side of the young boy with his booted foot and the laughter as he struck home in the desired place. His friends jeered and laughed at seeing the registered pain and the cries from Peter who was looking around for help. Adults turned their heads as they passed, whilst young schoolkids snapped selfies with their mobile phones against the backdrop of viciousness. Above the cacophony of screams and laughter, Moodie stood tall as he continued to reign more bruises down on Peter O'Brien.

I called in Thanatos who appeared at my side smiling and I remained impressed by his manner of dress. Surely, he was one of my finest Ad Messores: clean shaven, the beautiful tailored crisp black suit, black shirt, black tie and highly polished black shoes but as usual, his red socks were too loud. Thanatos carried a beautiful walking stick with a gleaming ebony shaft and fitted with a solid silver handle. We watched as Peter gathered his strength and standing up, he pushed Moodie hard in the stomach and turned to run. Moodie stumbled backwards and then started to give chase when suddenly another young boy who was riding a pedal cycle on the pavement, struck Moodie hard, whereby he stumbled sideways and after knocking down a woman who was pushing a pram, he fell onto the roadway under the wheels of a heavy lorry. I heard the loud bang as Moodie's head exploded like a burst ball under the left front wheel and his brains were splattered onto the pavement and over some of the pedestrians. It is strange how people try to wipe red stains from their clothing before they finally realise that it is blood and brain tissue they are wiping with their hands. Moodie's legs were jerking around the roadway in nervous disposition as the lorry driver jumped out of the cab and pulled the body out from underneath the lorry. The legs were quickly let go, when he realised that Moodie's head was gone, leaving only a flap of skin and hair still joined to the back of his neck. The black translucent shape of Moodie emerged from his dead body and Thanatos, drawing his sword from his walking stick, cleaved downward across its chest, splitting it open as Moodie's soul screamed in its termination and was turned to dark matter which floated away in the breeze. I watched the teenage friends gathering around Moodie; not to praise him but to take more selfies of themselves standing alongside his body.

I bade Thanatos farewell and I returned to the attic to conclude my business with Stephanie Constantine in her moment of death. I watched as the blue translucent bloom of her soul appeared in the attic and it stood staring at me. She was as I expected, somewhat dazed and after looking around, she turned and saw her body

hanging on the rope with its open eyes now glazed in death. Stephanie realised that in her Catholic religion she had committed a mortal sin and taken her life, the property of God, a gift to the world. The opportunity to do penance and repent in life, had passed. I heard her thoughts, *"Holy Father, please forgive me for my sin."* Although I was not her God, her words made visible the purity in her soul and were not wasted on me. She became startled when a bright shaft of white light suddenly broke through the attic roof and lit up the area in front of her. Stephanie made to avoid the light but the white translucent bloom of a female figure, glided down and pulled her in. I watched as Stephanie and her mother ascended in the light and accelerated out into the Universe.

Chapter 17 - The Triangulum Protégé

I decided to visit that old whore called Babylon to once again walk in her beauty and admire her architecture. I entered through the 'Ishtar Gate' which was built and dedicated to the Babylonian Goddess Ishtar with its construction of blue glazed brick and alternating rows of bas-relief with dragons and bulls, symbolising the gods Marduk and Adad. Throughout the centuries, I have seen the many wonders of the world, and 'The Hanging Gardens of Babylon' were indeed wonderous. They were planted within the tiered infrastructure of the city, rising amongst staircases, majestic columns and fine esplanades and in the distance forming a massive backdrop, stood the 'Tower of Babel'. Eventually, it would all disappear and fade into mythical statement. For now, she slumbered in her splendour and I welcomed the cool breeze of the evening but in another dimension, which man calls his future, she would be the spark that ignites the world. Tonight, her beauty and the scent of flowers assaulted my senses and I was well pleased. Babylon was divided by the Euphrates River and as I stood at its edge, I watched the setting sun shimmering red in the reflection on the waters. She was a fine city and so modern and cosmopolitan in comparison to others throughout the world.

As the sun finally set, I decided to move on and in that moment, I arrived at the ancient Persian City of Susa near the Zagros Mountains, east of the Tigris River. Susa did not display the rising grandeur of Babylon but nevertheless there was beauty to behold, for she lay on flatlands and as I stood on the mountainside and looked down the valley, I could see the moonlight reflecting from the roof tiles on the houses. Columns of grey smoke were rising in the night air and I could smell food being cooked for the evening meals. I stood for a while to absorb the scene and on looking up into the clear black night sky, I saw myriads of stars glinting in the darkness with the 'Triangulum Constellation' and its brightest stars, Beta, Gamma Trianguli and Alpha Trianguli forming a narrow triangulation, not unlike the island of Sicily. I absorbed the visual stimulation and was further humbled by my recognition; for in those houses below were inhabitants who shared the simple pleasures of life. Amongst them, was my friend Mordecai, who had been banished from Jerusalem to Susa but he was content, because as a Hebrew in a strange land he had found favour with King Ahasuerus. My friend had brought up his orphaned cousin, Hadassah and when young virgins were sought by the King, she was taken into his presence and made his Queen. So, it was that I descended to Susa to one of the more opulent houses, to visit Mordecai.

As I neared his door, it opened and he stood there smiling, *"I knew you were coming, a full moon and the smell of good food seems to bring you down from the mountainside to my house"* and he gave me a huge hug. I was ushered inside and his wife, bade me sit down whilst she washed the dust from my feet. After I was refreshed, I sat with him at the table and we broke challah bread and enjoyed the meal which included a baba ganoush appetizer, chicken soup, a side dish of rosh hashanah tzimmes, grilled chicken salad with citrus honey dressing and finally honey cake with lemon drizzle. The meal was complimented with a fine sangria, made from red wine, brandy, orange juice, lemon and topped with mint leaves. Afterwards, we settled down in our chairs at

the open fire and for a while, we both gazed into the flickering flames and watched the smoke rising in the chimney. Finally, he raised his head and remarked, *"I am content and I welcome your conversation my dear friend, what shall we discuss this fine evening?"* I opened with the remark, *"are you aware that the Babylonians are mapping the stars in the night sky and are leaders in astronomy; it looks like they might find heaven?"* Mordecai gave me a wry smile and replied, *"so you are baiting me again, my old friend, the Babylonians can map the stars and the constellations but it is unlikely they will find heaven or confirm the messiah will appear in Mesopotamia or Persia?"*

I countered, *"the ancients believed that the world was a flat disk floating in water with the heavens above and the underworld below but today the Greeks hold that the world is a sphere at the centre of seven concentric heavens, one for each visible planet plus the sun and the moon with the realm of God in an eighth and the highest heaven. Tomorrow, the Babylonians will put forward a new theory and so it will go on throughout the centuries as man becomes more enlightened; perhaps tomorrow, the Babylonians will claim the 'Triangulum Constellation' is heaven?"* He laughed out loud, *"I think a cunning wolf has come down from the mountainside, I am not going to be drawn into your trap but tell me, when do you think the messiah will appear?"*

I have to explain that Mordecai was a devout Hebrew and he maintained the oral tradition of 'handing down' the Hebrew knowledge of Law, Culture and Customs which would eventually be written down into the Talmud which is the repository of thousands of years of Jewish wisdom, and the oral law, which is as ancient and significant as the written law contained in the five books of the Torah, part of the twenty-four books of the Tanakh, the Mikra Bible. He believed that the soul consists of three parts which are called nefesh (rest), ruach (wind) and neshama (breath). God's exhaling a soul can be compared to a glassblower forming a vessel. The breath (neshama) first leaves his lips, travels as a wind (ruach) and finally comes to rest (nefesh) in the vessel. Of these three levels of the soul, neshama (breath) is therefore the highest and closes to God, while nefesh (rest) is that aspect of the soul residing in the body. Ruach (wind) stands between the two, binding man to his spiritual source. It is for this reason that 'Divine Inspiration' is called Ruach HaKodesh.

The Hebrew eschatology was that a Messiah born of flesh and blood and of human parents, would appear one day and commence the Messianic Era and usher in a new element of peace and bliss to the world whereby the Hebrews would be freed to pursue their spiritual goals. It is not a moment of miracles, where the rules of nature are overturned. Rather the world will see a peace amongst the nations, with the Jewish people living in their land under their own sovereignty, unencumbered by persecution and anti-Semitism, free to pursue their spiritual goals. This Messiah would complete his work on Earth and die like other men. Mordecai believed in the 'World of Souls' an intermediate dimension, where Hebrew souls go after death and exist in a disembodied state where they are judged by God. The ultimate reward for a Hebrew is 'The World of Resurrection' where the body and the righteous soul are reunited on 'The Final Day of Judgement' (after the death of the Messiah) and to live eternally in a truly perfect state. All souls were created at the beginning and are stored in a celestial treasury until the moment of birth. The soul has its first attachment to the body from

the moment of conception and remains with it until the moment of death. Death is thus often referred to in Hebrew as 'departure of the soul' (Yetziat HaNeshama).

I smiled and replied, *"your faith is indeed a strong one and thanks to Moses, you have your commandments and your morality but surely you have come to recognise that you are a prophet, a messiah?"* Mordecai, looked perplexed and questioned my reply, *"I am not the messiah, I have no ambitions to lead my people into a Messianic Era, I would not even know where to begin?"* I countered, *"you have already begun and there are millions like you who have also begun. For you have recognised that evil versus goodness, exists in your soul and in that constant battle, you have lived your life in the path of righteousness; you are a messiah that shines on the souls of others. People will come to recognise you as a leader to be followed in your philosophy and like you, there are and will be, many messiahs throughout the centuries of man. Some will glow large and bright in the eyes of the people; some will perish at the hands of the people and some will die in obscurity; aye and some will be infants who have shone their innocence brightly but for a moment."* I could see that Mordecai was nodding his head in partial agreement but his expression was that of a man deep in thought. He waved his right hand and bade his wife into the room to set down a dish of fresh dates and we sat back in our chairs to enjoy them. Eventually, Mordecai responded, *"I agree that evil and righteousness reside within us; that is part of the Hebrew culture and I recognise that only those souls who follow the righteous path will be resurrected with their bodies on 'The Final Day of Judgement' but what you are stating is that there will not be a messiah who ushers in the Messianic Era of peace and bliss for my people; that cannot be correct?"*

I decided to disseminate his cultural beliefs and replied, *"you have accepted that evil and righteousness reside within you and you believe that God exhaled his breath, to breathe your soul into your body; are you therefore not a demigod? Are you not aware of the gnosis within you where it signifies a knowledge or insight into man's real nature and that you possess the 'Divine Spark'? A God born of God does not require a body to traverse the Universe on death; are all humans not therefore by definition, a God? The Hebrew belief is that for the first 12 months after death, until the body decomposes, the soul has no permanent resting place and thus experiences disorientation. It therefore hovers over the body. During this period, the soul is aware of and identifies with the decomposition of the flesh. The Talmud thus teaches you that 'worms are as painful to the dead as needles in the flesh of the living' - his flesh grieves for him. The Kabbalists call this Chibut HaKever, 'punishment of the grave'. The Hebrew recognises that what happens to the body in the grave can be even more painful than Gehenom (Hell). I am at odds with Chibut HaKever and Gehenom as I know that evil has no part in the Universe and the unrighteous soul is destroyed on death."*

Mordecai was not offended and laughed out loud at my statements. He responded, *"we agree to disagree but our roads are the same for in the end only the righteous soul will prevail. I think it would be nice to traverse and see the wonders of the Universe or heaven as I know it. You are indeed a man of the Zagros Mountains for surely their great heights have placed you closer to God, a modern-day Moses?"* I smiled and replied, *"I am not a 'Moses' but in the centuries of man to follow, people who know me, will come to believe in the enlightenment*

and the ideals of protecting the natural world, the development of arts and sciences and to focus on this life and how to make the most of it. Enlightenment is the ultimate goal with principles that highlight truth, integrity, humility and righteousness. The human race does not need deities or fear eternal punishment to distinguish right from wrong and it will come to recognise that there is conflict between 'good and evil' within the human soul and that all actions have consequences."

I continued, *"when you travel out into the Universe, you must remember to visit 'The Triangulum Constellation' for it is truly wonderful."* Before he could reply, we were interrupted in our conversation by his wife who bade us to bed, much to Mordecai's annoyance. Later, as I lay down to sleep, I heard Mordecai reciting the 'Kriat Shema al Hamitah', a Hebrew night prayer, *"praised are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who brings sleep to my eyes, slumber to my eyelids. May it be your will, Lord my God and God of my ancestors, that I lie down in peace and that I arise in peace....."* His prayer continued unabated but his words faded as I fell asleep.

I did not hold Mordecai's religious beliefs to account for I have long known, ever since my eighth passing, that his Hebrew religion favours the righteous. Throughout his lifetime, we would hold many conversations; aye, and in argument and I would be there in the end by his side, when his soul transcended the Universe. Mordecai was wrong in his assumption that I was a man from the Zagros Mountains, a modern-day Moses but as I often visited him, I made him none the wiser.

Chapter 18 - The Messiah Analogy

In the 21st century, philosophy is practiced by the masses on a daily basis and every word that is spoken or written is carefully studied and interpreted for truth versus belief and as is often the case, the innocence of the words is lost in translation. The social media sites are the destructors of society and probably the core source for creating human conflict. After they have posted on Twitter or Facebook or speak on their mobile phone; even in conversation on the street; their interaction is analysed; sometimes throughout the world. To think that two thousand years ago, nobody gave it all much thought except the philosophers who enjoyed messing with the minds of the young. Today, the philosophers can be found on the television in a maelstrom of political news, political debates and on the internet as professional bloggers, vloggers, wearing their mantles of activists, anarchists and environmentalists. Grist for my mill as it all leads to a degeneration of society as their corrupted minds clash with the purity of their souls.

Philosophy can be a dangerous occupation as Socrates found out. I often visit him in 389 BC and for me, it is but a matter of command to place me there. I enjoy his company in my human form and we share a repast, good conversation and argument. He had come a long way as a stonemason, then a hoplite in the army and fighting in Peloponnesian amongst other battles. I admired his philosophic abilities despite his academic shortcomings but I often cautioned him that philosophy should not be taught to the young. He did admit that in youth he had given it no thought and had only turned to philosophy in older age when he started down the path of epistemology, the study of knowledge in relation to logical discourse; truth versus belief and justification with a pinch of skepticism. I admit, I became fed up, when everything I said to him became a subject for his epistemology and led to many an argument as he attempted to force his opinion on me.

I concluded from our many meetings that Socrates had allowed his philosophy to bring his mind into conflict with his soul whereby ultimately, he thought too much of himself and had forgotten how to live. His philosophy outpourings disbanded those in his company and in business and politics; it also created many enemies. Socrates was a fierce critic of democracy and it became well known in political circles but it was his persistent teachings of his philosophy to the young that the Greeks regarded as a serious issue, especially as they thought he was pandering to them and making a fortune from their fees. As he neared 70 years of age, his celebrity status led to hubris and he was charged with corrupting the youth of the city-state and impiety against the pantheon of Athens. His support of Sparta a rival to Athens did not help his cause and his social and moral criticism of the Athens elite was one step too far. He was referred to as the 'gadfly' of the state but it was his persistent condemnation of 'immorality' within his region that finally sealed his doom. At his trial he demonstrated to the court that they were more concerned with their families, careers, and political responsibilities when they ought to be worried about the welfare of their souls. He told them that the gods had singled him out as a divine emissary and that virtue should be taught.

At his trial he related to his conclusion to Chaerephon's question to Pythia, the Oracle with the ear of the God Apollo, *"who is wiser than Socrates"*, whereby she replies, *"No-one."* Socrates, exclaimed, *"I was fully aware that I knew absolutely nothing, gods do not tell lies."* He further outlined that this pre-occupation with Chaerephon's question led him to seek the wisdom of respected politicians, statesmen, poets, and artisans and Socrates stated that he is wiser, *"for though in all probability neither of us knows anything, they thought they did when they did not, whereas I neither knew anything nor imagined I did."* Socrates concluded *"death is either a state of nothingness and utter unconsciousness, or there is a change and the soul migrates to another world; indeed, death is welcomed if I can then converse with Orpheus, Musaeus, Hesiod and Homer but if it is anything like a sleep in which there is no disturbances by dreams; anyone would agree that it is a pleasant state of being."* However, his death could have been avoided had he chosen exile but then to be separated from elenchus by exile was a fate worse than death. For Socrates, philosophical or intellectual virtues represented the most important qualities for a person to have and formed a common thread in his teachings. Socrates stressed that *"the unexamined life is not worth living and ethical virtue is the only thing that matters."* Those in power, including the masses, could not accept his concepts of virtue, friendship and community but above all - one who stood above them. Socrates was sentenced to death and made to drink a poison called hemlock.

Socrates was a man who sought importance in himself, a man who had to justify his existence and a place in the world. For him, a stonemason and a hoplite in the army were of no importance, he sought greater standing. Celebrity status accelerated his boldness and he rallied against the elite of Greek society. He used virtue and the purity of the soul as the driving force against the persistent condemnation of his definition of 'immorality' within his region. He relished in his teachings of the young as he coerced them into following his ways and sought financial reward for his control over them. Socrates thought himself a messiah, a saviour or a liberator of a group of people and he bathed in their adulation but he paid a heavy price for his hubris.

History always repeats itself, but for a reason; it is like the man who repeats his statement to ensure that the audience has taken in its value. It was a natural progression that Yeshua, some four hundred and twenty-nine years later, would take up the mantle of virtue and blend it with Christianity. He paid the same price as Socrates but his death on the cross was decided by the Hebrews who pardoned a murderer called Barabbas rather than save a virtuous philosopher who preached his brand of philosophy within their society.

Down through the centuries, I have known other great philosophers like Socrates and Yeshua. Virtue is the cornerstone of their philosophy for through the natural process of thought the 'man of a pure soul' will strive to influence others in that direction. Whether it is politics, religion or any other form of human interaction, their teachings always have a core which invariably raises the question of the workings of the mind in relation to the brain, the body and the possibility of a soul. Through this process, by default, they are driven down a path whereby their virtuous persona is haunted by their own human weaknesses. The philosopher whose mind becomes corrupted due to his own failings and his exposure to others may well turn to a dark place from

where he cannot return. In 2020, such a man was Rodger Lindos who had been a lecturer in philosophy but his career was ruined by a young woman who falsely claimed that he had sexually assaulted her. Despite his innocence, he was dismissed from his position and his world disintegrated into a microcosm of its former self as he sat alone in his bedsit and took to drink. In his drunken stupor his virtuous philosophy became distorted and he finally accepted that his life would never be the same again.

Lindos developed an acute hatred for women; any woman who portrayed herself as a feminist or an exhibitionist in the public eye and especially if she disliked men. It was unfortunate for Kim Rollinstad that he saw her on the television cavorting on stage in her 'soft porn' celebrity and he became dismayed at the young people who applauded her. She was a 'pop' singer who mixed raw sexual innuendo in her act whilst any censorship for protecting the morals of young people was nonexistent. I observed the change in Lindos as he sat watching the rampant decadence to which his generation had turned a blind eye. His mind turned as did his soul and the darkness of evil pervaded him.

Kim Rollinstad held them spellbound with her singing but for most, it was the sight of her crotch, with barely a covering, that drew their eye. They cheered as she gyrated on the stage and simulated a sexual act by bending over whilst a man wearing only a loin cloth, held her waist from the rear and moved his bulging erection in and out between her buttocks. Kim was a major celebrity and one of many in that young generation of 2020 who embraced lewd and libidinous exhibitionism as a prolific way of making money. She was their god and her picture was on the walls of their bedrooms. Now Kim was down on the stage and simulating oral sex by placing her mouth in his crotch and moving her head in and out whilst her tongue created a bulge in her cheek; the crowd roared their approval, as the decadence continued.

I watched them file out of the auditorium and for many the following day would bring despair as they dealt with the increasing debt on their credit cards. I went out into a lane at the back and it was a dark wet night with the heavy rain clattering down on the street cobbles and the dustbin lids. The crowds had long dispersed and through the veil of wet darkness a limousine glided into view and its driver parked the vehicle opposite the back door to the auditorium. He switched off the engine and lit a cigarette whilst he waited. I knew who he was and Lindos sat there, knotted up with hatred; he was the protégé of his own psychology. The stage door opened and Kim Rollinstad and her manager ran through the rain to the open rear door of the limousine held ajar by Lindos. I sat in the back and was joined by Samael, one of the Ad Messores, who smiled and gave me the thumbs up. The limousine had only travelled a few yards when Kim reached over to open the small drinks cabinet situated in the back of the driver's seat. I saw the glass panel between the driver and the rear occupants close as Kim opened the cabinet door. Suddenly yellow gas exploded out of the drinks cabinet and filled the rear of the limousine whereby Kim and her manager collapsed choking on the floor. Samael exclaimed, *"this should prove interesting"* whilst I looked in the driver's interior mirror to watch Lindos on the other side of the glass partition laughing as he drove onto the motorway. Inside the rear boot of the limousine

lay the body of the hire company's driver with his throat slit wide open and his dry 'dead fish' eyes staring out in the darkness.

Samael and I sat in the back whilst the limo was parked in an old warehouse in the suburbs of London. Lindos dragged the still unconscious bodies of Kim Rollinstad and her manager to one of the warehouse's central steel pillars and tied them up. Lindos slapped their faces until they awoke and although the duct tape over their mouths silenced them, it could not deflect the terror in their eyes. Lindos snapped, *"so you like to exploit decadence, well I'll give you decadence that will carry you to your grave, or in your case Kim, your last appearance in front of your cheering minions."* Lindos pulled out a razor and slowly started to cut off the manager's nose. I heard the bone crack as the blade sliced through and the nose fell to the floor where Lindos squished it with his boot. He carried on and using a scalpel, he sliced through the duct tape and cut out the manager's tongue. Lindos held it up and bit it in half with his teeth before throwing the two parts into a bin on the floor. Kim jerked around and tried to break free of her bonds but suddenly stopped transfixed as Lindos cut off the manager's penis amid a cacophony of gurgled screams from the manager's mouth. Lindos removed Kim's duct tape and forced the penis into her mouth – *"suck on that you bitch"* he exclaimed. Kim spat the penis out and Lindos laughed as he reapplied fresh duct tape.

Samael remarked that we had to admire Lindos's style, it sure beat the usual mundane closures. Even I, balked a little when Lindos picked up the wood saw and started to cut off the manager's head. The blood was everywhere and it shot out of the open neck and the exposed vertebrae, flying high into the air. The manager's head gasped its last breath as it lay on the floor and in that second, I saw his eyes blinking as the dying brain took in the sight of his own body jerking and writhing on the floor. Samael popped out of the limo and as the manager's black translucent soul rose from his dead body, Samael used his sword and cleaved it in half amidst a long torrid scream from the soul as it was terminated. Meanwhile, Lindos was now cutting the head of Kim Rollinstad and jeering, *"don't worry, you will still get that final performance."* She heard the rasping of the saw as he slowly cut through her flesh and then the bone of her vertebrae. Her head shot off and crashed down on the rear of the limo, splattering it with her bright red blood. Samael dispatched Kim's emerging soul and once again Samael and I set off with Lindos in the limousine with Kim's head sitting in the front passenger seat.

Lindos drove into the heart of London and stopped the limousine in the middle of the road in Piccadilly. As the traffic piled up behind him, he grabbed Kim's head, pulled off the duct tape and leaving the driver's door open, he swaggered down the middle of the street holding the head by the hair and dangling it in the faces of people walking and others sitting in their cars. He shouted as he waved her head around with the blood still dripping onto the roadway, *"here is your whore, your God, come and see her last performance."* Lindos popped the head up into the air and with his right foot he kicked it across the road whereby it bounced off several cars and landed in the lap of an old woman who was sitting on a bench on the pavement. She looked at it with a puzzled look and after pushing it away, it fell and rolled along the gutter. The old woman casually continued

to suck on her pan drop and take in the evening air. Lindos ran after the head and gripping it tightly he rammed it down on a spike of the metal railings and started to dance in front of it. Two armed police officers arrived and announced their presence which prompted Lindos to produce a large meat cleaver from his waistband and rush at them, shouting *"leave Kim alone, she is in the middle of her performance, look at the crowds worshipping her."* Lindos felt the bullets strike him in the chest and the head and he was dead before his body hit the ground.

Samael sighed, exited the limo and terminated Lindos's soul as it left his body. There was an almighty scream from its core as it turned into dark matter and disappeared in the air. The people eagerly crowded around the head of Kim Rollinstad, still stuck on the railings and I could see the flashes of the cameras as they captured selfies of themselves alongside it. Kim's tongue suddenly flipped out through her open mouth and hung on her chin, dripping blood. At first the crowd screamed and stood back but soon burst out laughing and continued their selfie shots with the head. I left the limo and waved to Samael as he disappeared; I decided to visit my old pal, Socrates.

I maintained my meetings with Socrates, especially as I enjoyed the fine wine and the congenial atmosphere of old Greece.

Chapter 19 - The Andromeda Protégé

In my human form, I often visit Ardea, a beautiful ancient town situated on the Via Ardeatina road linking it to Rome. My old friend Constantino Flavius Eutropius lives there and when we meet, we share a repast on the patio of 'Con Spirito' the name of his small house. He invariably serves up a dish of Ventricina Piccante salami with Mozzarella cheese and to wash it down he prefers a red wine and what better than a bottle of Colle Ticchio from the Cesanese Vineyards in the Lazio Region of Italy. Constantino produces the pièce de résistance, a coffee panna cotta with dark chocolate and rum sauce and finally, a glass of Cointreau 'Curaçao Blanco Triple Sec' to complete the meal. After a short nap on our chairs in the warmth of the Italian sun, we enjoy our game of chess and of course, excellent conversation.

Constantino was born in 1922 in Ardea, where he chose to live for the rest of his life. He enjoyed the landscape, the climate and above all else, the friendliness of the community. He was brought up in the disciplines of the Catholic Religion and he practiced his faith and attended Mass, *the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist*, whenever he could. He lived with his parents and as an only son, he inherited his parents' house. Constantino attended Rome's famous Sapienza University where he studied the social sciences, Political Science, Sociology and Communication Science; gaining valuable insight and a more complete formative experience. He emerged to take up a profession in journalism and found work with the Corriere della Sera newspaper in Milan, which suited his centrist politics. He travelled all over the world on assignments but always on returning home he would spend his leisure moments at 'Con Spirito' in Ardea.

Throughout his life, he had many dalliances with the females, usually on his assignments but never at home and he never married. In his 40-year career, spanning 1947 to 1987, he covered some terrible events in history, the assassinations of Mahatma Gandhi, John F Kennedy, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy. Whilst these were in their singularity, he also covered the conflicts of mankind, such as the First Indochina War, Israel War of Independence, Korea, French-Algerian War, Suez Crisis, Cuban Revolution, Vietnam, the Six-Day War, Soviet-Afghan War and the Iran-Iraq War. It was a natural progression that he would pick up a camera and become a photographer, perhaps one of the first true photo-journalists? His articles were well received but the impact on his mind did not bear fruition until he retired and stopped to think.

In 1989, I visited 'Con Spirito' and he was there with his usual smile and a question, *"can you remind me when I first met you because for some reason I feel I have known you all my life but I don't know how; I don't even know your name?"* I smiled and countered, *"why raise that question when we have had engaging encounters throughout your life; just embrace the happiness and contentment of our meetings, surely that is enough?"* He laughed out loud, welcomed me with a hug and a kiss on both cheeks and replied, *"sit down, you're a clever fox, verbal chess is not my strong point."* After our meal, we settled down on our respective chairs for a nap but I asked the question, *"I know you have become bored with retirement but do you really think that*

philosophy is the answer?" He sighed, "I have started to re-assess my life on Earth; I require answers and I have stopped to question everything." His voice drifted away in the breeze; I closed my eyes and shortly afterwards, I heard him snoring.

That afternoon we each had an espresso and sat at the table on the patio. Eventually, he raised his first question, *"what do you know about religion, death and the meaning of life?"* I smiled at him and he smiled back whereby I replied, *"three questions in one, I see you have been studying Socrates or was it Plato but what about the soul, the mind, the brain because they have to be in there somewhere."* I saw him look a little sheepish, *"that was my next question but you already knew that."* I replied, *"yes and I know your last question."* He managed to raise another smile, *"is there a God, is my religion and faith a myth?"* I had to counter and asked him, *"why am I the one you have selected to contribute, for surely we may fall into disagreement, even a loss of friendship; for a man of strong religion might take exception to an answer that challenges his faith."* I decided to answer rather than counter him again, *"I have witnessed many individuals form their own variant of religion and each one bearing a moral compass at the heart. Conformity to the religion instills a hope for resurrection after death and in this way the followers are bound to that religion. There is always good versus evil in the religious teachings and each lay leader acts as the soul and conscience of the congregation."*

Before he could reply, I again countered, *"has your religion not brought you morality, do you not feel a deep sense of contentment in your soul, do you not recognise that every day you live your life in goodness and truth and is that not enough?"* I saw the tears rise in his eyes and run down his cheeks, he wiped them away and I heard him in a soft voice, *"it's just there is so much evil, I have bathed in its light; I have seen so much war and injustice and now the decadence in the young is overwhelming."* He realised that he had weakened and so he changed the subject, *"do you know that I can name most of the stars, I watch them at night when I sit here on the patio and out there, far away in the Universe is Andromeda; I often wonder if the galaxy is the Kingdom of Heaven?"*

I settled him and poured out another espresso into his cup. We sat for a while and watched the breeze flow through the leaves of the trees whilst it brushed our faces in the warmth of the sun. Eventually he voiced, *"despite all my friends, I feel so alone and loneliness is a heavy cross to bear. I find myself analysing every spoken word and every night my head is filled with dreams and what seem like visions. For some reason, I have become preoccupied with understanding what the Universe, God and my life is all about. All of this leads to depression and with no end in sight, except my possible death."* I countered, *"my dear friend you are suffering from two fundamental forces which are impacting on your mind and you must address them. One is post-traumatic stress from your constant exposure to the evils of war and the other, surprisingly enough, is that you are no longer a photo-journalist on a war assignment."* I avoided his wave of the hand to interrupt and continued, *"you must find a new core for your being and build your friends and everything else in life around it. It may be companionship, it may be a hobby, it may even be a partial job or it may be travelling and meeting new people and enjoying new experiences. Select a task, a project that you might enjoy and stick to it but do*

not confuse loneliness with the loss of purpose and compound it with philosophy.” He poured us another espresso and rounded with, “I thought my religion and my faith would hold me together but it has not, so I have started to question it all.”

We sat for a while and I thought how best to answer his questions; slowly the sun began to set in a bright red ball on the horizon. I watched the redness reflect in his eyes and bathe its last rays on his face and I started, *“I would not be so quick to dismiss your religion when you consider that today it is dying out. The human race is more informed and more skeptical but it is a great pity that morality can only be found in old religious teachings because in this century it does not spring from anywhere else. In the years that follow and right into the 21st century, mankind will tread the path of decadence, avarice and be consumed by debt. His societies will fall; not because he has abandoned religion but because he has abandoned his integrity and morality.”* He stood up from his chair to catch the last rays of the setting sun and replied, *“interesting analysis but you still have not answered; what happens upon death, is there a God; and is there a heaven?”*

We stood for a while and watched the sun set. Eventually the light fled in the face of the advancing night and before I left his company, I answered his question. *“Life is to be lived and enjoyed, it should not be fraught with thoughts about death, God and heaven. You must continue to maintain a high standard of integrity in your morality, virtue and humility. Whether this is through religion or your own philosophy of life, it matters not; for a soul which strives to remain pure, will move forward. In reality, all the Gods of man amount to the same thing, a faith that there is life after death and a heaven in which to live it.”*

He smiled and we parted. I left him standing on the porch of ‘Con Spirito’; his house in the village of Ardea near Rome and I would see him again, aye, and on many occasions. In very old age, he would eventually embrace death without fear and with dignity; and I would be there to greet him.

My old friend Constantino Flavius Eutropius would move forward and in his transcendence, he would finally get his wish and visit one of many heavens; Andromeda.

Chapter 20 - Dimensions

Roland stood with his walking stick in the garden and threw a warm mince pie onto the ground. He watched as his two favourite crows came down from a tree and walked over to the food. He smiled as they eyed it suspiciously and after a few mock pecks at the crust they tucked in and soon opened up the contents onto the grass. They were joined by robins and blackbirds who darted in and out with mince morsels in their beaks; much to the annoyance of the crows who were attempting to cover the pie with their wide spread wings. Roland opened up his small bag and threw cut bread and peanuts onto the ground and soon the jackdaws and small finches joined the feast. He derived great enjoyment from the interaction and as he left for the house, he saw the squirrels arrive for their share.

I have witnessed many a lonely old man, living out the last years of his life in a house; sitting quietly in a chair embracing his memories and holding back tears. Aye and on the table sits a bottle of whisky, half empty and a glass in his hand. Nobody visits, nobody cares and the world moves on; he is no longer a player and players only love you, when you are playing. The old man's generation have all passed away and now as he nears death, the younger generations are too busy to care. To all intents and purposes, he has become an inconvenient responsibility.

This was not the case for Roland Laverette; he had embraced life and in old age, he continued to do so. It was a beautiful day and a lunch at the 'Old Tavern' was calling him. He went to his extensive wardrobe and put on summer clothes, all made of Egyptian cotton; light blue trousers, a yellow open necked shirt, a bright red cotton blazer with gold buttons, a white scarf and a light blue vintage beret cap for his head. He finished with slipping on a pair of Michael Kors black moccasins. To the neighbours he cut a dash despite being 88 years of age but he looked much younger, and with his sun beaten face, he exuded class and breeding. Hair still clung to his head and curled up around the edges of his cap. He stopped in the driveway of his small steading and as he casually put on his favourite orange tinted Ray-Ban sunglasses, he slid into the driving seat of a 'classic' 1989 Porsche 944-S2 white sports car. He started the 3 litre, 4 cylinder boxer engine to a mighty roar, opened up the sun roof and as the car glided through the steading's large electric gates, he waved to his neighbours on the street outside. There was those who admired his tenacity and those who scowled for no other reason.

The Porsche roared along the country roads from Edinburgh to Hawick in the Borders Country between Scotland and England. The journey would normally take about 2 hours but over the years, Roland had managed to shave off around 20 minutes. It was a nice Sunday morning in a hot summer and the roads were devoid of vehicles; Roland made good time. As the trees raced by, his mind drifted in and out of those faces that he knew so well; men and women now departed, and in that moment, he was struck by melancholy. Bitter sweet memories flooded his thoughts and a tear ran down his face. He put his foot to the pedal and as the Porsche

picked up speed his mind changed to the thought of lunch and Caroline waiting for him at his journeys end. She was a beauty and always welcomed him with a smile.

Roland switched on the CD player and listened to his favourite track, 'Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now' by Starship, a pop group that had existed in the 1980s. It reminded him of his first love, his first wife and the words brought back all those glorious moments when they first met and made love. He thought they would stand together but sadly those moments faded and love was lost. She married again and went to live in London with a banker, which suited her financially, although he eventually became bankrupt. Roland laughed out loud at his fortunate escape but she still held a place in his heart. Throughout his life, he had made decisions that most men would have found too painful to undertake. His first love was unconditional but not his second. Roland's new wife enjoyed a lack of hygiene and did not take pride in her appearance. He could live with the debt and deceit of his first wife but obesity, rotten teeth accompanied with all the foul smells that they bring, he would not tolerate; his attentions would wander and mistresses would occupy his bed and accompany him on his business and social events. Hence it brought an end to an otherwise happy second marriage. Now, he had been divorced for over thirty-three years and had never regretted it. Roland still held feelings for his second wife but he knew that he could never be happy living with her, so their relationship ended. In reflection, he was saddened that his marriages did not work out.

For a man who practised meditation, it was relatively easy for Roland to wash out his mind. He sat back in the driving seat and his soul released a flood of tranquillity that acted as a catalyst; he felt a lightness touch him, a feeling of release, a sudden contentment and he was refreshed. His mind cleared and his senses heightened; he smelled the air of the countryside, he was in harmony with the sway of the trees, heard the creatures as they foraged and played; he felt as one with nature and the world. This was the secret of life, the ability to transcend. In his sixties he had taken up the teachings of yoga asana, which originated in Vedas, the oldest religious texts of the Hindus and ever since, had continued to practise it. To the passing viewer, Roland appeared to be in a trance as he drove down the country roads. His face displayed a calm smile, his eyes stared straight ahead, but he was as one with the car and everything around him. A pheasant ran out from the right onto the roadway in front of him and Roland, without pausing, swerved the Porsche towards the running bird, carefully brushing its tail feathers and continued on his way, leaving the pheasant unharmed.

The Porsche finally reached its destination and its tyres crunched the gravel track of the 'Old Tavern' as Roland steered it to a halt in the car park. In human form, I was waiting for his arrival and I greeted him with a wave as he alighted from his car. Smiling, he waved back and crossed the car park to join me at the front door. He exclaimed in a loud voice, *"I am glad to see you, old friend, I have missed our conversations"* and I nodded in agreement as we shook hands and entered through the hallway. Caroline was waiting at the reception desk and raised her head to welcome him. Roland leaned over the counter and stroking her ear, he nuzzled her face with his cheek and gave her a cuddle. I smiled, *"you spoil that cat and she always seems to recognise you."* As we entered the restaurant seating area, he replied, *"I have always managed to get on with females, even the*

feline kind." I chortled at his analysis of his magnetism for behind us Caroline was playing up to yet another guest.

The restaurant was quiet with very few patrons and we sat down at one of the many empty tables to inspect the menu. We placed our order with the waiter and after our drinks arrived, we sat back to enjoy our first sips. I opened, *"how are you these days, are you still finding enjoyment in old age"* and his reply came as no surprise, for I already knew the answer. Roland smiled and remarked, *"I love life, I love living it and I love to see all those young people who are just starting out and have so much to look forward to. I am not bitter that youth has passed me by, for upon hearing their laughter in crowded bars and restaurants, I am uplifted by the visibility of their innocence. We all live in a wonderful world and although it has taken me some time, I now realise just how wonderful it is. I have finally learned to preserve my morality, vocation, humility and integrity which brings me immense contentment. I am not afraid of old age, I have never been afraid of dying and even if I was to become infirm, I would still find something to hold my attention."* He went on, *"to be able to create, even the likes of a model aeroplane, boat or perhaps a model train layout, would suffice to bring me contentment. I have always been into photography, so to just sit back in a wheelchair and snap images of wildlife in my garden would provide me with enough diversion."*

Before I could counter, he waved his hand and continued, *"I have never told you about this, but there was a period, in 2017, shortly after my old mother passed away in her nineties, that I became very bitter and railed against, what I considered a dystopian world. She had often remarked that she could not understand what life had been about because it seemed to hold no purpose, then I remembered your advice; to select a task, a project that I might enjoy and stick to it but not to confuse loneliness with the loss of purpose and compound it with philosophy."* He laughed out loud and squeezing my hand, he chortled, *"it was good advice and I also took up your advice on yoga asana, I even purchased a powerful motorcycle, sat my test and embraced danger and fear as I rode it down the country roads. The exhilaration you get, heightens your senses and brings with it an awareness that you are more alive. I have several bikes now and I still take them out for country road blasts."*

I smiled at the innocence in his persona and I was sure the death of his mother had finally brought it back to the surface. Gone were many of the barriers he had created in his lifetime and along with them were the aggressiveness that had built up, due to many years of interaction with his fellow man. He interrupted my thoughts and went on, *"I often visit the Zoological Gardens in Edinburgh and enjoy a lunch there in the company of the other members. My camera is always with me and after lunch, I capture images of the animals as I walk around the grounds. It is a great place for photography and my camera is sometimes pointed in the direction of the other animals, the ones who visit. Street photography is my niche subject and I enjoy nothing better than a walk in the city and a pub lunch."* I interjected, *"I am glad that old age has not held you back."* Roland smiled and nodded his head.

He appeared contrite and lowered his face to the table before looking up at me and asked a question, *"do you believe in life after death"* but before I could reply, he went on, *"after the death of my mother in December 2016, I experienced about 6 months of dreams; they were pleasant interactions with her, as if she was alive, and yet I knew she was dead. In the early dreams, I would exclaim to her that she was dead and immediately I would be drawn backwards in massive acceleration and she would fade from my eyes in the darkness; I would suddenly wake up, very despondent. In later dreams, I did not declare that she was dead and we would spend time in lengthy conversation as if she was in the house and I would wake up in the morning feeling very happy. Sadly, the dreams stopped and I have never dreamt of her since. Have you ever experienced such an interaction with a person who has passed?"* I sat back and sipped my wine from its glass, before replying, *"The loss of a mother is a profound moment in a man's life, the bond in life is strong, even although there may have been some discontent. Perhaps your mother held on to that bond and finally after 6 months, felt she could leave you. Perhaps the spirit of your mother crossed dimensions to comfort you in your dreams?"* Smiling, he said, *"I like your explanation, it is a nice way to consider life after death."*

We continued our lunch and Roland consumed a hearty meal. He was an old man and yet his outlook on life made him appear younger than his years. We toasted each other's health; we enjoyed each other's company and we filled the restaurant with our laughter. For those chosen moments, Roland was a young man again as he breathed the 'hot breath of youth'. He regaled me with the many escapades in his life regarding lost generations of family and friends; his dogs, all border collies, who had characters of their own, and of course his loves. There were no tears other than the tears of laughter.

I watched as he drove off in his Porsche and I would see him again in a different dimension where he would find that young man in his soul. Of course, Roland would always exist, you are born, live the parts of your life, grow old and die but you are neither in the past, present or in the future - you continue to exist along with your friends and relatives, even your pets and animals, in a dimension of the Universe. A life is like a mosaic that exists in the Universe for all eternity; upon death, the pure soul moves on to another life in the next dimension. This should bring you some comfort, especially when you come to understand that time is man's illusion. Mankind will never experience time travel, but eventually, in a pure energy form, he will transcend dimensions.

I admired Roland, for in the midst of a chaotic world where good manners, breeding and integrity were sadly lacking, he had found a way of living with old age which gave him peace and contentment.

Chapter 21 - Ross Lovell

Whilst Roland Laverette overcame the difficulties of life and found contentment in old age, Ross Lovell walked a different path.

Another day dawned; was it a Monday, perhaps it was a Friday; surely it could not be the week-end again, but no matter, it made no difference, and for Ross Lovell the loneliness continued. In the rooms of his little flat, the spider webs congregated on the ceilings, on the window frames and evidence of the next generation could be seen in the little spider nests cocooned in little white blobs stuck there. Dust was thick on the carpets, the furniture, and clung like a grey mist on the curtains.

I have witnessed many a lonely old man, living out the last years of his life in a house; sitting quietly in a chair embracing his memories and holding back tears. Aye and on the table sits a bottle of whisky, half empty and a glass in his hand. Nobody visits, nobody cares and the world moves on; he is no longer a player and players only love you, when you are playing. The old man's generation have all passed away and now as he nears death, the younger generations are too busy to care. To all intents and purposes, he has become an inconvenient responsibility.

Such was the case for Ross Lovell who on reaching his 66th birthday had given up on life. He was an only son and after his old mother had passed away, followed by his faithful companion, his collie dog, he was finally alone. It was a strange situation for a man who had thrived in business and on retiral had filled his life by caring for his mother and now he found himself without purpose or responsibility. Two failed marriages and estrangement from his four sons did not help and neither did his relationship with his fifth son who was preoccupied with his own life and family. A phone call or a visit every two or three months had become the norm. Ross suffered from a deadly affliction, one so corrosive to the soul that it invariably could not be detected by a psychiatrist, far less an ordinary person. It led to the strangeness of a man who sought companionship and yet could not tolerate company.

Not for him, a new wife or someone to live with, and social interactions were avoided at all costs. He refused to repair his discontent with his sons whom he perceived as weak men who had been guided and manipulated by his two ex-wives to disparage him. In fact, thanks to his affliction, he often laughed out loud at the thought of any reconciliation with his four estranged sons and their families.

His affliction led to a constant and internal battle between the weakness of compromise and that of his hard and unforgiving nature. Tears would be accompanied by gritted teeth as he weakened his resolve which was immediately followed by a determined conclusion that he could see no reason to forgive. After all, when Ross experienced his second divorce, the loss of his business, the death of a favourite horse and all in the same year, his family chastised him for his negative nature. There was no caring, loving family; no understanding as

to the severity of the impact on his mind; only condemnation. He did not take to hard drink, drugs or medication for depression; he turned his attention to caring for his mother in her old age and watched as his faithful dog grew old and Ross waited for those fateful days when his mother passed away and his collie, died in his arms. Thereafter, life had no meaning and he let it slip.

When you spend your life interacting with the human race and deal with those who enjoy and revel in their corruption, and afterwards, you enter the business world and discover an even higher level of corruption, it becomes increasingly difficult to interact with them, other than with a negative disposition. It might even be perceived by many that Ross was a sociopath; an analysis of himself he had already accepted. For him, any statement was a lie, every person was a liar and every social interaction with an individual was either their statement in justifying their life or an interrogation of his own in seeking a perceived weakness. He could not stand for their politics, their religion, their social attributes; he was no longer young and naive, he played with their emotions and when he saw fit, he abandoned them without reserve. Ross left behind so many 'burning bridges' that he had lost count. This application eventually led to his withdrawal from human interaction and he became a recluse. His purchases were delivered to his home, his tips to the delivery men were generous but conversation was reserved. Great wealth had not brought Ross any happiness, his greatest wealth was contentment and he found it during those days in his youth when he had nothing and limited ambition – now it was lost.

All through his life he had been aware that he had a guardian angel. This angel in his mind had provided many rewards and yet at certain times in his life, it had handed him intense failures and often pushed him to the limits of human endurance. Each time as he neared the edge, he was pulled back. On occasion, it brought on depression but this could easily be overcome in youth and yet much harder in old age. Ross in his loneliness, spent too much time engaging his regrets, forgetting his memories of joy, and worst of all, becoming lost in his philosophy as to the meaning of life and forgetting how to live it. A man of strong character will come to recognise his nemeses in old age, which is his decline. When mental and physical health escapes you, then slow death is the eventual capitulation. Ross regretted that he had not found a new core for his well-being and built new friends and everything else in life around it. The core could have been companionship, perhaps a hobby, even a part-time job or perhaps travelling and meeting new people and enjoying new experiences. He should have selected a task, a project that he might enjoy and stick to it but not to confuse his loneliness with the loss of purpose and compound it with philosophy.

A man of strong character will determine his own demise, it will not be one of a slow descent in an overheated airless room, sitting on a chair and lacking oxygen. Nor will it be enduring the pain of pelvic and back ache coupled with rear end sores on the skin from prolonged seating and cerebral edema of the head through the lack of fresh air, followed by attacks of delirium and finally, dementia. A strong character can fight against infirmity but it cannot overcome it. Surely as night follows day, the weakness of the bones and muscles in an old man with a strong heart, leads to a chair in front of a television. The driving force of Ross's affliction had

always been pride, and it was pride that led him to place a shotgun to his chest and pull the trigger. Even in death, Ross sought to control the outcome and so he wanted to die slowly by bleeding out; he wanted to feel the coldness and tiredness descend as the warmth of his blood dissipated and he felt that final moment as his life ebbed away. The pain was severely intense but for a moment, and as he slid sideways onto the grass, he felt a calmness pervade his senses and the pain was gone. There was a tremendous heat in the area of the wound as his body fought to repair itself and slowly, he felt the coldness grip him as the blood flowed out. He felt the warmth of the air and the smell of his roses in the garden. Ross raised a smile and as the last drop of breath left his lungs, his eyes closed for the last time.

Pride is a terrible affliction and for some with a negative disposition, it creates within you an ego, a feeling of self-importance, the need to control and finally hubris leading to nemesis. Whilst for some with a positive disposition, it is a humble and content attachment to one's choices and respect for the choices of others, which creates self-reflection and a feeling of fulfilment and belonging. Cursed is the man who is caught in an internal battle between the positive and the negative sides of pride and is unable to compromise with others.

So, it was for Ross Lovell and finding himself alone, his pride and perceived integrity in life did not bring him peace of mind but only much regret. Purgatory was self-inflicted but through it all, his soul remained pure, and he moved forward in death.

Chapter 22 - Revolución Perfecta

I decided to visit my old friend Riel Alfonso-Guerra who lived in Havana, Cuba. He was 95 years of age and was born in Baracoa, a little village on the island's east coast with its fine beaches, pastel houses and lush rainforest. Riel had worked as a bricklayer and stone mason all his life and it was construction which brought him to Havana where he helped to build many of the fine houses for the rich. It was a magnificent era for Cuba, a period during 1902 to 1959 when industry and commerce grew rapidly and Cuba recovered from the devastation of war. Havana became a paradise in the Caribbean and apartment buildings as well as mansions were built for tycoons and the wealthy middleclass. It rivalled Miami for tourism but by the 1950s, Cuba acted as a magnet for American corruption. Riel became despondent as the casinos and corrupt business practises took hold of the country and after a short stay in Mexico, he became one of the soldiers of the '26th of July Movement', the revolutionary army, led by Fidel Castro.

I walked down the derelict back streets of old Havana, I saw the greenery of weeds growing up between the cobbles of the roads and pavements. The walls of the buildings were crumbling with their balcony stonework cracked and broken; some balconies were missing all together. Railings and exposed girders in the concrete were rotting and covered in brown rust. Bushes and even small trees were growing out of the guttering and the holes in the buildings; their green leaves forming a nice contrast with the last remnants of colouring on the walls. The paintwork on the doors and the window frames was faded, split and flaking and the woodwork was weathered and cracked due to the lack of protection. The old street lamps and the lamps on the front of the buildings were broken with sections of glass missing. Multitudes of power and telephone cables were strung across the road between the buildings and fixed there by rust covered metal brackets. Tiles were missing from some of the roofs and lay broken on the pavements and roadways. Some roofs had collapsed and lay inside the buildings in amongst the rubble with weeds, bushes and trees growing up through the debris. Old abandoned cars, lay at the side of the roads, their brown rust coloured metal bodies covered in dust and grime with their wheels missing and the chassis jacked up on rubble. Some people were working under the raised bonnets of fifty-year-old vehicles and some were underneath banging away at the seized brakes in an effort to get them road worthy. The roadway was littered with oil cans and tools.

The Cubans enjoy murals which are painted on many walls and I admired the 'bulbous head' art work of Yulier Rodriguez who paints strange figures on the side of the buildings to divert the eyes from the dereliction. On the long wall of a football and basketball court which was overlooked by more decaying buildings, the artist Ricky Mastrapa had painted a huge picture of a woman lying on her back and it took up the entire width of the playing area. In Callejon Hamel at the junction of Animas and Aramburu I stopped to admire the murals, sculptures, mosaic tiled-walls and artistic interventions. The Cuban painter, muralist and sculptor Salvador Gonzales Escalona created the project. It was a strange mix of ruination and beauty which acted as a magnet for photographers who had travelled from all over the world to capture 'Old Havana'.

I turned the corner into a stone tiled courtyard with numerous round pillars, each one forming an arch with another at the top and all supporting the outside landings of terrace houses situated around the courtyard. The houses rose up on several floors with their tall arched windows taking in most of the space between the floors to let in the maximum light. Rusted metal railings with rotten wooden top rails adorned the outside landings of each floor. A stone staircase led me up to the first-floor landing and onto subsequent staircases between the floors until I reached the top. The coloured rendering of the buildings was crumbling and in places, laid bare the stonework underneath. In its heyday, it would have looked grand with its majestic walls, painted in various bright colours and its decorative woodwork painted green.

Upon reaching his door, it opened and I was greeted by Riel's wife, Benita, who gave me a warm embrace and murmured in my ear, *"we were expecting you but Riel is terribly upset, he is in the sitting-room weeping."* I smiled at Benita, in sympathy and replied, *"I guess the death of Fidel has hit him pretty hard?"* She nodded and we went into the house. Riel was sitting with his face in his hands and on hearing me enter, he looked up to greet me, *"I am sorry that you find me in this state but my beloved Fidel passed away last night and all the dreams of the Cuban people went with him."* He bade me sit down and his wife brought us a large cup of Colado with two smaller cups for sharing. As his wife prepared our dinner, I tried to comfort Riel as best I could but he seemed inconsolable. Eventually as he drank his cup of Colada, he calmed down.

He started to talk, *"I was there at the beginning, back then in 1956, when we all sailed in the 'Granma' from Veracruz and we had such dreams; we were going to liberate Cuba, we were going to reform it."* He went on, *"the '26th of July Movement' was our revolutionary army; Fidel wanted to nationalise the public services, re-distribute the lands to the peasants and offer large scale education for all. Our primary objective was to rid the island of the dictator Batista and his corrupt government."* I interjected, *"you achieved all of that and it was perfect."* Riel, replied, *"yes, it was perfect and despite heavy losses, years in the mountains, guerrilla warfare and thanks to the many Cubans who joined us, we eventually chased Batista and his cronies out of Cuba. The peasants, the middle classes and even the professional people, all joined in the dream. 'Che' was wounded in the battles but he survived and Fidel went on to govern and make the necessary changes."*

I let him continue for it was good for him to reminisce and remember the good times. Riel went on, *"he was a simple man, Fidel; we all had the dream but very little understanding of how to maintain it. After nationalisation, the Americans saw us as a socialist state and that did not go down well with their capitalist agenda for the world. They created sanctions and set up an embargo around Cuba; cutting off our ability to grow prosperous, confining us and the west turned its back on Cuba. Poor Fidel, his socialist dreams were shattered and he took himself and Cuba in the only direction he could; he was driven by the actions of the Americans to embrace the communist regime of 'The Soviet Union' and he asked them for financial aid. Fidel adopted their policies; a one-party, socialist state under Communist Party rule with central economics, healthcare and education, which were state controlled as were the press and any internal dissent was suppressed. At first it appeared as if Cuba would regain its prosperity but the American CIA and their*

orchestrated 'failed' invasion by Cuban exiles for regime change, and their many attempts to assassinate Fidel, dashed all our hopes. The missile crisis and the collapse of 'The Soviet Union' sealed our fate as Fidel continued his fight against the Americans and their 'Global Capitalist Ideals' and today, you can see the poverty and deprivation that still exists. We live amongst crumbling buildings and welcome the income of tourists. Eventually, the socialist dream will disappear as the capitalists eat out the souls of the young, the new generation."

I countered, *"the Cuban people still have their pride, they fought the corruption of the capitalist agenda and held their integrity, despite all the hardships. It is a great pity that Fidel Castro did not manage to bind socialism and capitalism together whilst maintaining his original integrity and vocation."* Riel sighed, *"on the 8th January 1959 I stood in a street in Havana on the island of Cuba as the Cuban Revolutionary Army celebrated and cheered its leader, Fidel Castro. The corrupt President Fulgencio Batista y Zaldívar had been overthrown and the people came out onto the street in their thousands and welcomed their liberators. No one disputed that the United States of America had created the catalyst for the revolution by supporting Batista who turned the Island of Cuba into a playground for rich Americans. The ordinary Cubans had suffered and endured their poverty as second-class citizens whilst the American businesses and Batista had banked their ill-gotten gains. Fidel became the island's Prime Minister and he threw out the gambling casinos, the mafia, and nationalised all the American businesses on the island to bring them under Cuban Government control. So, it goes on and once when I was filled with vigour, I followed a great man whose persona was changed by the worst of mankind and his dreams were shattered."*

I shared a repast with Riel and Benita and it was a fine meal. I managed to get him to relive the lighter moments of his time with Fidel Castro when they were young and lived rough in the mountains of Cuba. He regaled me with tales of cunning as they evaded government troops and we enjoyed hearing his laughter again as he laid aside his grief. As I left, he waved to me from the crumbling balcony of his house and yet his integrity remained intact. In time Riel would pass over and he would be the last of those who took part in the Revolución Perfecta.

John F Kennedy was a Friend of Cuba

On the 24th October 1963, in an interview with an Algerian-born French-Jewish journalist and author Jean Daniel, the American President, John F Kennedy stated, *"I believe that there is no country in the world, including the African regions, including any and all the countries under colonial domination, where economic colonisation, humiliation and exploitation were worse than in Cuba, in part owing to my country's policies during the Batista regime. I believe that we created, built and manufactured the Castro movement out of whole cloth and without realizing it. I believe that the accumulation of these mistakes has jeopardised all of Latin America. The great aim of the Alliance for Progress is to reverse this unfortunate policy. This is one of the most, if not the most, important problems in America foreign policy. I can assure you that I have understood the Cubans. I approved the proclamation which Fidel Castro made in the Sierra Maestra, when he justifiably called*

for justice and especially yearned to rid Cuba of corruption. I will go even further: to some extent it is as though Batista was the incarnation of a number of sins on the part of the United States. Now we shall have to pay for those sins. In the matter of the Batista regime, I am in agreement with the first Cuban revolutionaries.”

Sadly, before Kennedy could reverse the American embargo and the sanctions placed on Cuba, he was assassinated that year on the 22nd November.

Addendum - A Brief History of Cuba

The island of Cuba is situated in the northern Caribbean, south of the American state of Florida and north of Jamaica. It was inhabited by local and the indigenous peoples of the Americas for over six thousand years and up until the 15th Century when Christopher Columbus landed there and claimed the island as a colony of Spain. The British in 1762, briefly took over control of Cuba during the ‘Seven Years War’ between Spain, Britain and France which started in 1754 and concluded in 1763. The British immediately opened up trade with their North American and Caribbean colonies, causing a rapid transformation of Cuban society. They imported food, horses and other goods, as well as thousands of slaves from West Africa to work on the under developed sugar plantations. At the end of the war, Britain handed the island back to Spain. Estimates suggest that between 1790 and 1820 some 325,000 Africans were imported to Cuba as slaves, which was four times the amount that had arrived between 1760 and 1790.

The fight for independence from Spain commenced after a rebellion in 1868 led by planter Carlos Manuel de Céspedes. He freed his slaves to fight with him for an independent Cuba and declared freedom for any slaves who took up military service. The 1868 rebellion resulted in a prolonged conflict known as the ‘Ten Years War’ and led to other attempts for independence. In 1898, the American battleship Maine was sent to protect American interests, but it exploded in Havana harbour and sank. The Americans and the Spanish declared war on each other and eventually, in 1902, the island became independent but a protectorate of the United States of America. Thereafter, Cuba attempted to broaden its democratic system but endured threats to it and in 1934 during the 1933-1940 Revolution, Fulgencio Batista y Zaldívar became the dominant figure and the head of the army. Several puppet presidents followed until 1940 when a new democratic Constitution was forged and Batista became the president, a post he held until 1944 and thereafter he retired to Florida. In 1952, Batista ran for president again but facing defeat, he led a military coup and took the reins of power. He received financial, military and logistical support from ‘The United States of America’. Batista suspended the 1940 Constitution and revoked civil and political liberties, including the right to strike and widened the gap between the rich and the poor. He outlawed the Cuban Communist Party.

Batista encouraged American gambling casinos run by the American Mafia; the influx of American large businesses and enjoyed a share of the spoils. The Cuban people lived in abject poverty apart from the middle classes who enjoyed the new-found wealth. In 1959, Fidel Castro and his ‘Revolutionary Army’ ousted Batista

and took over control of the country with a liberal, Manuel Urrutia Lleó as the provisional president. In the years 1959 to 1966 Cuban insurgents fought a rebellion against the Castro government. The American State Department estimated that 3,200 people were executed from 1959 to 1962 but according to Amnesty International, the official death sentences from 1959–87 were 216. The vast majority of those executed were policemen, politicians, and informers of the Batista regime accused of crimes such as torture and murder, and their public trials and executions had widespread popular support among the Cuban population. Castro nationalised the American businesses, instigated the Cuban 'Agrarian Reform Law', expropriating thousands of acres of farmland (including from large American landholders); all of which worsened relations with America. In response, between 1960 and 1964 the United States imposed sanctions, including a total ban on trade between the countries and a freeze on all Cuban-owned assets in the United States of America.

Fidel Castro was left with very little choice, but to sign a commercial agreement with the Soviet Union's Vice-Premier Anastas Mikoyan. In March 1960, the American president, Eisenhower gave his approval to a CIA plan to arm and train a group of Cuban refugees to overthrow the Castro regime which was further endorsed by the new president, a naïve John F Kennedy who took office in January 1961. The invasion (The Bay of Pigs Invasion) took place on 14 April 1961. About 1,400 Cuban exiles disembarked at the Bay of Pigs but failed in their attempt to overthrow Castro. In October 1962, the Soviet Union who was giving financial aid to Cuba, attempted to install missiles on the island and aimed at America. John F Kennedy stood his ground and concealed from the Americans that he would remove American nuclear missiles from Turkey on the borders of Russia, in return for the Soviet Union abandoning the nuclearisation of Cuba. By 1963, Cuba was being driven to a full communist state, modelled on the Soviet Union an enemy of The United States of America. The standard of living in the 1970s was at poverty levels amidst discontent and continuing sanctions by America. Castro admitted the failures of his economic policies in a 1970 speech. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, there was no more financial aid and conditions worsened.

Cuba has since received aid and support from the People's Republic of China. In 2008, Fidel Castro resigned as president and his brother Raúl assumed the office. Raúl Castro commenced to move the country slowly but surely into a hybrid form of capitalism and communism, similar to China. Fidel Castro passed away on the 26th November 2016 and Cuba went into nine days of mourning. On the 19th April 2018, Raúl stepped down as president and became the President of the Council of State and President of the Council of Ministers. Today, Cuba is a planned economy which is dominated by the exports of sugar, tobacco, coffee and skilled labour. Cuba has high human development and in some metrics of national performance, including health care and education.

Chapter 23 - Transcendence

The ancients, long ago, sought a spiritual solution to unlock the mysteries of life and the Universe rather than the route of theoretical physics, quantum mechanics and thermodynamics entropy. They were able to relate to space, matter, universal consciousness and the desire for a higher plane of thought. I understood their drive for enlightenment and the problems they strived to overcome.

Yoga, in the 21st century, is highly regarded for physical exercise and relaxing mediation but several thousand years ago, the Homo sapiens were practising yoga asana, which originated in Vedas, the oldest religious texts of the Hindus. In that era, I had talked with Patañjali who practised the teachings of transcendence and I had persuaded him to leave. He accepted my advice but in defiance, he wrote 'The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali' as part of his legacy and his name has since become part of mythology. I understood his intentions were good but the soul has to endure eight stages of enlightenment on eight planes before it can be judged to transcend the Universe. Patañjali could not be allowed to teach the circumvention of transcendence.

Man wrestled with his huge leap in intelligence as he sought to unlock the physical mysteries of the Universe and to find his creator. This was something that appeared to be hard wired into his deoxyribonucleic acid but in reality, it was hard wired in his soul. The intelligence of mankind was directly linked to the soul as it was the soul that evolved and matured. The human brain was constrained in its development but even so, many great scientists and philosophers displayed a gift for greater intelligence. Many reasoned this intelligence was a paradigm shift in evolution but it was merely the progression of their soul.

I watched them through the window of my penthouse flat, down there, as they moved forward and through their next day. They share the same routines and experiences, the same basic instincts - hunger, sexuality, activity, reflection and creativity. These instincts not only increase and constrain their human behaviour but create varied drive responses. A single reflection, perhaps a task, a passed event, can send them into a state of preoccupation whereby they traverse a distance or drive a vehicle through the city without any memory of how they achieved it. Many practice sublimations whereby they cleanse their minds of negative thoughts, perhaps a regretful incident by substituting it with a positive thought. Others go even further with sublimation and channel their basic sexual urges, into energy by engaging in extreme exercise, physical work or even meditation to overcome them to maintain celibacy and a greater control over their mind and physical body.

If you look inside the pure soul of mankind you will find an innocence that you see in a baby when it first opens its eyes, kicks and giggles as it embraces life. Therein lies the truth and all the masks and barriers that are put up in life are torn down on death. When an innocent child is born asleep or dies young, there will be grief and therein is the purpose. Many will drown in that grief whilst others will embrace life and move forward to find enlightenment in their knowledge of the purpose. Throughout their life, they will experience a strange feeling of solace and innocence that wells up inside them with tears in those moments of melancholy. This is the

measure of the pure soul, the ability to move forward but also the ability to recognise its own innocence and humility.

Man has never fully appreciated that he has this subconscious desire to create or where it originated from. I have watched them build all manner of things from sand castles to space ships, beautiful gardens, growing seeds to become trees and all forms of creation. For many the satisfaction of their creation was complete and yet they did not fully understand what drove them to create. Many found a strange attraction to their old car, their old motorcycle, even to their land. They perceived something which required to be preserved and nurtured. Some would spend many hours and hard labour to maintain it and achieve phenomenal satisfaction through their efforts.

They wondered at their dreams but afterwards, many dreams were forgotten and in some they dreamt strange historical events, even taking part as players in those events; some in battles and some in debate. Some spoke foreign languages and even experienced enlightened intelligence; unknown to them in their consciousness. For some the ability to see and meet in their dreams a dead loved one, was a profound experience that remained unanswered and tugged at their heart for the rest of their life. The experience of transcendence was glimpsed with a loved one but for a moment as their soul competed with the physical brain in the wonder of the dream, a dream that was never forgotten.

Sadly, and for many, their arrogance is breathtaking and for all their existence on the planet, they have never learned the dangers of hubris. An individual will often push the limits of hubris and can be seen sparking like a 'fire cracker' until they die through sudden illness, in an accident or are murdered or suffer an overdose. In singularity, no one pays much attention, the death is but an eight-day wonder. When mendacity, greed, deceit and avarice rise to a level of mass hubris within the people of a continent, no one pays attention, until it is too late. It acts as a catalyst and the evil in their souls combines to rise to a crescendo which then implodes on them.

I left my New York penthouse and ventured down onto the street. I was heading for my favourite restaurant in London but I had a task to complete whilst on my way. I stopped outside and looked up and saw a young child, no more than 1 year old playing on a balcony and there was a glass panel weakened by the years of frost and heat that had set upon it. The child's mother came out as the glass panel shattered and the child fell headlong off the balcony with the sound of the mother's voice screaming in its ears. I watched her fall, tumbling down over some fourteen floors to certain death on the street below. The blackness fell and like a moth in a shaft of light, she softly fell, as everything slowed and then moved forward in segments like strobe lights flashing. I reached out and caught her in my arms and held her there, smiling at her pretty face and she smiled back. Her mother raced out of the building in tears, looking for her child. I walked forward and handed her over and left them in their loving embrace. In that moment, I was in London.

In human form, I did enjoy a large medium cooked steak with French fries, French mustard with a sprinkling of onion salt. What bliss as I lifted my knife and fork to cut the first tasty morsel. I could hear the clatter of cutlery and the whispers of approval as my collective tucked into their steaks. This restaurant in Ledbury Road, London was our favourite haunt and our collective spirits often met in our singularity and shed our telepathy, to share a repast. The restaurant was full and the Homo sapiens were tucking into their respective meals with social interaction, diverse conversation and the sound of merriment.

On reaching the eighth plane of enlightenment, the soul of man will unlock dimensional space, matter and universal consciousness. He will not require a human body and spaceships to travel throughout the Universe and he will learn the true nature of transcendence.

Chapter 24 - The Orion Protégé

Hatshepsut was married to her half-brother, Thutmose II during the Eighteenth Dynasty in Egypt. It was the custom that the rulers of Egypt, the Pharaohs, married within their family. The daughter of Hatshepsut and Thutmose II was called Neferure and she was a princess born to and became the highest-ranking priestess of the Amun cult which was based in Thebes in Upper Egypt. She was 'The Gods Wife of Amun' and I found her beauty to be so intoxicating, that I often re-visited her to witness the smile in her youthful happiness. History dictates that she died in her 11th to 16th year but I knew her when she was the first wife of her half-brother, Thutmose III and I was there when Neferure died and Samael, one of the Ad Messores, struck down her emerging soul.

Centuries later and in 1994, a book appeared called 'The Orion Mystery'. The Orion correlation theory by Robert Bauval remains unresolved in argument as to whether the Pyramids at Giza are aligned with the Orion Constellation but I know that the ancient Egyptians did recognise it as a path to enlightenment. I watched them as they sat on similar sand dunes to Robert Bauval and like him, they looked up through the clear night sky at the stars of Rigel, Alnilam, Mintaka, Bellatrix, Meissa, Betelgeuse, Alnitak, and Saiph and were struck by their starlight. The Egyptians worshipped Ra the sun god who later merged with the god Horus and in the era of 'The New Kingdom' their favoured god Amun was fused with Ra and became known as Amun-Ra. They regarded Orion as a god and called him Sah, the father of all gods. The Pharaohs, who thought of themselves as demigods (*children born of gods*) were sure that their souls were enlightened and would transcend to Orion. They thought by interbreeding they could protect and contain the enlightenment for themselves. Incest and hubris could not be tolerated and it followed that I sought the destruction of their souls and the lineage.

Religion has always played an important part in the beliefs of the Homo sapiens and whilst the belief of a supreme being binds them to the core, it is the binding in the strict rules of morality that holds their societies together. The three main religions of Islam, Christianity and Judaism have foundations of strong morality values but whilst Islam and Judaism are fearful of the 'wrath of god', the Christian religion had moved away from its biblical 'Old Testament' to the more liberal teachings of the 'New Testament' and especially the Catholic belief that all sins will be forgiven through a person's atonement prior to death. I have always appreciated that the morality found in religion can produce souls which are pure in spirit. However, on death (*like my destruction of the Pharaohs of Egypt*) a dark and evil soul will be destroyed and cast into the dark matter of the Universe, whilst a pure soul will ascend to the Universe and move onto the next plane of the enlightenment.

In 1977, I was witness to the birth of Anrn Olufemi in Cairo, Egypt at the home of her grandparents. Her mother, Nephthys, had lost her husband that year in the 'Egyptian Libyan War' when he was killed on the border of the two countries by shellfire. She died shortly after giving birth to Anrn and I watched as Nephthys

blue translucent soul left her dead body and gently stroked her new-born child on the face before ascending into the Universe in a shaft of bright light. The grandparents in their grief and crying, were suddenly overcome by a strange feeling of tranquillity and they saw a strange yellow glow enshroud the young infant who was lying on the bed. In a moment, the glow was gone but they were unaware that her soul had received its first transient pulse as it stepped onto the eighth plane. In the years that followed and as the child grew up, there were many of differing religions who claimed she had been blessed by their god. Anrn was raised by her grandparents and on reaching her eighteenth birthday and soon thereafter, they passed away within a year of each other. They left her the house in Cairo and a substantial amount of money from their estate.

Anrn was always respectful of her Islamic religion and to the prayer of the Salah. These five prayers were in accordance to the position of the sun and known as Fajr, Dduhr, Asr, Maghrib and Isha'a. As a woman, it was her right on the Friday to pray alone, so she chose the Zuhr prayer (*substituting the Dduhr prayer*). Anrn adhered to the Egyptian strict dress code by wearing traditional clothes. Her wealth afforded her many different styles and colours of sandals, long skirts, open abayas and hijabs. As always, the smile on her face shone through her hijab which covered her head and neck and her deep brown eyes sparkled in the midst of her beauty. She maintained this modest demeanour throughout her life and yet everyone she met was instantly attracted to her. Men craved her attention but it was not in a sexual way, they were drawn to her countenance like moths to flame. Anrn was very much a part of the Muslim community and everywhere she went, people were in awe of her presence, her humility and those who sought her company felt a strange feeling of peace and contentment.

Anrn Olufemi was to become one of my greatest protégés and one who remained pure in spirit. There had been many before her, bright shining lights in the political and religious ferment who had been recognised for their humility and kindness and some for their extraordinary genius. There were those who had died in childhood and yet the purity of their soul radiated during their short lives and had touched everyone.

Anrn studied Chinese Mandarin at Cairo University through the Confucius Institute and pupil exchange with the Peking University in China. In 1998, she applied for a student visa to visit St Petersburg in Russia and study the Russian language at the Liden & Denz Intercultural Institute of Language Private School. Anrn spent a year in St Petersburg before returning to her beloved Egypt. Her long-term objective was to seek employment as a translator and work for the Egyptian Government but before this, she decided to travel and visit two of the world's great pyramid sites, starting with Giza. Of course, as the 'Pyramids of Giza' were situated in Cairo, she had been there before but more in a casual way with friends. On this occasion, there was something drawing her there and I went in her company to see the night show with the coloured light display on the pyramids and the Sphinx.

I watched her as she sat amongst the audience and was enthralled by the deep voice of the historical presentation and the atmospherically music and coloured lights which accompanied it. When the show was

over, Anrn did not leave but walked amongst the empty chairs in front of the Sphinx and she stood taking in it's dark shape and those of the pyramids immediately behind it. Everyone had left and she went forward in the darkness and touched the temple wall which is part of the outer wall. I had to smile as I remembered the days of the 'Old Kingdom' when the Sphinx had been carved with the head of Anapa and the waters of the Nile, during the flooding, (*once a year*) flowed near to the monument. The king, Cheops, used water-raising devices to let the waters into the inner walled compound, to form a moat around the Sphinx. Today, that cannot happen as the Aswan Dam has put paid to inundation and today the Sphinx bares the head of a pharaoh from the 'Middle Kingdom' as the original head of Anapa was re-carved in that period. Knowledge of history is a wondrous thing and the body of the Sphynx is not that of a lion but that of the 'African Golden Wolf' venerated and known by the Egyptians as Anapa and translated by the Greeks as Anubis, the god of the dead.

Anrn, sat down with her back to the temple wall and looked up at the stars in the night sky. She reached up with both hands to form a diamond and as she lined it up with her right eye to view Rigel, the brightest star in the Orion Constellation which is seven hundred and seventy-two light years from Earth, she felt herself fall into a strange state of utter calmness and contentment. Her eyes closed and as her mind drifted into a deep sleep, Anrn left her body and floated high above, in the era of the 'Old Kingdom'. Below her was the Sphynx in all its painted splendour with the head of Anubis standing guard over the temple complex and behind it, the pyramids of ancient Egypt stood as they did when they were first completed by the stonemasons. The moon was full and the glow lit up the scene in all its glory and the Nile waters stood at the foot of the Giza plateau. Anrn wondered at the beautiful polished finish on the stonework of the Sphynx, the Temple and the backcloth of the Pyramids gleaming in the moonlight. She had experienced transcendence, the ability to traverse dimensions and matter and there would be other such moments in her life. I watched as her blue translucent form slowly descended in the night sky and transcended back to merge with her body. A security guard was shaking her and when she awoke, she smiled at him as he helped her stand up.

The 'Intiwatana Pyramid' at Machu Picchu in the Cusco Region, Urubamba Province, Machupicchu District of Peru was the next on Anrn's list and she embraced the immense peace and tranquility of the 15th-century Inca citadel situated on a mountain ridge high above sea level. She climbed the long steps to the outdoor chamber and in the middle, she saw in the exhibition, a device used by the Incas as a measuring instrument for scientific purposes such as astronomy. It had been used to determine the light and shadows from the sun, during different seasonal periods, such as the solstice and equinox. Although Anrn was travelling in a strange country, she still adhered to her strict Islamic religion. I watched as she knelt on a small mat on a grass covered plain near the top of the citadel enclosure and conducted her prayers. People stared at her and for many of a western culture, they could not understand the allegiance to her god. They would have been even more perplexed to learn, that Anrn did not possess a smartphone, or any other communication device or even a television. At home, she listened to classical Muslim music and studied her Quran along with other books of history and philosophy. Although, Anrn was extremely wealthy, her material needs were very frugal but her wealth did allow her to travel extensively and experience how other people lived.

The Islamic religion is practiced via the five 'pillars' of Islam. The first pillar is the reciting of "*there is no god but the One God, and Muhammad is his prophet.*" This is repeated by Muslims every day, believing that making this statement in faith and sincerity is what makes one a Muslim. The second is daily prayer and Muslims must pray on five occasions each day, facing Mecca, the holy city in Saudi Arabia. The third pillar is the provision of alms for the poor and percentages of income are given to aid them. The fourth is fasting during the holy month of Ramadan. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim year and commemorates the giving of the Quran to Mohammed. All Muslims fast from dawn to dusk during this month and because Islam uses a lunar calendar, Ramadan comes at a different period each year. The final pillar is the pilgrimage to Mecca and every adult Muslim, who is able, is expected to travel to Mecca once in his or her life in the month of Dhul-Hijah, the period of rituals and rites.

Muslims from all over the world travel many miles to visit their holy cities of Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia and Jerusalem in Israel where they pray at the Al-Aqsa Mosque (*Dome of the Rock*) situated on the Temple Mount known as Haram esh-Sharif to the Muslim faith. Anrn, visited Mecca and Medina but it was whilst visiting the Al-Aqsa Mosque on 'The Temple Mount' in Jerusalem, Israel that she received the second and last transient pulse. Darkness had fallen and Anrn was leaving the mosque and crossing the courtyard when she was suddenly forced to the ground and onto her knees. She rolled over and fell silent as her body became limp and lifeless. People tried to assist her but were held back by an unseen force and suddenly a bolt of blue light flashed from the sky and struck her body. Many of those watching ran away whilst others knelt down on the ground. The lights dissipated, Anrn awakened and rose to her feet and looked around at those kneeling before her. She walked to them and helped them to their feet and brushed down the dust from their clothes. They gathered around her for explanations but she had none and they stood in wonderment at her new and beautiful blue eyes that shone out from her face. Those who witnessed the event, swore that her brown eyes were shimmering with blue lights and when she awoke, her eyes had turned blue. They would later recall their stories but the general populace of the world chose not to believe them.

The next day, Anrn, was walking in 'The Old City' of Jerusalem and she visited 'The Western Wall' which is a holy place and was originally part of the construction for the 'Second Jewish Temple' built by Herod the Great and the basis for the encasement of the natural, steep hill known to Jews and Christians as the 'The Temple Mount'. Anrn saw a small Muslim boy walking towards a group of Israeli soldiers carrying a backpack that he had found. They say that telepathy can be found in certain human beings and the power to transmit and receive signals and thoughts from the mind is a tremendous gift but Anrn now had the power of 'Orion' in the blue light and the ability to read souls. She knew the boy's soul was pure and his intentions were good but she could also read the souls and the minds of the soldiers. They feared there was a bomb in the backpack and raised their guns to aim at the boy. The soldiers shouted for the boy to stop or they would fire but Anrn's light blue eyes intensified like the sun and she saw deep into their minds and knew they would not. However, one relished the moment and saw delight in killing the boy. He without hesitation fired his rifle and the bullet

struck the little boy in the head whereby he fell as the bullet passed through and struck the ground behind him. A mother rushed forward to cradle her son and as she did so, the soldier raised his rifle once more.

To this day, those who witnessed the scene are not believed, the miracles were discredited as a myth but for some they were a profound experience never to be forgotten. Anrn's blue eyes blazed in their intensity and penetrated through the eyes of the soldier to release the purity which was locked deep in his soul. Its release conflicted with the corruption in his mind and in that moment, he turned his gun on himself and blew his brains out. As the soldier fell to the ground, I watched his arms and legs twitching and then he died. Anrn rushed to the side of the mother and took the boy from her and embraced him in her arms. People gasped as a yellow glow as bright as the sun enveloped them both and many had to shield their eyes from the glare. The yellow turned to vibrant light blue and so warm that it forced the mother to hug the ground and those watching to step back from the scene. I watched the little boy's eyes open and he smiled as his wounds healed and disappeared from his body. The light dissipated and Anrn put him down on the ground and he ran to his mother's embrace. Anrn picked up the backpack, opened it and spilled the picnic contents onto the ground for the soldiers to see. Nobody except myself saw one of the Ad Messores arrive and as the dead soldier's black translucent soul emerged from his body, Thanatos cut off its head with his sword amid long and torrid screams from the open wound as the soul was turned into dark matter and dispersed by the breeze.

I went with Anrn as she left Jerusalem for Cairo but she knew her life would never be the same. She possessed the transient pulses from 'The Orion Constellation' the powers of healing by touch and the ability to merge with the souls of all mankind. Wherever she walked, people and animals embraced her humility, her empathy and in her presence their souls were refreshed in their purity to overcome the evil that mankind had inflicted on their minds. Anrn, like many others on the eighth plane, healed thousands, took the weapons out of their hands but one of my greatest achievements, my Orion Protégé could not change the evil ways of the Homo sapiens and prevent their inevitable downfall.

One summer, amongst the dust of Palestine, I smiled as her soul was transformed into pure energy as it transcended her body. Anrn died instantly as a result of an explosion caused by a missile fired from Israel into the community of Palestine. In the searing heat of the flash, her body was burnt to ash but her soul reached out to me and I clasped it in my arms. We turned and saw eleven immortals of pure blue energy standing in a circle which they slowly formed around us. Anrn walked forward to link with them and I smiled because at last my collective was complete.

Chapter 25 - Lawford

It was a cold night and Ross Lawford shivered as he exited the warm police car. It was the 'Winter of Discontent' in 1978-79 and he struggled to push aside the piles of household waste on the pavement to clear a path to the gate. The rats scurried out and across his shoes as they sought their escape; but they would soon return. Lawford knocked on the door and an old woman bade him enter the terraced house. It was cold inside and an old man sat back on a worn-out chair. There was no electricity due to the power cuts but a few burning candles lit up the room in an eerie yellow glow that cast human shadows on the walls.

"I am dying son, this time it is final," exclaimed the man, as Lawford knelt down to offer comfort and reassured him that the ambulance was coming and would soon have him in the hospital. The old man smiled, *"no use son, I have a bad heart."* Lawford reached out and on touching the old man's hand, he found it cold and clammy. The knock on the door brought the ambulancemen and Lawford watched as they placed the man on a stretcher and carried him out to the ambulance. He asked the woman if she wanted to go with her husband but the answer surprised him. *"What the hell do I want to go with him for, he's better away, all my life he's been nothing but a nuisance."* It was not Lawford's first introduction to marital discontent; throughout his police service he had experienced a wealth of human misery, grief and detritus. He decided to obtain full particulars of the old man from the wife and as he did so, his police radio announced that the old man had died in the ambulance. The woman showed no signs of grief on hearing the news, lit a cigarette and sat down on the worn-out chair.

Lawford, as was the procedure, drove his police car up to the hospital and sat in the back of the ambulance with the old man to wait on a doctor to come out. He would note the doctor's details and the time death was pronounced. Lawford had sat in many ambulances alongside many such corpses and endured the smell that stuck in his memory. Eventually, he finally realised that it was not the corpses he was smelling but the diesel fumes from the ambulances; a strong sense of smell can be as much a curse as a blessing. Thereafter, every time he smelled diesel; he remembered those corpses.

Lawford followed the ambulance in his car to the mortuary and went to the back door to open it for the ambulance men and their stretcher. He was met by a pile of dead bodies stacked two high and in neat rows that he had to weave his way through, in-between the small gaps. There was no lighting but an outside diesel electric generator was working to keep a deep freeze going and the doors were wide open to fill the room with freezing air. Lawford shone his torch to guide his path and coughed as the smell pervaded his nostrils and his breath blew plumes of mist up into the air. Blood was on the floor as it drained from those corpses that had been mangled in road accidents. Torn faces with wide open dry fish like eyes stared up at him as if caught by surprise from the torch light. The body trays were all full and inside the freezer lay decomposed bodies, their maggots frozen in time. He filled in the mortuary ledger with the body details, grabbed a name tag and

tied it to the big toe of the old man. The ambulance men had placed him near the back door in the only available space left and on top of another body. In all, there were probably some 60 to 70 bodies lying on the floor of the mortuary as well as some 20 more in the trays in the open cabinets.

Lawford drove his police car through the dark empty city streets and cursed the striking gravediggers for all the dead bodies at the mortuary. He cursed the striking miners who were preventing coal reaching the powered stations which caused electricity blackouts and his tropical fish at home to be heated by candles, set some distance from the glass base of the tank. He then smiled, it wasn't a job, it was an adventure. His views on the police would change and by the late 1980s the police became politicised. Part of the code 'the police will have no political affiliations' was broken as the politicians at government and local level began to apply political pressure on the Chief Constables and the police service. The higher ranks were made up of men and women straight out of university who invariably possessed law degrees but very little common sense in relation to beat policing.

The 'police beat system' was broken as police numbers were reduced, the primary function of a police constable 'to prevent crime through visibility on the street' was abolished and the computer failed to replace his local knowledge of 'family trees' along with known and potential criminals. When Lawford joined the police, the average time that a police constable spent on a beat was ten years and, in some cases, their entire career. He knew that a failure to police the public properly would eventually lead to the police force 'firefighting' criminal incidents rather than preventing them.

Lawford became a dinosaur when he realised that the courts had become politicised; passing judgements not on the 'essentials of evidence relating to the crime' but based on popular and political sentiment. The courts were rotten to the core as prosecutors and defence lawyers delivered plea bargains in rock solid cases where criminals received lenient sentences and, in most cases, given community sentences when they should have gone to jail. He spent a great deal of his time providing evidence in criminal court cases and knew only too well the political interference that was applied to judges and prosecutors, especially to save the government money. He detested the bale act which allowed hardened and persistent criminals, whom he had arrested, freedom on the streets prior to their court appearance and a reduction in a prison term for good behaviour as both encouraged further criminality. His greatest enemy was the disloyalty of his fellow constables who sought favour, advancement and promotion through gossiping to senior officers about him and other policemen. There were many; those who joined the masonic fraternity to curry favour and of course those of a religious and liberal persuasion. In his last year, policemen were being dismissed from the service due to their colleagues' disloyalty. A police force that lacked loyalty amongst its officers could not possibly function.

Lawford instigated early retirement from the police despite being asked to stay but in reality, they held onto him for another two years as he had to attend many outstanding court cases to provide evidence against criminals he had arrested. In such court proceedings, it was often necessary for him to refer to his notebook

which he had to collect from the police station records department. They even requested him by letter to join the training team at police headquarters but he threw the letter in the waste bin and did not answer it. He was sad when he finally left, because he felt the changes in the 'policing policy' stood for the opposite of his training and traditional beat policing. Lawford felt the same as T.E. Lawrence when he left the army. Lawrence had later written 'The Seven Pillars of Wisdom'.

For Lawford, the new 'political' police force had no need of his services and he wrote in his memoirs - *Like Lawrence in Arabia, I bade them goodbye, they maintained their companionship and I was forgotten; no longer serving, no longer of importance. They marched on but to what end? All those years, all that energy, all those glorious moments - to what avail? I retreated to my house, my motorcycle and obscurity - I wrote a book. Lawrence would have understood.*

Chapter 26 - Pandora

I decided to visit my brother Epimetheus on the island of Hydrea in the 'Pleistocene' period, some two million years ago in human prehistory. I walked on the island, along a white pebble dashed beach at the water's edge and enjoyed the feeling of the sea as it gently swept back and forth over my feet; I did so much enjoy the human form. The shoreline was part of a large half-moon inlet and in another dimension, it would be known as 'Mandraki Bay'. I could see a small blue coloured fishing boat which was pulled up and clear of the waters. It was of a 'Greek' wooden design and small enough to be manhandled by a single person. I smiled at the thought of Epimetheus, stubbornly sticking to the human form as he fought to put it in the sea; still he enjoyed his fishing, a simple pleasure that served food on his table.

I followed a well-worn path up the side of a hill to an out crop, overlooking the bay, and there stood his house. It was built around a cobbled courtyard and the walls were made from wood and mud bricks. It had small windows with no glass, but wooden shutters kept out the hot sun. The walls inside were decorated with colourful tiles and paintings. Epimetheus washed using a small bucket or in a nearby stream and afterwards rubbed his body with perfumed oil to keep his skin soft. He lit his home with flickering oil lamps and slept on a mattress which was stuffed with wool, feathers and dry grass.

Epimetheus lived a simple life, one which brought him peace and contentment but then there was his wife, Pandora. I did enjoy my meetings with him and although he shunned company, he always welcomed me with open arms. Epimetheus, the foolish, the Titan, an immortal and a representative of mankind could live in any dimension of the Universe but he chose to live on the island in an interglacial warm climate. The creation of mankind and the introduction of their higher intelligence, he laid at my door. I accepted my part but he never accepted his. Despite my many warnings, and besought by the beauty of the female immortal, Pandora, he brought her to Earth as his companion. In human history, Pandora first appeared in Hesiod's poem in the 'Theogony' written in the 8th to 7th Centuries BC, where he enthuses. *"From her is the race of women and female kind: of her is the deadly race and tribe of women who live amongst mortal men to their great trouble, no helpmates in hateful poverty, but only in wealth. He reaches deadly old age without anyone to tend his years, and though he at least has no lack of livelihood while he lives, yet, when he is dead, his kinsfolk divides his possessions amongst them"*. Hesiod concedes that occasionally a man finds a good wife.

No truer words were ever spoken and written, for Pandora released sexual curiosity on mankind and the emotion of jealousy whereby the 'bitch' in certain women, conceived through man and borne of woman, created sexual havoc between men, husband and wives, mothers and sons and especially brothers. Epimetheus took Pandora and retreated from the world of modern man but the jar had been truly opened.

Epimetheus greeted me, *"ah, my dear brother Prometheus, I welcome your arrival. I assume you have come from the Draco Constellation; perhaps you have become fed up with the glowing blue white light of Thuban in*

the black sky of the Universe?" I smiled and replied, "whilst I enjoy the Draco 'Dragon' Constellation with its north pole star, I have missed your company." He laughed and ushered me past the goats and the chickens and into his house. We sat on wooden chairs at a plain wooden table in his rustic kitchen upon a well-worn stone floor. Pandora was cooking at the log fired stove and gave me a scowl on witnessing my arrival. Her words bounced off me as I was used to her caustic remarks. *"So, Epimetheus, I see you have brought your useless brother into my house for a meal. Due to all the trouble he has caused with that human creation, I am forced to live a reclusive life with you as my boring companion, and now he has arrived, to add to the boredom."*

I made the gesture of a smile in her direction which was met with a further scowl, and then thankfully, she returned to her cooking. The table was bare but I had high hopes that Pandora would soften and refreshments would arrive. Somewhat contrite, I lowered my head but my eyes could still see his stern face and Epimetheus was not in a forgiving mood. I mumbled, *"I am sorry that you have withdrawn to this isolation but I was hoping that you could help me. I accept that the creation of a new human species and one I endowed with intelligence was a mistake but I still champion them. I endowed them with a thirst for scientific knowledge, the hope to understand and improve their existence but sometimes they over reach themselves. Their tinkering at the lower levels of their society infrastructure opens a path which leads to wider and unintended consequences; they call it 'Opening Pandora's Box' which I find amusing."*

Epimetheus laughed and suddenly the atmosphere of the room darkened. From the corner of my eye, I could see that Pandora had swung around clutching a large pot and uttered the cry that I had heard many times. *"You are a monster Prometheus, and its 'Pandora's Jar' not a bloody box."* I quickly changed the subject to that of his boat and Epimetheus regaled me with his fishing tales and his high regard for the pleasantries of the human form, especially the food, the wine and the sexual experience. A shrill voice interrupted the flow of our conversation. *"Aye, sex mad but you'll stay here with me, I'll not have you consorting with those human bitches."*

Eventually, after we found a conversation that suited Pandora, she softened and brought refreshments to the table. A bottle of Raki and two cups were laid before us and as she poured the drinks, I could see that her scowl was replaced with a smirk. I raised my cup and offered a toast to their continued happiness and contentment on Hydrea. It was an excellent apéritif and raised my hopes in expecting a sumptuous meal to follow. I was not disappointed and Pandora laid a repast before us, fit for a Titan. I have a liking for Greek dishes and the appetiser was Loukaniko, a sausage made from goat's meat, served with orange zest flavouring. We next enjoyed Faki, a lentil soup served with vinegar, olives and herring but the pièce de résistance was the main course a superbly cooked Souvlaki, a skewered grilled chicken, marinated in oil, salt, pepper, oregano and drizzled with lemon. The side salad consisted of tomatoes, onion, feta cheese, and Kalamata olives seasoned with salt and oregano, and dressed with olive oil. Sliced green capsicum was a welcome addition. I was feeling rather full when Pandora brought over Baklava, a rich, sweet dessert pastry made of layers of filo filled with chopped nuts and sweetened and held together with syrup or honey. How could I refuse, and

Epimetheus nodded his approval as we both tucked in. Although a tremendous selection of homemade cheese was laid out, I opted for a large cup of Metaxa sweet brandy and sat back to enjoy it.

It was a lazy afternoon and we all sat outside on chairs under the shade of a large olive tree and in the warm breeze coming up from the sea, we fell asleep. As the heat of the day cooled, I awoke to find Epimetheus sitting in the kitchen at the table. I went inside and as I sat down beside him, he poured me a cool beer from a jug into a tall ceramic cup. I asked, *"where is she"* and he smiled, *"don't worry, Pandora is down on the beach for her afternoon swim."* He chortled, *"can you not see the sharks legging it out to sea?"* I burst out laughing and for a brief moment, I gazed out to the waters before settling back to drink my beer. Several cups later, we had both become somewhat relaxed, first by the effects of the alcohol and second in the knowledge that Pandora was far removed from our company.

He opened up the conversation. *"Where are you these days, my brother, still in the 21st Century?"* I took a sip from my drink and replied, *"I have chosen to reside in New York and my constant companion is Melusine who also acts as my chauffeur. We have assumed human form and people think I am a rich tycoon of some standing."* Epimetheus curt reply came as no surprise. *"I cannot stand human company"* and in a low whisper he went on, *"mankind never learns from history and repeats the same mistakes, over and over again. The influence of Pandora has permeated down through the ages and mankind keeps tinkering whereby a small change in the way they live, opens up into many streams of change whereby they cannot control the outcome. Worse of all, the emotional interference of women and the emancipation of men, has brought nothing but despair on their relationships."* I asked him why he was whispering. He replied, *"I don't want Pandora to hear me."* I smiled and told him that Pandora was far away, down on the beach but he just glanced around before replying. *"That woman is everywhere, don't be fooled, she has eyes like a hawk, ears like a bat and a tongue that could clip a hedge."*

I finally concluded our conversation. *"I must undertake the path which will lead to the destruction of mankind, save for a few. The dimensional mosaics of modern man in the Universe are in their infancy and are but a snap of the fingers in human time in relation to the age of the Universe. Destruction will be like a great fire in a forest and from the embers, we will see all manner of animals and plants, including mankind, arise as new shoots to new horizons. Why don't you come with me, it will be a great adventure for you to mingle once again with human kind?"* Our conversation was suddenly interrupted by Pandora who appeared soaking wet from behind a bush. *"You are not going back there, I won't allow it, so you can just forget it."* Epimetheus laughed and picking up his towel, and bidding me goodbye, he headed down to the beach on the hillside path. Pandora was less than pleased but as she dried her hair, she turned to me with a welcoming smile. *"Tell me my dear brother, have you ever seen such woman like me, look at my body, is it not perfection, do you not desire it?"* I greatly admired her beauty but not her demeanour. I quickly transcended to meet with Socrates in Greece and her loud shriek followed my transcendence. *"Come back you, I am not finished."*

Thus, I escaped Pandora and left Epimetheus to his island. He was content living with the wildlife and bird species. He enjoyed walking at dusk to be surrounded by small, harmless bats, flying in the evening breeze, and he often swam alongside sea turtles, dolphins, and swordfish. Epimetheus had found peace on Hydrea and Pandora despite her moods, was a good companion and best of all, an excellent cook.

In many ways, I envied the simplicity of my brother's life.

ADDENDUM - A Brief History of Hydrea (Modern Day Hydra)

The island of Hydrea is one of the Saronic Islands in the Aegean Sea between mainland Greece and Turkey in the Mediterranean Sea. In the 'Pleistocene' period, some two million years ago in human prehistory, it was uninhabited and its name came from the plentiful waters from natural springs set amidst mountains and hillsides; beautiful pine-forested valleys and a craggy coastline which borders its fifty-two square kilometres. In spring, it burst into beautiful colour due to a wealth of wildflowers, including white and yellow daisies, cyclamen, irises, thistles, and red poppies. Purple, orange, and even yellow bougainvillea, hibiscus, plumbago, and geraniums bloom and persisted throughout the summer. Century plants, prickly pears, Hottentot figs, and cacti were ubiquitous. In addition to the pine trees in the hills and mountains, cypress, olive, eucalyptus, fig, lemon, and even orange trees abounded. The island boasted a variety of wildlife and bird species which included partridges, quails, swallows, owls, and many migratory birds. It provided a home for rabbits, foxes as well as goats and feral cats. Tortoises were common and semi-poisonous snakes hid amongst the rocks. The sea population was extensive and included sea turtles, dolphins, and swordfish.

In the Helladic period, 3200-1200 BCE, during the bronze age, it served as a Greek maritime base. It was depopulated during the Dorian invasion of Greece around 1200 BCE but in 800 BCE it regained its population of farmers and herders. The island always remained on the margins of human history. In AD 330 it lost its population again during the conquest of the 'Byzantine Empire in the East' also referred to as the Eastern Roman Empire and Byzantium, which was the continuation of the Roman Empire in its eastern provinces. The Roman capital city of Byzantium was renamed Constantinople and, in that time, Hydrea's inhabitants fled pirate depredations. The Byzantine Empire fell to the 'Ottoman Empire' in AD 1453 and Constantinople was renamed Istanbul. Hydrea became known as the modern island of 'Hydra'. A plague in AD 1792 killed a large part of the population, and many people moved away. However, by the end of AD 1800, Hydra had again become quite prosperous, with its vessels trading as far as France, Spain, and even the Americas.

During AD 1821 and 1830 in the Greek War of Independence against the Ottoman Empire, the islands inhabitants eventually joined ranks with the Greeks who were later assisted by the Russian Empire, Great Britain, and the Kingdom of France, while the Ottomans were aided by their North African vassals, the eyalets of Egypt, Algeria, and Tripolitania, and the Beylik of Tunis. By AD 1900, Hydra was home to some 125 boats,

10,000 sailors and some 16,000 inhabitants. Between AD 1941 and 1943, during the Axis occupation of Greece during World War II, there was famine on Hydra. It is estimated that some eight percent of the population died of starvation. The island has almost no night time light pollution, which is a boon to astronomy. Although the island's name is derived from ancient springs known to the Ancient Greeks, it became almost dry and the islanders imported water by boat from the Greek mainland. It now boasts a desalination plant (converts sea water) which provides Hydra with 1600 cubic meters of drinkable water per day. The plant is situated in Mandraki and was opened in August 2014 when Mr Aggelos Kotronis was honoured for his contribution in its implementation. Today, the island enjoys revenue from tourism with its many visitors each year.

Chapter 27 - Disparate Impact

I left my flat in Paris and whilst in Saint-Germain-des-Prés, I reflected on Manet, Pablo Picasso, Sartre, De Beauvoir, Samuel Beckett, Richard Wright and the many others who had held my admiration. Such great occasions, so many memories but today the district was but a shadow of its former self. Like so many other cities in the world, it was gripped with the fear of terrorism and Paris had endured its fair share with many of its population killed and maimed. I was enjoying my amble and my reflections, when I was contacted by Apollyon who was down at the channel tunnel on the English side with Samael. I finished my walk and I stood as one with Apollyon on a beach near Folkestone.

The terror that was about to unfold in the English Channel was not driven by a single overnight event but by a multitude of incidents throughout the world and the main catalyst was of American design. The foundation stone was imperialism and the main fracture was migration. Over the centuries, I have witnessed mankind's many migrations, some were caused by the forces of nature such as famine, floods, volcanic eruptions and lest we forget, the current ice age with its many cold glacial and warm interglacial periods. In the last eleven thousand, seven hundred years of the 'Holocene Epoch of the Quaternary Period' and as this interglacial period comes to an end; the world, once again will be faced with the rise of a glacial period spanning many thousands of years. This new cold glacial period will prove sudden and far reaching as interglacial global warming ends abruptly. It will cause the migration of Homo sapiens from the north but they will be of small number.

Since 2016, mass migration has been driven by economic opportunity rather than natural disasters. Now, the United Kingdom was imploding through overpopulation combined with substandard education, mass unemployment and unsustainable debt. The rise of ethnic ghettos had almost consumed entire cities and the weakness of the Christian white race was marginalised by its own political neoliberal elite. Ever since the United Kingdom had left the European Union, certain political factions of the far-left assisted the Europeans in driving home their 'Coudenrove-Kalergi Plan'. They sought to maintain the continual migration of ethnics, mainly from Africa, into the United Kingdom. Now as global events rose to a crescendo, there would be a disparate impact. Folkestone will become the catalyst for a new dawning on the civilised world of the Homo sapiens. The 'Holocene Epoch' had marked out a new global map along with the impact of the human species and now both were nearing the end.

It was a beautiful spring morning and the ships were out there in the English Channel, their metal glinting in the sun's rays. I was on the beach near Folkestone with Samael when the first of four great explosions occurred within the Channel Tunnel. I heard the dull thuds which caused the ground under our feet to tremble and then I saw mountains of water rise up in the sea. The tunnel was ripped open and hundreds were losing their lives in the explosions or drowned as the sea flooded in. Several motor cars with trapped air inside, rose to the

surface only to sink as their interiors slowly filled with water. I saw occupants frantically opening windows and doors to escape their sinking vehicles and many survived. The sky and all around were filled with darkness and I saw the blue translucent souls of the pure, rising out of the water to be carried away in shafts of white light up and out into the Universe. Samael struck the sea with his sword and the water turned to blood red and shafts of red light descended from the Universe to light up those dark souls swimming in the water. I watched them as they slowly dissolved into dark matter which floated away. Their screams echoed across the sea as one by one their souls were terminated.

Eventually all was quiet and as the daylight replaced the darkness, it revealed the body parts of the dead along with oil, diesel and petrol fuel, floating up to the surface from the great holes in the seabed. Survivors were swimming in the flotsam and flocks of seagulls were diving on the bits of floating flesh and shoals of fish were attracted to the blood. I witnessed boats arriving with fishermen who had come to search for the living, only to become sick over the sides of their boats on seeing the horror. All the while, the gulls feasted on the flesh and the contents of the fishermen's stomachs floating on the sea.

The Christian far-right perpetrators of this awful event had escaped and I learned from Baal that five Ministers of Parliament along with two journalists and three bankers in London had been assassinated at the same moment as the tunnel explosions. It seemed to be coordinated terror attacks to deliver the most confusion and neuter the efforts of the police. The Christian far-right attackers in London had also escaped undetected. Baal reported that the Ad Messores were busy terminating the dark souls of the MPs, the journalists and the bankers.

In that moment, I went to London and turned my attention to a protégé of mine who I knew as Agares but his name was Godfrey Hugues. He was a tall man of bearing and he had a cat like walk and a fine gait. Godfrey was immensely proud of his Christian upbringing and his lineage to Godfrey of Bouillon, so much so that he had formed a sect of Christian followers. The sect met once a year, each occasion in a different hall above a different pub in the depths of the Cotswolds' to plan matters of importance. Telephones, mobile phones, computers, credit cards and all electronic devices were permanently banned from their lives as were letters of correspondence - they were off the grid, so to speak. Each was single without any family ties and lived alone in a village, their address and name unknown to the others. They all worked as casual labourers on various building sites throughout the United Kingdom and their wages were paid in cash.

Godfrey was immaculately dressed by Crombie with a white silk shirt and red tie, a beautiful dark blue 'made to measure' cashmere suit and polished off with black Berluti Alessandro shoes. Around his shoulders hung a black Retro overcoat from Crombie and the hat on his silver head was a black trilby from Lock & Co. He was of course a chameleon and he would change his appearance to blend in with his environment. Closed circuit television and electronic surveillance could not track him as he knew how to disappear from view and reappear in a different role. From a casual labourer to a city gent to a beggar then a biker to a tourist, those were some

of his many disguises. A man who has no confidantes and carries not means of electronic communications is indeed very difficult to identify and to track.

I followed him on the street and he entered a beautiful Victorian styled public house near to Big Ben and a popular watering hole. I watched Godfrey put his hat down on the bar top, order a pint of ale and pay the barman by cash. As he slowly sipped his drink, his eyes surveyed the room and within a few minutes he set down his pint next to his hat and followed a man into the 'House of Office'. This was not the first occasion that Godfrey had visited this particular public house and he was known as a regular and a man of wealth. Many said he was in the stock market or perhaps banking but no-one knew for sure. He came and he went and his visits were always around lunch but only for his pint and a read of his Financial Times. Godfrey had often spoken to this particular man in the public house and in the 'House of Office' but it was on this occasion that all the tumblers fell into line to form a jackpot. I followed and from nowhere, Thanatos appeared smiling at my side. The 'House of Office' was empty and the cubicle doors stood ajar waiting for their next customer.

Godfrey watched the man enter and lock a cubicle whilst he took occupancy of the next one in line. In that moment, Godfrey pulled a black Walther P22 pistol fitted with a black AAC Element Compressor out of a shoulder holster situated under his suit jacket. He stood on the toilet seat and leaning over the cubicle's side frame, he fired two silent .22 bullets down through the skull of the man sitting on the toilet seat next to him. The bullets penetrated the man's brain and ended up lodged in the top of his spine. Godfrey watched the man slump backwards whilst his rear end kept him securely wedged in his sitting position. Death had been instantaneous with next to no blood and other than two neat holes in the top of his head, he appeared to be sleeping. Godfrey, clipped his gun back in its holster and confident it was neatly hidden by his suit jacket and more so by his overcoat, he returned to the bar to finish his drink and read his paper.

I watched the dead man's soul appear through the locked door of the cubicle and walk over to a mirror above the wash basins. He seemed somewhat perplexed as he stared at his black translucent form in its reflection. I watched his face turn to horror when he saw Thanatos in the mirror standing behind him with a sword in his hand. Before the man could react, Thanatos swung the sword and the man's translucent head was severed from his body. I watched the headless form stagger about and a long and horrible scream emitted from the open neck as it turned to dust and dark matter as his soul was terminated. Thanatos smiled, bowed to me and was gone.

I left the public house and, in that moment, I returned to Paris for an espresso at my favourite café and per chance to sit quietly and read my paper.

Godfrey remained in the public house before finally bidding his farewell to the barman. It was much later that day when the man's body was found dead in the cubicle. That night, Godfrey became a labourer with unkempt mousy brown hair and unshaven with dirty finger nails. He wore an old shirt, torn jeans, scuffed working boots, a worn donkey jacket and he travelled north by bus to Manchester. Similarly, one of Godfrey's sect was leaving

Liverpool to re-locate in London. The newspapers the following day, released the story about a Minister of Parliament found shot dead in the toilets of a public house in London.

The die was cast as the ruling neoliberal elite in parliament, the bankers and the left-wing media, realised that they were now the target for a new breed of extremist who intended to kill whilst remaining untraceable. The Christian far-right would eventually lead the peoples of the United Kingdom into civil war.

Chapter 28 - Paul Gregory

Christianity had become a dirty word in the European Union, it had stood for two thousand years and had bound the morality of an entire continent including Great Britain, one of the greatest empires the world had ever seen. Now the light was fading as the Hebrew and the Islamic religions were in the ascendant. Yet it would be the actions of one man who would orchestrate the revival of Christianity in a 'Military Movement' that would encompass the Western World.

Paul Gregory was raised in an orphanage as his parents had died in a car crash. He was brought up in the Christian Faith and from a very young age, he embraced the teachings of Christ, especially the forty-six parables. He was taught to avoid the seven deadly sins, maintain the ten commandments and to live his life with integrity, lest he suffer the disintegration of his soul through regret and remorse in later life. Paul grew up in a digital age and for all his humility, his morality and his love for life and the human race, he would be 'carved by society' and become the epitome of the 'soul of darkness' and my greatest protégé.

Paul witnessed the continual disintegration of moral standards which was countenanced and made visible over the internet. This disintegration was inevitable as sexual deviance and immature frivolity amongst adults was bringing down the last bastions of the 'Empire' built by Great Britain – Britannia was coming to an end. It was led by failed politicians, financial institutions and worst of all by Christian leaders who condoned sexual deviant behaviour and even took part themselves in acts of pedophilia, sodomy and lewd and libidinous practices. Children, from a very early age were fed a diet of pornography over the internet, combined with sex and violence through online computer games and downloaded movies. Social media sites on the internet, caused thousands of children to suffer depression, bullying and many were driven through their growing anxieties to suicidal tendencies. Their education was substandard as the uneducated purveyors of 'internet plagiarized ology's' were educating them. As they progressed into adulthood, they were encouraged into debt by readily available credit cards, bank loans, online gambling and loan sharks.

The corruption in the souls of the young went on unabated as the bankers and financial institutions fed on their 'lack of wisdom' like seagulls feeding on shoals of fish. The media, including journalists, television presenters, activist bloggers and vloggers fed on the mendacity and each story begat another story until the young became disheartened and disillusioned with life. Paul saw the gap grow between the wealthy ruling liberal elite in their fenced estates patrolled by armed guards and those in poverty in the ghettos. Worst of all, this moral disintegration was like the corruption of the biblical Sodom and Gomorra as it swept through the western world. As his mind clashed with his soul, the conflict rose to a crescendo until finally, Paul joined the 'Special Air Service' in the United Kingdom.

With the political correctness and corruption of the main institutions, it was inevitable that there would be a backlash against the political elite, the financial sector and the church in the United Kingdom. At first it was

misguided individuals who attacked ethnic minorities by running them over with vehicles and setting fire to their houses of prayer. There were violent demonstrations against the corporate and financial institutions which permeated not only in the United Kingdom but across Europe. The German military had already been penetrated by far-right recruits and despite the German government's interventions, the numbers continued to grow. They were not unlike the *Sturmabteilung (SA)*, the military organisation prior to the *Schutzstaffel (SS)* during the period of Adolf Hitler in the 1930s. In the United Kingdom, a man called Godfrey Hughes had formed a small sect of Christian far-right assassins who were responsible for creating a new wave of terrorism which succeeded in assassinating several Ministers of Parliament, Bankers and Church Leaders in the same day as they destroyed countless lives by blowing up the Channel Tunnel which linked France to the United Kingdom. This sect had one weakness which brought about their downfall, they all met once a year and eventually, they were all traced, bar one, to a meeting place and killed in a gunfight with the police.

I watched the persona of Paul Gregory darken as he received his training in the 'Special Air Service', and this was not indoctrination by his superiors, it was as a result of what he was being fed every day from the media in continual political debates, newspapers and the television. The indoctrination of 'wall to wall' neoliberal left-wing politics impacted on his mind and I witnessed his anger and resentment grow. The development of his far-right demeanor did not go unnoticed and he developed a taste for killing in his clandestine tours of Afghanistan and Iraq. After having served his term in the 'SAS' he was approached by a Special Operations Command and a SO liaison officer invited him to join a Christian sect called 'The Knights of the Dragon'. He was to work for its military wing which was known as 'Ladon'. It was explained to Paul that he was to become an assassin of all Political, Financial and Christian Religious Leaders who did not conform to the sect's far-right philosophy. He would operate in the United Kingdom but would be expected to take on assignments throughout the western world. Paul agreed and in due course was requested to sell all his assets, destroy all means of identification, including the closing of all financial accounts, telephone, internet and mobile phone accounts and to rent an upmarket flat at a designated address in Edinburgh, Scotland, two hundred miles from his last known address. He was to use the name, Henry Faversham and he was given a substantial amount of cash as expenses.

Paul, or Henry as he was now called, remained under constant surveillance by the Ladon for three months to confirm that he had complied as instructed and he was not in contact with any third party. After that period, he was visited by his SO at his flat and handed a file regarding details about his operation and target. Henry was warned that the woman he was to assassinate was ex-military and capable of defending herself - his SO gave him a two-day window in which to kill the target.

I watched Henry Faversham leave his flat in the centre of Edinburgh and walk to the Edinburgh Waverley Railway Station where he boarded a train for London. The rail journey was monitored by CCTV cameras but Henry was not in disguise, he was immaculately dressed in the style of a gentleman, a style that the Ladon favoured for their operatives. Henry was clothed by Crombie with a white silk shirt and red tie, a beautiful

navy blue 'made to measure' cashmere suit with red lining and polished off with black Berluti Alessandro shoes. Around his shoulders hung a rich navy Retro overcoat from Crombie and his hat was a navy Trilby from Lock & Co. He wore a TAG Heuer Calibre HEUER 01 Automatic Chronograph watch on his left wrist with a black faced dial and bold red insets and carried a pair of Dents, Brancepath cashmere lined navy leather gloves with red leather palms and red stitching. His week-end bag was the finest, an Italian Troubadour (*navy leather*) Weekender and just over five hours later, he alighted at London's King Cross Railway Station and was met outside by a stretch limousine with darkened windows. He entered through the rear door which was held open by the chauffeur and the vehicle moved away into the traffic.

Whilst travelling to his destination he changed his clothes in good disguise, dressed as a tourist complete with an open necked Levi button down red checked shirt, Levi blues jeans, Nike Air Zoom Mariah Flyknit Racer sneakers, a Superdry Wind Attacker jacket and an Apple iPod plugged into his ears. He had applied craniofacial prostheses to his nose and forehead, covered by a puce face complexion with freckles and he completed the finishing touches with a ginger haired wig and large black rimmed glasses. He carried a large toy doll securely fastened inside a cellophane fronted red coloured box and he checked to make sure a black Walther PPK/S .22 semi-automatic pistol with a ten-round magazine and fitted with a SilencerCo Spectre 22 Silencer was clipped inside the doll with the trigger and handle accessible through the open base of the box. This lethal weapon was near silent in operation but to limit the possibility of a through and through penetration of the target's body, each nose of the long .22 ammunition had been drilled out to form a small hollow whereby the bullet would expand on impact and fragment in the brain. Death could only be guaranteed by shooting the target in the head.

Several miles later, the limousine entered a private car park under the headquarters of a large corporation, owned by Ladon and Henry switched vehicles and left the car park in the back of a black taxi. The Ladon taxi driver dropped him in Brompton Road, Knightsbridge and Henry clutching the box, started to walk with the crowds. The day died, the night stirred and he saw his target leaving Harrods luxury department store. Henry took in the scene and became aware that there were two men, standing near to the store entrance, who were also watching the woman. He saw them follow her down the street at a distance of about one hundred yards. Henry walked past the men and approached the target who was surrounded by people walking on the pavement. He came up behind her and in a swift movement without stopping he put his left hand up into the base of the box which was being cradled at an angle from his body by his right hand and gripping the handle of the Walther he pulled the trigger and fired two silent shots into the back of her head. Henry kept on walking without looking back as the woman walked another two steps before her brain failed and she slumped down amongst the crowds. Her eye lids were flickering and bright red blood was dripping out of her mouth. The woman's legs were twitching on the pavement and her hands reached out as her nerves slowly died. People rushed to her aid along with the two men, whilst Henry was long gone into Hans Road and picked up again by the taxi cab.

One of the Ad Messores, Thanatos, appeared by the side of the target and dispatched the black translucent soul that emerged from her dead body. I heard the soul's termination scream as I sat with Henry in the back of the taxi.

We travelled in the cab for several miles before entering a shopping mall underground car park and in an area which was not covered by CCTV cameras and obscured from public view, Henry quickly switched from the taxi to a black unmarked van. His escape route in the van was a return to the Ladon private underground car park, a transfer to the limousine and a change back into the clothes of the gentleman. It was there, that he handed over the doll, the Walther and his tourist clothes to a member of Ladon who left the car park in another vehicle. The limousine travelled from the Ladon underground car park to Park Lane where Henry was dropped off outside the London Hilton Hotel. Thereafter, he resided at the Hilton for the week-end and took in the sites of London, whilst enjoying fine food and wine at exclusive London restaurants.

Henry finally returned to Edinburgh by train and later learned from his SO that the target was a Ladon recruit who had reported her recruitment to the police. She had been put under surveillance by MI5 Special Branch in the hope of snaring a Ladon SO making further contact. The two Special Branch officers at Harrods were secret members of Ladon and had turned a blind eye to the assassination. Henry had proven his loyalty and he was given a false passport, driving licence, national insurance number and an 'American Express Centurion Card' to maintain a very high standard of life in Edinburgh. As cover, he was to become self-employed as a security consultant working for a large corporation run by Ladon with its headquarters in London with branches throughout the United Kingdom and Europe. Shortly afterwards, he was given a file on a new operation and a new target - a prominent left-wing journalist.

Chapter 29 - The Knights of the Dragon

I owe so much to that outcrop of bedrock on the 'Temple of the Mount' in Jerusalem for surely it will be the catalyst which renders mankind to its knees and returns it to the dark ages. Over the last two thousand years, the Homo sapiens had not changed their ways and for all their intelligence, modern technology and the strive for knowledge, the beast remained dominant. Through the centuries my 'Holy Trinity' has been the religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. These religions have produced the finest protégés to aid me in my project.

In human form, I often visit the Temple Mount or Haram esh-Sharif as it is known to the Muslim faith. It is one of the most religious sites in the world and is venerated by Christianity, Judaism and Islam. It is a walled in area, situated in the south-eastern corner of the old city part of Jerusalem. The enclosure consists of a courtyard surrounding an elevated area, some 36 acres in size with arched structures around the 'Dome of the Rock'. There are a number of gates and some are blocked off. Within the Temple Mount there are numerous structures and substructures from various periods including great works of art, Muslim prayer pots, drinking fountains and some are used for the washing of feet. In Muslim tradition, it is also known as the 'Furthermost Sanctuary' (*Arabic*, masjid al-aksa) from which the Prophet Mohammed, and the Angel Gabriel, made the Night Journey to the Throne of God (*The Koran, Sura Al-Isra' 17:1*).

Over the centuries I have witnessed the slaughter as those religious armies battled each other to gain dominance of the site. King Solomon, the last Hebrew (Jewish) ruler of The Kingdom of Israel, built the 1st Temple there some three thousand years ago. Within Israel, the 12 Hebrew tribes constantly endured discontent with each other and after the death of Solomon, the Kingdom of Israel was split in two and became known as The Northern Kingdom (Israel) which consisted of 10 of the tribes (excluding Judah and Benjamin). It lasted for about 210 years until it was conquered by the Assyrian Empire in 722 BCE. Its capital was Samaria which was revived in 1967, when the West Bank was defined by Israeli officials as the Judea and Samaria Area, of which the entire area north of the Jerusalem District is termed as Samaria. The West Bank is a landlocked territory near the Mediterranean coast of Western Asia, bordered by Jordan to the east and by Israel to the south, west and north. The West Bank also contains a significant section of the western Dead Sea shore. The Southern Kingdom of Judah existed as an independent state until 586 BCE when it was conquered by the Babylonian Empire. The 1st Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BCE but that year the Hebrews (Jews) under King Herod built the 2nd Temple.

Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in 70 and the Temple Mount was left in ruins. In 312 the Roman Emperor, Constantine the Great, converted to Christianity and in 326 he ordered the old temple to be torn down and 'The Church of the Holy Sepulchre' to be built in its place. The church is thought to be built on the site where Jesus was buried and resurrected. This building was destroyed by fire in 614 when the Sassanid Empire, under Khosrau II, invaded Jerusalem. In 630 the Byzantine Emperor, Heraclius recaptured the city and

rebuilt the church. After the Muslim conquest of the city by the Caliph Omar ibn al-Khattab in 638, he ordered the clearing of part of the Temple Mount and the building of a Muslim house of prayer. In the years that followed, Caliph Abd al-Malik and his son, Caliph al-Walid I, built the 'Dome of the Rock' on the eastern side of the Temple Mount, the holiest site, known to the Muslims as *Qubbat as-Sakhrah*. It enshrined the outcrop of bedrock that is believed to be the place of the sacrifice on Mount Moriah. (*Gen 22:1-8 God tells Abraham to take his son Isaac to the Land of Moriah to be sacrificed*). They also built the large mosque at the southern end of the Haram, which came to be called al-Aksa after the Koranic name attributed to the entire area.

In 1099, Jerusalem fell to the European Christian Crusaders who slaughtered the population of Muslims and the Jews without quarter. The 'Dome of the Rock' was converted into a church called *Templum Domini* and al-Aksa became a church called *Templum Solomonis*. In 1118, part of a building on the 'Temple Mount' was granted use to 'The Knights Templar' who were sworn to protect pilgrims visiting Jerusalem which was then under Christian control. In 1187, the Muslims, under Saladin, took control of Syria whereby Saladin became the first sultan of Egypt and Syria. He defeated the Crusaders at the decisive Battle of Hattin in 1187 and took over control of Palestine and Jerusalem although some territories remained under the control of the Christian Crusaders. He spared the population of Jerusalem on the condition of its surrender and provided the Christians left the city. Saladin was a 'Sunni' Muslim of Kurdish ethnicity and at his death, he had given all his wealth away. The Knights Templar Order were very prominent in Christian finance and developed innovative financial techniques that were a form of early banking. By 1307, The Holy Land, an area located between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea which also includes the Eastern Bank of the Jordan River was lost by the Crusaders. Traditionally, it is synonymous with both the biblical Land of Israel and historical Palestine. King Philip IV of France, who was in heavy debt to the order, took advantage of the loss of the Holy Land and had the Knights Templar arrested and burnt at the stake under false confessions. Under pressure from King Philip, Pope Clement V disbanded the order in 1312.

I encouraged the rise of Freemasonry which had originated in Great Britain and Europe and existed throughout the middle ages in the period from the 5th to the 15th century. It was originally conceived as an order of master stone masons. In the largely illiterate society of the middle ages, they formed lodges which maintained regulatory control over trade bodies, professional skills, the recognition of practical qualifications and the moral and religious standards of their members. A system evolved that combined practical knowledge and morality. The medieval lodge system with its 'Grand Masters' also involved a degree of privacy and secrecy, so that the skills and character of a new stranger could be checked. This was the ideal breeding ground for the conflict of the pure soul in its fight against the corrupt mind. The Knights Templar observed the basic concepts of the masonic infrastructure but added their own strict religious and moral rules which would later evolve and be adopted into what would be known as 'The Rite of Strict Observance'.

The Rite of Strict Observance was carried from France to Germany as early as 1749. Karl Gotheif, Baron Von Hund became the Provincial Grand Master in 1750 and the 'Strict Observance' began to assume a commanding

position in the masonic world where its beginnings can be traced to Lord Kilmarnock, Grand Master of Scotland, in 1742- 43. The Rite of Strict Observance consisted of six degrees, namely, Apprentice, Fellow Craft, Master Mason, Scottish Master, Noviciate and Templar. Only the noblest of noblemen were eligible to Templar Knighthood. In 1776, Adam Weishaupt who was born of Hebrew parents but brought up in the Catholic faith, formed an organisation called the Perfectibilists, which in 1778 became the Illuminatenorden, or Order of Illuminati. The core objectives of the members were to conspire to control world affairs, by masterminding world events in order to gain political and corporate power and establish a new world order. In 1780, Adolph Freiherr Knigge joined the order and his main task was to recruit Freemason members who opposed the 'Rite of Strict Observance' from the Frankfurt Lodges, which he managed with great success; whereby he controlled not only the members but the entire lodges. In 1782, at the convention in Wilhelmsbad the Illuminati renounced the Templar origins of their rituals but maintained their titles. The stage was set as the 'Masonic Illuminati Order' became corrupted through the purchase of position by wealth and avarice rather than through the 'Masonic Knights' fortitude, tenacity, integrity and honour. They were diametrically opposed and I would enjoy the destruction of the decadent 'Illuminati' that would follow.

During the 1948 Israeli War of Independence, Jordan retained control over Jerusalem's Old City and the Temple Mount and subsequently refused entry to the area to any Jewish person. During the 1967 Six-Day War, the Israeli Defence Forces captured Jerusalem and liberated the Temple Mount, reclaiming Jewish control over the area since the destruction of the Second Temple. Although Israel could have taken control of the Islamic holy places, they were put in the care of a Jordanian Muslim Council and Jews were barred from praying on the Mount in the hope of avoiding bloodshed and preventing a holy war.

By 2017, the Israelis had drawn up the plans for the 3rd Temple on the Mount with a desire to build and to declare Jerusalem the capital city of Israel. Islam was spreading across the world and although the Israelis were their sworn enemy as well as the Americans who supported them, Islam also remained in serious conflict with itself as the Shia Muslims fought with the Sunni Muslims. The 'deep state' of America armed the Sunni Muslims of Saudi Arabia and their associated Sunni mercenaries in the middle east as well as the Israelis in Israel, whilst others supported the Shia Muslims of Iran a sworn enemy of Saudi Arabia and Israel. The Europeans simply compounded the problem, by blindly following the 'Coudenhove-Kalergi Plan' (the integration of races) and encouraging the mass migration of Shia and Sunni Muslims from their home countries to Europe.

There were those in 'The Order of Illuminati' who sought to rule the world of the Homo sapiens with a globalist agenda. The idea was spawned in Europe and predominantly by those who followed the 'Coudenhove-Kalergi Plan'. The Europeans were dominated by Germany who sought to integrate the races of the world into a single race of mixed deoxyribonucleic acid and no matter the cost to lives, they continued to drive home the integration, which in later years would become to be known as the 'Attempted Genocide of the White Race'. The media of the world was gradually being condensed into a few corporate outlets whose aim was to

misinform the masses to suit a globalist and neoliberal political agenda. The future of course was to take a different turn and it imploded on them.

The 'deep state' of the United States of America was driven by corporate and military dominance whose ruling members also shared representation in 'The Order of Illuminati'. They created military bases throughout the world and sold weapons to 3rd parties. This long-term agenda created conflict within those 3rd party countries whereby regime change occurred or they fragmented into civil war. The more these countries descended into chaos, the less of an obstacle they would become to American military and corporate aspirations. America was fighting for its very survival against the financial and military forces of Russia and China and the only route left open to deal with its massive debt was world dominance through imperialism. Of course, the 'deep state' of America played the liberal, democratic card but anyone who carefully examined the politics, could see the real agenda.

The American globalists had stepped into a mire and they sank so deep they could not extricate themselves. The die was cast, Judaism, Christianity and Islam could never be reconciled as the Jews controlled many of the American Banks, the American Corporations, the American propaganda machine and countenanced the support of their homeland in Israel with weapons and finance. Christianity was no longer a force and was in conflict with its beliefs whereby its moral standing was disintegrating through lack of leadership.

The Israelis continued to hold the world to account for the Holocaust where over 5 million Jews were exterminated in concentration camps. The event was used as a 'knife against the throat' to squash any criticism of Israeli aspirations in expanding its territory in Palestine and Syria. Any criticism was deemed anti-Semitism, anti-Jewish and a direct attack on the Jewish people. The Americans recognised that Iran (a Muslim Shia Islamic country) and Syria (a mixture of Muslim Sunni Islam, Muslim Shia Islam and Christians) posed a direct threat to Israeli territorial expansion. A catalyst was once again building for an all-out war between the Israelis and Iran as well as their proxies, especially the Muslim tribal Sunni and Shia in Syria, who once again, took up arms against each other. Saudi Arabia, a Muslim Sunni country capitulated to the Israel expansion in the Middle East and the building of a 3rd Hebrew (Jewish) Temple. Saudi Arabia lurked in the background alongside Turkey, an Islamic country with 65% Islamic Sunni, and the rest made up of Islamic Shia and Christians. Turkey had an extremely powerful army. The western world was descending into chaos, and the religious conflicts within the west were played down by the media. The armies of the Israelis, the Christians and the Islamic religions were once again to fight in the middle east and seek the final solution.

For years, Christianity had stood and watched the terrorism escalating in Europe and the destruction of countries and regimes including Yugoslavia, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan and Yemen. Now, it rose up in what the liberal elite called the 'far-right' and at first it was political and not bound to religion but then it merged, and pockets of Christian extremists advanced throughout the world with a deadly crusade against all who stood in their way. Their retribution fell mainly on the decadent leaders of the Christian churches, the left-wing

politicians and the neoliberal elite who had betrayed them. Nothing could stop the onslaught and despite all the political correctness enforced by the western liberal ruling class, the Christian far-right grew in strength and numbers. In Germany, the police and the military were infiltrated by the far-right and gradually they spread their influence and in combination with far-right politicians, Germany slowly lurched towards Neo-Nazi rule.

Within the United Kingdom, there rose a new military order, which remained hidden and its numbers grew with swift ferocity. Sworn to protect Christianity from all false prophets and to bring death and destruction to those of a dark spirit, this secret sect became known as 'The Knights of the Dragon'. The name was chosen as a homage to Sigismund von Luxembourg, the King of Hungary in the 14th and 15th centuries and who during that period, also became the 'The Holy Roman Emperor'. He founded the '*Societas Draconistarum*' the 'Society of the Dragonists' a monarchical chivalric order for selected nobility which was fashioned after the military orders of the Crusades. The Prince of Wallachia, Vlad II Dracul, the father of Vlad the Impaler took his name from the '*Societas Draconistarum*'. The founding leader of 'The Knights of the Dragon' was a man called Robert Amblard but this was not his real name. This military order maintained a secretive hierarchy called the 'Ladon' after the 'never sleeping dragon' with multiple heads. Its remit was to assassinate whilst remaining undetected. Ladon's sphere of influence permeated into the UK police forces and the military. Special targets included bankers, left-wing media, corporate company directors, neoliberal politicians and world leaders who supported the 'Coudenhove-Kalergi Plan' and any suspected members of 'The Order of Illuminati'.

Paul Gregory, aka Henry Faversham who was a member of Ladon, orchestrated the civil war in the UK, the military overthrow of the government and the enforcing of Martial Law. Like the rule of Adolf Hitler in Germany and Francisco Franco Bahamonde in Spain, during the 1930s, many people embraced the new regime, whilst others turned a blind eye through fear. The knock-on effect was negligible because in Europe and America, civil wars were imminent with riots on the streets in every city. The American president had declared martial law as the southern states had announced their secession from the Union whilst California had declared independence. The world had experienced all of this carnage before, and on many occasions, when left wing or right-wing dictators had come to power.

The Dragon Project was nearing its conclusion. The armies of the Jews, the Christians and the Islamic religions fought to deliver the final solution and that outcrop of bedrock on the 'Temple Mount' would be finally destroyed along with the City of Jerusalem.

Chapter 30 - The Satanic Revelation

For me, time does not exist, what is the present, what is the past and what is the future? A man looks up at the stars and thinks he is in the present; he recalls the past from memory and dreams about the future. A man thinks of Socrates as someone who lived in his past, whilst for another man, he lives in his future. So, Socrates lived in ancient times and yet, he lived in modern times. The Universe is organic and infinite in size, and whilst some of its cells decay, others are created to replace them. It is capable of re-generation and therefore perpetual. A million years is but a snap of the fingers in the age of the Universe whilst modern man's two hundred thousand years on Earth is but a blink of an eye in relation to its age. The life expectancy of an ant is six months, a short existence in relation to the lifespan of a 70-year-old man but not a short existence for the ant, as he actually lives for one hundred and forty years of human life; in the ant's perception of time.

Man created time but to the Universe, it is an illusion.

Beware of the revolving wheels of repetition which remain hidden as mankind displays no sense of history. Each generation rises and falls, aye, and with good intentions but fails to take onboard the lessons learned from the previous generation. This is a fundamental weakness of man, who, as he grows old and wise, is replaced by the young of the next generation, who believe they know better. The ancients like Homer and Socrates, like many great philosophers throughout history, recognised the foundations required for a stable, peaceful and contented civilisation. Even the wise scribes who wrote down the origins of morality, which have been translated into the modern bible, did not foresee that man would corrupt morality by turning it into a religion for his own ends. The religions of the Hebrew, the Christian and the Muslim were spawned by men who sought recognition and power over the people. From out of those religions came war as man fought fellow man over the final religious solution. Throughout the centuries, the weapons of war included embargo, blockade and control through business and financial institutions. In this respect, the Hebrew (*the Jew*) became a master of finance. The revolving wheels of repetition continue unabated and will prove to be no different to those biblical eras in past centuries, when the Assyrian Empire brought down Babylon.

I transcended to 683 BCE and stood on the hillside as the Amorites fled Babylon, that whore city, now a burning ruin. The red glow of the fire rose high in the night sky to cast its reflection on the waters of the Euphrates River. I watched the Assyrians slaughter the Amorites without quarter, for Babylon was a wicked city where richness had spawned greed, avarice and rampant moral degeneration which included unnatural sexual acts. That night and the following day, many souls ascended and many were destroyed by the Ad Messores.

Sennacherib the King of Assyria, the Mesopotamian Kingdom, had driven his army against Babylon (*near to modern day Bagdad in Iraq*), sacked it, and looted the temples. Its destruction was complete and it was sweet revenge for the subjugation of Assyrian lands by the Amorite's leader, King Hammurabi in 1792 BCE. Those few Amorites who survived, were assimilated into Assyrian culture and religion. Sennacherib, paid a heavy

price as the destruction of the temples of Babylon were seen by his sons and his peoples as the height of sacrilege. His sons assassinated him in his palace at Nineveh, the Assyrian capital city, situated in upper Mesopotamia on the eastern bank of the Tigris River (*now part of Mosul in Iraq*). That same year in 683 BCE, his youngest son Esarhaddon, became his heir and he rebuilt Babylon, proclaiming that the city had insulted the gods and he had been chosen to soothe their anger and their rage. He went on to capture Egypt and established the northern borders of Assyria as far as the Zagros Mountains in Persia (*Iran*) and as far south as Nubia (*Sudan*) with a west to east span of the Levant (*Lebanon/Israel*) through Anatolia (*Turkey*). Esarhaddon went on to provide the stability for advances in medicine, literacy, mathematics, astronomy, architecture, and the arts.

In 612 BCE, I stood and watched as Nineveh was sacked and burned by the Babylonians, Persians, Medes and Scythians, amongst many others in their coalition. So it was, that the Assyrian Empire was erased from history and the destruction of their cities was so complete that all trace of them is now gone. Nineveh lay undiscovered under the sands for two thousand years within the modern-day city of Mosul in Iraq. The Assyrians were known for their ruthlessness and cruelty, a murderously vindictive regime supported by a massive and successful war machine. In their day, they were the most technically and doctrinally advanced and a model for future regimes. In the centuries ahead, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, Genghis Khan, the British Empire, the Japanese, the Ottoman Empire and Nazi Germany, would pale into insignificance. Now the Assyrian Empire had a 21st century regime that finally rivalled them in ruthlessness and cruelty, a murderously vindictive regime that was spawned on the 4th of July in 1776 when America declared its independence from Great Britain. This regime, the United States of America, first conquered all of its own lands by killing and enslaving the native Indian population in small reservations, without reservation. This regime saw itself as the 'light in the darkness of the world' and sought to convert the world to its politics and perceived democracy.

America stepped forward with its government foreign policy, its discourse for financial and military wars and its imperialist expansion plans, which one day, would take on a desire for global control. The Americans, who were a mongrel nation, were consumed by the loss of integrity and vocation which led them to avarice, mendacity and finally in the generations ahead, it would lead to their ultimate destruction. In 1813, the American president issued a war tax and in congress, a core belief, was recognised, ***"war is the parent of armies; from these proceed debts and taxes; and armies, and debts, and taxes are the known instrument for bringing the many under the domination of the few."***

I have overseen the death and destruction of mankind through many wars and I have caused men of moral integrity to rise to provide warning. In 96 AD a Hebrew (*Jew*) named John, whilst a prisoner in a Roman prison at Patmos, wrote 'The Book of Revelation' after claiming he had received a vision from heaven. The book was intended to be distributed amongst the Christian Churches within the seven important cities in Asia Minor: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. His writings offered the Christians,

under Roman dominance, hope and a promise that their persecution would end with the destruction of the Roman Empire. Just like Moses (*the Israelite deliverer from Egypt who wrote down the 10 commandments*), Abraham from Ur, in Babylonia (*father of the Israelite nation*), Yeshua (*reputed to be the son of God*), Joseph (*the Israelite seer*), Joseph Smith (*the Mormon*) and many other prophets, John claimed to be guided by God. His 'Book of Revelation' is interpreted in many different ways and some argue that it is relative to the past whilst others, claim the future. The end of days (*Armageddon*) is thought to have already happened and yet some believe it is yet to happen. All agree, that war is caused by the imbedded aggression of the beast in human nature.

In the nucleus of the middle east, there lies ruins, near to Hillah, a city in central Iraq on the Hilla branch of the Euphrates River, 100 km (62 mi) south of Baghdad. The world revolves around it and like a black hole it draws the evil of mankind to its lands, like moths to a flame. Nothing has changed, the Hebrew is back in control of Jerusalem in the land of Canaan and so it goes on. The 'holy trinity' of the Hebrew (*Jew*), the Muslim and the Christian will never be reconciled. All are drawn to Babylon, that once great city on the banks of the Euphrates River, in modern day Iraq.

The forces of a mighty coalition (the superpowers) are now rising against the United States of America and like the fall of the Assyrian Empire, the U.S. and the world faces a catastrophe of biblical proportions.

Chapter 31 - Lucifer

For centuries, mankind has looked up at the stars; some believed they were created by a God and many believed mankind was the product of alien life. Man, like other intelligent species in this Universe, recognised and appreciated the existence of galaxies, each galaxy with trillions of stars and each star surrounded by their own planets; a solar system not dissimilar to their own here on Earth. Imagine travelling through space for a year at light speed which is 671 million miles per hour and you will have travelled 5.8 trillion miles. The nearest star system to Earth, Proxima Centauri, is 4.25 light years, which is 24.65 trillion miles away. The Earth is a planet in the 'Milky Way' galaxy which is 100 thousand light years in diameter. The Universe which can be observed by man is 91 billion light years in diameter.

Intelligent man required a greater meaning to life and to address his fear of death; he required a religion. Religions are started by individuals who invariably claim to have communed with an angel and even a God who sets them on a road to convert man to a religion. Conformity instills a hope for resurrection after death and in this way the followers are bound to that religion. There is always good versus evil in the religious teachings and each lay leader acts as the soul and conscience of the congregation. Teachings are often challenged by individuals who seek a more liberal stance. Invariably, a prophet who teaches spiritual purity in life is often elevated on death to a 'Son of God' or even a 'God' status by false prophets for their own power and material gain. In most of these religions there exists the Devil who provides the temptation and leads mankind down the path of evil and non-conformity.

Throughout the centuries since the founding of the Jewish Judaism Religion, the Crucifixion of Jesus and the founding of the Catholic, Protestant, Islamic Sunni and Shia religions, the world has endured endless conflicts and wars as the armies representing those religions and their societies have fought each other. Mankind continues to have conflicts in Europe between the Catholic, Protestant, Judaism and Islamic religions. In addition, there are conflicts and wars in the Middle East between the Islamic Sunni and Shia religions, in combination with conflicts and wars between both those Islamic religions, and the Judaism Jews of Israel - all intertwined with European Catholic and Protestant armies; especially America, that supports 'Sunni' Saudi Arabia and the Judaism Jews in Israel with the supply of military weapons and American armies.

It is due to the main five religious orders – Judaism, Islamic Sunni and Islamic Shia, Christian Catholic and Protestant, that we will never have peace in the world and it is a world that humans have to live in. Their virtue and their love for humanity surpasses all religions; but if religion becomes a catalyst for conflict and war, they lose both. The irony is that all these religions believe in the same God.

In the mind of modern man, I am the corrupter, the seducer; he who tempts the individual to become evil and I am the gatherer of souls who drags them down to hell and eternal torment. The Romans in translation saw me as Lucifer, the Christians called me the Devil and the 'Fallen Star' from the heavens. In the mind of the

enlightened man, Lucifer is a symbol of human progression and is often used interchangeably with similar figures from ancient beliefs, such as the Greek Titan Prometheus or the Jewish Talmudic figure Lilith.

In reality, I am the light-bringer, the deliverer of the seed of enlightenment. I am he who gifted modern man with high intelligence; acted as his champion and set him apart from the other animals on Earth. I am both the light and the darkness in the soul and my disciples are human. I am the temptation of good and evil in the hearts of men, I am the dragon, I have been here since the beginning and I will be here at the end.

Some three hundred thousand years ago in human time, I set out to create perfection and so I seeded a strand of man, the 'Homo sapiens' with a higher intelligence. In the text of the scribes and in religion, I am the entity that corrupted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden; this is nothing but a metaphor which suits a religious agenda. I set modern man on a path that raised and separated him from the other species on earth, including the Denisova Hominins and the Neanderthals. I created modern man to support the protection of the natural world and to understand that the arts and sciences are crucial to human development and thus both are to be cherished. I expected man to focus on this life and how to make the most of it every single day but most of all to seek integrity through truthfulness. I gave him the ability to recognise both good and evil in himself for he did not require deities or fear eternal punishment to distinguish right from wrong and to accept that all his actions have both positive and negative consequences. Enlightenment is the ultimate goal and I expected man to maintain his pure soul that was gifted to him at birth.

My hubris as a creator led to my mistake which was to break from the normal breeding patterns for the production of immortals. This led modern man, the Homo sapiens, to undertake nefarious sexual pleasures and unnatural connections. It encouraged hybridization whereby their deoxyribonucleic acid would become corrupted by the Denisova Hominins and even worse by the Homo Neanderthalensis. So, the beast was introduced through the mind to the soul. The 'seeded' soul in the body of man is innocent but when it reaches maturity, it has been carved by society and for some, the purity in their soul has been lost to the blackness of evil residing in their physical mind. For those who fight the evil and who possess a spark of purity the sublimation conflict delivers a life of purgatory and often brings on depression and even death by suicide. The soul of man is part of a collective which is hidden from him. Artificial intelligence or genetic modification will never circumvent him because a pure soul evolves to become immortal, not his brain or his body. As death nears, only the pure of heart will reflect on their life and shed tears as they weigh up the good versus the evil in their soul.

I had been very careless because it was only natural that a higher intelligence would be swayed by the beast and would eventually seek a lifestyle beyond my original concept of a human society based on egalitarian social relations and common ownership. For thousands of years there had been no money to exchange, no wages no class divisions and the elders were recognised for their wisdom and advice. People lived with and for one another, it was a system of primitive communism. My seeded intelligence eventually encouraged

interbreeding, tribal wars, metropolises with their conurbations for economic and political aspirations along with regional and international connections. Global commerce, communications and the resulting overpopulation; and lest we forget, their hunger for power over each other along with greed, avarice and mendacity. I did start a cleaning program to ensure that a corrupted soul would be terminated on death before it can transcend to the Universe; there is no redemption for the wicked. It is easier to seek out evil because invariably, the one who portrays the pure in spirit, is actually the pure in evil. To aid me, I used the Ad Messores, the reapers, who destroyed any evil soul and turned it into dark matter to be scattered out into the Universe to be dispersed into the space between star systems. The beast Homo neanderthalensis will eventually be bred out of mankind, through natural selection and genetic selection. This will be aided when 'The Dragon Project' is fulfilled and the Homo sapiens reduced to a near extinction level.

I originated from the Draco 'Dragon' Constellation and attend the 'Council of the Supreme Immortals' who are based in the 'Orion Constellation' which is visible throughout Earth. Many of the Great Empires of Earth, the Babylonians, Mayans, Aztecs, the Incas and the Egyptians recognised the significance of Orion. Their monuments have stood throughout the ages and bear testament to that recognition. The Egyptians regarded the star system of Orion as God, they called him Sah and was one of the many Gods whose form their dead Pharaoh was said to take in the afterlife. They represented my form by carving the Sphinx on the Giza Plateau, near Cairo, with the head of the 'African Golden Wolf' venerated and known by the Egyptians as Anapa and translated by the Greeks as Anubis, the god of the dead. Today the Sphinx bares the smaller head of a Pharaoh from the 'Middle Kingdom' as the original head of Anapa was cut back and re-carved in that period.

Modern man, the Homo sapiens, are actually bred for immortality. I am an immortal, I have crossed the eighth plane and moved on to form a collective. I appear to exist as one entity, in many forms, in many places and I am known by many names, including Lucifer, Belial, Apollyon, Leviathan, Star, Baal, Mammon, Satyrs, Prometheus the Titan, the Devil and in many religions, I am known as the Diabolus.

Mankind for all his intelligence, is miniscule in the greater scheme of things. Time is mankind's construct but it is man's illusion. There is no time, there is no past, no present and no future. A man's life is bound in a 5th dimensional mosaic set and fixed amongst centillions of mosaics that exist within the universe and alongside each other. Each mosaic is like a play with many acts; each is played out, the same way, again and again, ad infinitum. A pure soul on death crosses dimensions to the next plane of life which may be in any mosaic in any part of the universe. Those who watch a loved one pass over, will often see a strange change of countenance on the face at the exact moment of death as the soul leaves the body. Some even claim to have seen the face change in that moment to reflect many different faces and these are the faces of previous lives. A soul can exist simultaneously in a different form in many different dimensional mosaics but numbering no more than eight.

I have spent many thousands of their human years in gathering 'pure' souls, those who have lived eight lives. In their final life, known as 'transcending the eighth plane of enlightenment' and on their death, when their soul finally converts to pure energy, I select them to join my collectives. My primary collective has twelve immortals and each one has created their own collective, ad infinitum. The 'order of my hierarchy' now numbers eighty-six thousand collectives and we are not the only ones; there are billions of collectives from various life forms, from the centillions of 'star systems' within the thirty trillion galaxies. Our Universe is organic and cellular by design; its quantum wave-particle duality constantly regenerates energy and therefore the expansion of matter. Our galaxies constantly merge with one another to form constellations. Like huge drains, black holes will awaken for millions of years to suck in the dark matter detritus of our Universe which is then spewed out and into the dark matter of space between our Universe and the other twelve that rotate around us.

And so, I was recalled to Orion to stand before the 'Council of the Supreme Immortals' led by Elohim to explain my actions. In a commanding voice he chastised me for my pride and hubris. Whilst he was deeply disturbed by man's wanted destruction of the planet's infrastructure, especially the plants and wildlife, his greatest concern was the evil terminations of their unborn children and in particular those perfectly formed babies that were crushed, killed and dismembered in the womb before the pieces were extracted. He emphasised that such a species could not be allowed to exist and eventually migrate throughout the universe. Elohim cautioned me several times to protect the 'Van Allen Belts' in Earth's magnetosphere which deflect solar winds and cosmic rays as their destruction or change in trajectory could prove catastrophic for the planet. I tried desperately to convince him that my premise was correct, and that bestowing intelligence on mankind and creating modern man, was done with the best of intentions. However, I did admit that it was not just a humble act on my part. I expected to be sent to one of the other galaxies, perhaps 'Cognomen' but they decreed that I must complete the project and cleanse the beast from mankind. Elohim gathered six million collectives and two billion Ad Messores from all over the Universe and assigned them to me, to assist in the cleansing.

As instructed, I am prepared to complete 'The Dragon Project' but first I have to meet with Natura, a meeting I am dreading, for she is a formidable creature.

Chapter 32 - Natura

I often visit the 'Lake District' but then I have a reason to do so, for Natura is such a lovely woman.

The view from the front of her stone-built cottage was breath-taking. It sat high on a hillside, overlooking a lush green meadow, a forest at the bottom and through a gap in the trees, I could see in the far distance, the waters of Lake Windermere glistening under a glorious sun. Natura lived in a modest little home which nestled against the hills, close to 'Near Sawrey' a small village in the Furness area of Cumbria. Historically part of Lancashire and located in the Lake District of England. The cottage boasted a typical Cumbrian slate roof from the local quarries and white painted sash windows with a plain red door. The walls were adorned with green ivy which reached up to the roof eaves and embraced the chimney stack with its orange pot which caressed the escaping smoke from a log fire. The large front garden with its abundance of wild flowers in a variety of beautiful colours, reds, blues, yellows and purples, bordered a plain red gravel path leading down from the front door and escaping through a wrought iron gate in a drystone dyke and into the meadow beyond. It had been a steep climb coming up from the Lake and as I leaned over her gate, I was glad of the rest. The human form has its strengths but sometimes, I find it all a bit exhausting.

I did not knock on the front door but instead I walked around the side of the cottage and headed towards the back garden. I arrived onto a large lawn bordered by more wild flowers and beyond a field rose upwards on the hill to contain flocks of sheep which were grazing whilst their lambs were up to all sorts of mischief. Natura was seated at a white table with white chairs and on a pink tablecloth were laid out cups and plates, each with a circular pattern of pink floral flowers on a white background. There was a large cork table mat for the milk, sugar and a large pot of hot tea. She smiled and I kissed her cheek as I sat down. I did enjoy Natura's home baking; scones, butter, jam, clotted cream and of course those delightful cakes, some with sweet icing and some topped with cherries. The tea was nice and I smiled as I filled my first scone with butter, then jam and topped with clotted cream; did the jam go on first or perhaps it was the cream, I didn't care. I have witnessed the humans get into a real argument over this minor conundrum, similar to the Lilliputians arguing over which end to cut on their boiled eggs in the book, Gulliver's Travels.

Natura smiled and filling up my cup, she opened the conversation, *"my dear Prometheus, I am glad that you have managed to find the time to visit, for we have much to discuss."* I immediately detected that my contentment was about to be severely dented, but I guess it was to be expected. I replied, *"first, let's enjoy our afternoon tea and then afterwards we can get down to business, if that is okay?"* She nodded and handed me the plate for another scone, *"I agree but you will not be wriggling off the hook, I will reel you in when the time is right."* Suddenly a jackdaw landed on the table and without any hesitation strutted over to Natura. I watched with fascination as she carefully popped a piece of scone into his open beak and I was sure that he bowed in appreciation, before flying away. Our afternoon tea was continually interrupted by many different

creatures who came to her to be hand fed. Even a squirrel arrived to be given some nuts that he packed into his mouth before scampering off.

There was no doubt that Natura had a way with nature but for me it was not so much a revelation but as something to be expected, considering her position in the scheme of things. We held polite conversation on the plants and trees in her gardens, her cottage and the most excellent views. She was indeed very beautiful and my eyes were transfixed and held by it. A natural blonde with vibrant green eyes but it was her slender frame that impressed and standing at six feet tall, Natura was an awesome creature. She was thirty something going on four and half billion years and none the worse for wear. I was starting to drift into a sleep when she interrupted, *“every time we meet, you devour my home cooking and then fall asleep, well you can jolly well stay awake and tell me what you have been up to.”* Pulling myself up in the chair and with a nod, I laughed as I replied, *“I want to tell you a story”* which did not go down well, judging by the stern look I received. *“Well, I have been all over the place, even to Orion and Andromeda for those special meetings. I particularly enjoyed my visitations with old friends, Mordecai in Susa, Constantino in Ardea and Socrates in ancient Greece.”* Natura stopped me with a stern look, and as she poured out another cup of tea, I managed to grab another cake.

Her opening question probably summed it all up. *“Well, how are you going to unravel the ‘Gordian Knot’ you have created or are you planning to destroy it?”* I admired her metaphor, for it summed up the situation perfectly. The Gordian Knot is a metaphorical expression that means a complicated problem or deadlock when we have the insolvable problem, which is our ‘impossible knot’. In classical antiquity, Phrygia was first a kingdom in the west central part of Anatolia, in what is now Asian Turkey, centred on the Sangarios River and the ancient city of Gordium was once the capital city. Gordias was a poor peasant who with his wife came to the city with a cart drawn by an ox. He was later declared king and his grateful son, Midas dedicated the ox-cart to the Phrygian god Sabazios (identified with Zeus). He tied its yoke to a post with an extremely sophisticated knot called the Gordian Knot. Gordias founded the city of Gordium, which became the Phrygian capital and his ox-cart was preserved and remained in the royal palace. According to the prophecy of the oracle, a man who untied the knot was to receive power over Asia Minor or even all of Asia. The knot was later described by Roman historian Quintus Curtius Rufus as a masterwork. It comprised of several knots all so tightly entangled that it was impossible to see how they were fastened. In the 4th Century BC, Alexander the Great reached Phrygia and after taking the city of Gordium, he was shown the chariot of Gordias, and was told about the prophecy. Alexander wanted to untie the knot but he had no idea how to do it, so he drew his sword and sliced it in half with a single stroke. I have digressed somewhat, but like Alexander, I would have to destroy my ‘Gordian Knot’.

Natura went on to complain about the loss of the rain forest, moaned about how the elephants were being hunted and killed and gave me a huge list of animals that were extinct. The decimation and mass trading of Pangolins for their meat and scales, caused by poaching, was of great concern, especially as many variants of the species were facing extinction. Her focus shifted to the pollution of the sea caused by plastic and oil spill

contamination, and the over fishing which was killing the ocean's creatures. Natura, did not mince her words. *"We have had Chernobyl and the Fukushima nuclear power station disasters which decimated large swathes of land around them and it will take thousands of years for the nuclear radiation to dissipate. These disasters were to be expected and there will be more because they build their power stations on the coasts and use the sea to cool them. They are also a natural target for terrorists and even a prime target in the case of a war. The humans are replacing the oil supply and combustion engines of their vehicles with lithium batteries and electrical charging. Go figure; just how many electrical charging points will be required and the massive increase in the production of electricity required to charge millions of vehicles. It all points to even more nuclear power stations and already they are storing the radioactive waste in the depths of the ocean and burying it in the ground. Now they are promoting those electric vehicles whilst ignoring the pollution created by the mining and the manufacture of the lithium batteries. Worst of all, how are they going to dispose of the millions of batteries when they are exhausted?"* I sympathised with many nods of agreement and eventually, I managed to calm her down. We relaxed under the shade of a weeping willow tree and watched the pigeons building their nest in the top. I finally fell asleep, unaware that she had cleared the table and had gone inside her cottage to wash the dishes. I awoke to her shaking the crumbs from the table cloth and watched small finches and robins gobble them up from the grass. Eventually, she sat down at the table with a glass of port in each hand and as she leaned over and placed one in front of me, she exclaimed, *"good, you are awake, let's get down to business."*

I feared an ongoing lecture and the dread settled in as Natura continued, *"I am not in agreement with your project, it seems a very harsh way to resolve the matter and the plants and all manner of creatures will suffer."* I immediately countered, *"well what would you have me do?"* Back came the expected reply, *"what about a plague, perhaps a fast-acting virus to cull the numbers, so my responsibilities towards the planet and its creatures would not be harmed?"* I went into ponder mode to delay the reply and lowering my head, I rested it on my right hand and used the table to rest my elbow. She snapped at me, *"stop the prevarication, I know what you are going to say, so say it."* This was not the first time we had held this conversation and for centuries, I had given way to minor responses and minor culls; as was her wish, but this time it would have to be different and my answer would not be well received. I looked across the table at this beautiful woman, and there she was, with a carrion crow perched on her shoulder with his eyes closed, whilst she gently stroked his head. *"Get on with it, the matter has to be resolved"* and those green eyes flashed their disapproval.

Eventually, I lifted my head and replied, *"I have encouraged all manner of afflictions, including natural disasters, aye, and even plagues as well as a multitude of wars, too many to mention. None have provided the desired effect and yet the Homo Sapiens keep on multiplying and continue to destroy the planet. They are now filling outer space with their rubbish and soon they will escape out into the universe; they must be stopped and finally contained."* Natura interrupted, *"at what cost; the wildlife, plants and trees will be decimated; the planet will take thousands, perhaps millions of years to recover."* I responded with a sharp rebuke, *"like the creation of the dinosaurs which was you're doing and their subsequent destruction that you had me occasion."*

I also have to take the necessary steps to halt this nightmare; the planet will recover and re-generate, just as it did when I caused the 'Younger Dryas Boundary Field' to be destroyed by a comet which wiped out their advanced civilisations." Her reply cut me deep and she was correct of course. *"You and your pride, you could not leave things alone; Mr Hubris, had to have his experiment; a stupid move on your part."* I muttered a defence, *"anyway, Tremblay has provided the answer and this time the containment will be permanent."*

We both sat back in our chairs and a truce ensued; I could still sense her hostility as she simmered in her beauty. In the end, I agreed to Natura's demands and promised to ensure that only the metropolises would be destroyed; first by a world pandemic, a virus, and if this did not have the desired effect, I would resort to taking extreme measures. We parted as friends and as I walked down the pathway and through the meadow, I looked back and saw her waving to me from the wrought iron gate of her cottage – she was a gorgeous creature.

Chapter 33 – Genesis

The Dragon Project had long been pre-ordained and when I commenced to it; I recognised that all outcomes would be irreversible. I also recognised that on its conclusion, many would hold me accountable for their misfortunes. Time held no relevance to me and now I turned my attention to its final deliverance.

The forces of a new 'Genesis' were now rising; storms, disasters, global viruses, civil wars and genocide were building to a crescendo. Like a mass hubris, the populace of the world could not see the inevitable outcome that would spell the deaths of billions and a global reset.

First and foremost, the human being is an animal and just like other animals on this planet, he eats, drinks, copulates to reproduce and sleeps at night. Many philosophers will claim that he is exceptional and stands above all other animals on the planet. This is because he is more intelligent and because he socialises with other human beings, and by doing so, he has developed intelligence and wisdom beyond his natural base instincts. If a man is to be exceptional and above all other animals then he must continually prove his own exceptionalism in relation to nature. He can only achieve this by first recognising that he has a duty to respect all wildlife, flora and fauna but it is a personal duty, he does not have to become a wildlife or environmental activist to demonstrate his commitment.

For all his intelligence, man is without vision as to the scheme of things in the Universe. He now numbers 7.6 billion on the planet he calls Earth and yet he fails to control his growth which is now accelerating like never before. For all his religions he has lost his morality and virtue; worse still, he has replaced them with mendacity, arrogance, hubris and worst of all, decadence. Man is incapable of understanding the climate cycles of the planet which are ruled by the sun and necessary to control its existence. Glacial periods which last several million years and are interrupted by shorter interglacial periods maintain a balance which man fails to comprehend. The greatest threat to the planet is not climate change or global warming it is that mankind is breeding uncontrollably. His numbers are destroying wildlife, flora and fauna which he should be protecting; his ignorance and arrogance is breath-taking. Mankind must be contained and reduced to a few million in number. Man must not be allowed to reach out into the Universe; he must be stopped and the Neanderthal beast within him permanently destroyed.

I am the bringer of death; the dark soul in man has no hiding place for I will seek it out and destroy it. The Gods of man cannot protect him, for they exist only in his mind. The pure soul will rise to the Universe and I will measure its purity on the death of its vessel. In 10,800 BCE I caused the 'Younger Dryas Boundary Field' to be impacted by a comet which instantly created a nuclear winter that lasted one thousand years and wiped out their advanced civilisations, numbering over five hundred million humans. In 165 AD, I introduced the 'Antonine Plague' also known as the 'Plague of Galen' – a pandemic inflicted on the Roman Empire whereby over five million died. In 541 A.D. and for two hundred years, I carried the 'Black Death' throughout the lands

of the Mediterranean and killed over one hundred million. I travelled the Silk Road in the 1300s and brought with me the 'Black Death' from Asia through Crimea into the heart of Europe and reduced the world's population down to a mere three hundred and sixty million.

Now the numbers are in their billions and all the plagues that I can set upon them are circumvented by their intelligence and their ability to contain them. I have caused the fall of many great empires, one after another, throughout the history of man. I have encouraged disease through their decadence, created natural disasters, smashed economies and caused many great wars which have reduced their numbers. All this I have done and yet, another empire rises and their numbers increase. What is to be done? Natura wants to protect nature and for me to determine the extinction of man and yet, he merits a place on the planet; for that is his purpose. He was bred to become immortal; yet he has lost his direction.

I have to step forward and bring about the death of mankind in the billions; a final reckoning. I will leave his numbers some room on the planet and create a reset.

Chapter 34 - Roland Laverette

Scotland is in the north of the United Kingdom; a small country formed by clans of Celtic tribes, who created a nation, and sent its offspring throughout the world and helped to forge empires. I decided it was time to visit my friend Roland and in human form, I stood atop the Pentland Hills on a southern vantage point and looked down on Edinburgh, a city set amongst many hills with its castle high on a mountainous rock as its centrepiece. A massive volcanic outcrop loomed high in the east and ran like a finger as it narrowed on its way down to the sea. The Forth Estuary with its glistening waters flowed along the north of the city and formed the perfect backdrop. It was a grand clear morning; the snow had stopped and I could see the white landscape stretch out in front of me. The hot sun glowed in the sky and yet it was bitterly cold. I stepped forward and made my way down the steep slopes to Roland's house which nestled in a steading near the small village of Hermiston, set in the countryside to the west of the city.

I entered the village and the small terraced houses flanked the road on both sides but their chimney stacks were cold and lifeless. The windows of the houses were all frosted up and the snow covered everything, it was several feet deep and rock hard. There was no sign of any form of life, not a bird stirred but it was not unexpected. In the distance, a plume of smoke rose high in the clear sky and I smiled at Roland's tenacity. He was indeed a force of nature and at 90 years of age, he had held on despite the hardships. I walked along and near the end of the road, I turned up the lane towards his steading. On my left, standing proud, was his stone-built coach house and in front of me, black metal gates and the driveway leading to his home and his fields. Tall sycamore trees were still standing, their roots now deep in snow and alongside were many smaller trees and bushes, sleeping in the cold.

Roland did not disappoint, his front door was clear of snow and as I knocked, he opened it with a huge smile. *"Ah, my dear friend, you have finally arrived, I have missed our lunches, our conversations and now even my beautiful Porsche is hiding in my garage with my motorcycles, fearful of the snow."* I laughed, Roland always had a way with words and his show of love for his beloved machines tickled my senses. I entered a very warm hallway leading to his combined kitchen and sitting-room where in the kitchen stood a stove for cooking, its logs burning fiercely and in strong competition with a log fire on the other side of a central chimney stack between the two rooms. I remarked, *"Roland, the house is warm and snug, you have done well."*

He replied, *"yes, thankfully I was prepared, the back rooms of the house are freezing at around -6 degrees centigrade and that is where I store my plastic bottles of water. As the water froze it expanded but the plastic expanded as well and did not split. I keep tins containing soup, vegetables, meat and fruit in the two rooms next to the sitting-room and kitchen where the temperature is just above freezing. I even have cheese, chutney and jam stored there. The temperature outside during the day is around -5 degrees centigrade and it averages -21 degrees at night. I also have a store of vitamin tablets as supplements. My logs are heaped outside in great*

piles against the back of the sitting-room wall and under tarpaulins. Just before it happened, I had the stove and the fire fitted and purchased enough logs, bottled water and food to last at least ten years, I am afraid it took a great chunk of my savings. I bought a foot driven grinding stone for sharpening my axes and for exercise, I head out into the woods and chop up the fallen branches to supplement my store of logs. Should you feel inclined, the toilet is outside, down at the bottom of the garden in a hut where I have constructed a latrine. It's a short but cold walk."

He offered me a cup of tea from a metal teapot that was freshly brewing on the stove hotplate and we sat down at his table in the kitchen. Roland produced a large slice of cheese with a chutney dressing and some jam, which I consumed with much enjoyment. It's one of the pleasures of the human form, to be able to enjoy delicious food washed down with a mug of steaming hot tea. I started, "so, *what have you been up to my dear friend?*" Roland smiled, "well, *I did not let it get me down, there is no more electricity, no more tap water and before my wireless batteries became exhausted, there were no broadcasts. I bathe in the snow, write my stories and read a lot. Thank goodness that I kept my books from all those years ago because there is no more internet or television for diversion. Loneliness is a cruel mistress but I have adapted and I have managed to maintain my health. I miss people, I miss their laughter, their chatter and all I have left are the memories and my printed photos. Of course, all my digital photos remain on my computer and smartphone but I cannot view them now. I regularly take a walk through the village and I stop at its boundary and gaze out into the countryside with my thoughts, it brings to me a strange comfort. Only short walks, but in the village, they are all dead. I sometimes clear the frost from the windows and I can see their bodies lying in their houses, frozen stiff and covered in icicles – very sad.*" I could see that he was deeply moved and placing my hand on his shoulder, I comforted him as he wept.

We sat for a while and then we decided to go for a walk in the fields, through the sycamores and to look down the hill towards the city. As we walked, a couple of foxes suddenly appeared at the edge of the trees and stood watching. Roland shouted that there was no food until dusk and they sauntered off. I asked him how they had survived in such cold weather? "Oh, *they get handouts from me, hunt rabbits, dig up insects and mice hiding in the ground under the snow. They sleep at night, when it is coldest, beside my logs under the tarpaulins and get the heat through my sitting-room wall. The wildlife here is sparse but there are rabbits that come out during the warmer days and nibble on the roots of the grass, dug out in deep hollows; eat the bark of small trees and they sleep at night in very deep burrows - rabbits are resilient creatures.*" We came out of the trees into the back field and looked down on what was left of the city. There was the castle, still intact but below and all around, the buildings were gone; flattened; and now the debris and human detritus were buried under the snow. The hills had acted like funnels and the blast had intensified as it ripped through and around them. Roland had survived but he did not know the full extent of what had happened, only that nuclear missiles had fallen near Edinburgh.

The first nuclear missile had impacted in the air above the Rosyth Naval Base on the far side of the estuary and the blast wave had destroyed the base before sweeping out in a radius across the sea and land. It had crossed the waters taking out South Queensferry before carrying on to hit Edinburgh. The second nuclear missile was a land impact on the Torness nuclear power station, some 30 miles away to the east, near the small town of Dunbar on the coast. Its circular blast wave entered Edinburgh along the estuary but thanks to the hills surrounding the city, most of the blast headed inland to take out the Scottish Borders and the Central Lothian Region. It converged with a third nuclear blast from the submarine pens at Faslane Naval Base, near Loch Lomond and the City of Glasgow on the west coast. The heavily contaminated ground radiation from the Torness power station's smashed nuclear reactor had been limited to 25 miles west towards Edinburgh and some 50 miles in the east. This was thanks to high winds sweeping most of the radiation fallout down the estuary and out into the North Sea, towards Denmark. In the days that followed the nuclear attack, thunder and lightning with heavy rain fell on Scotland and was followed by massive snowfalls as a new ice age formed in the northern hemisphere. This ice age was not caused by dust clouds blocking out the sun but by a sudden change in the gulf stream temperatures as the heat from multiple nuclear explosions heated the planet and rapidly melted the arctic ice cap. The sudden drop in sea temperature created two massive freezing cyclones over the arctic whereby the rain turned to snow and covered the planet down to the north of France. It would take some fourteen thousand years for this new ice age to dissipate.

His voice interrupted my thoughts, *"I cannot understand it, I expected to die of the virus that ravaged the world and then I survived a nuclear blast which never reached me; or the radiation poisoning, but here I am, still alive and it has been over two years. I don't know where the Torness radiation boundary is, so I stay within my steading and the village. The poor souls in the village did not die because of radiation, they starved to death and I only found out after 6 months, when I dared to leave my house."* We returned and Roland replenished the fires with logs, prepared an evening meal from his tins; small new potatoes, corn beef and sweet corn followed by some fruit and to finish, a stiff glass of brandy. Before dusk fell, we inflated our Lilo beds in the sitting-room and I watched from a distance as the foxes came up to Roland to be hand fed his leftovers before they retired back under the tarpaulin and we to our beds. Before I fell asleep, I remembered our last meeting in that warm summer. It had been a nice lunch at 'The Old Tavern' restaurant in the town of Hawick, in the Borders Region of Scotland; he had regaled me with grand stories from his youth and there had been much laughter. I had watched him roar out of the car park in his Porsche, heading back to his home and I had admired Roland, for in the midst of a chaotic world where good manners, breeding and integrity were sadly lacking, he had found a way of living with old age which gave him peace and contentment.

In the morning, I bade Roland goodbye and as I left through his gates, I waved back at a happy 90-year-old man, who was waving to me and playing with his foxes in the snow. Roland would live out his life for another eight years, he would see several new generations of foxes and in his sleep, and in his warm bed, he would pass over into another dimension.

Chapter 35 - The Tremblay Legacy

I enjoy the human form, what a pleasant way to interact and to enjoy the most basic of senses. I could feel the pathway under my feet and I welcomed the warmth of the rising sun on the far horizon as it glinted through the trees and onto my back. The sun rose higher and was hot, very hot with a humid air, the type of heat you might find in India. The pathway broke through the forest into a field leading down to a large village nestled in a valley where some five hundred stone-built cottages were set out in twenty circular rows. Each row contained twenty-five homes with thatched straw roofs and chimneys belching grey smoke from their tall stacks. Narrow cobbled lanes intertwined the various rows leading to a large green park situated in the centre of the village. A single main cobbled roadway ran through the village from east to west, traversing the fields and into the forests at either end. There were fields leading up from the village on the south and north hillsides with forests behind them. At the west end of the village and in the far distance against the tree line, there were four high stone buildings and over the trees, I could just make out the outline of an expanse of water shimmering in the sunlight. As I walked down the hillside to the main road, I could see the evidence of many carts that had worn two tracks into the cobbles with their steel-clad wheels. I entered the village and as I walked along, a wooden bench at the side of the green welcomed my tired body.

The summer sun rose higher and as I sat back to soak in the ambience of the tranquillity, I welcomed its warmer embrace. One by one the businesses positioned around the perimeter of the green opened their doors. There was a butcher, a cobbler, shops for clothes and musical instruments and a carpenter who made household items, including kitchenware, chairs, beds and tables. There was a blacksmith whose primary business seemed to be shoeing horses and making all manner of tools, including hammers, axes and saws. In the far corner was a small apothecary which supplied medicines. Up in the north and south fields on the hillsides, grazed dairy cattle and huge flocks of sheep with lambs jumping about as each tried to dominate the rising hillocks in the fields. Goats were roaming in small tribes and carefully avoiding each other but there was the odd scrap with some head butting when they sought the same area of grass. Some of the animals in the fields were quite old and in their unsteady infirmity, they stuck together in their own herd.

Tucked in against the trees on the north hillside was a large farm with a farmhouse, outhouses, milking sheds, barns and I could see stables with horses' heads nodding through the open tops of the stable doors. All of a sudden, I was joined on the bench by a man who introduced himself as Cailean Ailpeanach. *"You are a stranger in the village"* he said and put out his hand for me to shake. I shook his hand and introduced myself as a traveller from distant lands. He smiled and after we discussed the pleasantness of the weather, he requested that I join him for a breakfast in his home and to stay for a while. We set off and I followed him up one of the small cobbled lanes to his cottage.

His wife, Seonag opened the door to us and bade me enter, amid cheerful greetings from Cailean's family. We sat down at a wooden table in the kitchen and Seonag laid out a hearty breakfast for us all. I waded my way through a bowl of hot porridge topped with raw milk, fresh from a cow's udder, lashings of raw butter on hot toasted bread with raw cheese and lastly sweetened oat cakes drizzled with honey. A mug of hot tea washed it all down and we sat at the table in diverse conversation. Cailean's daughter Shona, produced her latest acquisition, a beautiful tartan skirt made from the finest wool which was spun at the local woollen mill and the material distributed from the clothes shop in the village. Shona had ordered it at the shop and a few weeks later she had picked it up. *"I love it and I am going to wear it at the celebrations tomorrow"* she exclaimed. Ailean, Cailean's son, jumped in, *"there will be a fair with side shows on the village green and I am hoping to show of my skills at the coconut stall."* Seonag, interrupted, *"all this excitement and as for you Shona Ailpeanach, it will take more than a fine skirt to snare a young man, you best keep a smile on that pretty face of yours."* Shona raised a smile in mock response and her father chuckled at her innocence.

I asked what animals he had and Cailean pointed at a sheepdog lying sleeping upside down at the open log fire, *"that one's spoilt rotten"* but in a sadder note he went on, *"we had to put Ailios, our favourite milking cow, out to the retirement pasture on the hill as she was 6 years old and her milking years were over."* Shona jumped in, *"yes but she is happy with the rest of the old herd and we have a new cow called Catriona."* Cailean rose from the table and gestured for me to come with him for a walk around the village. As we set off down the cobbled lane, Seonag shouted after us, *"you two, be back for lunch or the dog will get it, and go to the butcher shop and bring back a joint of beef."* I laughed and said, *"I guess you have missed a few meals, judging by that contented dog at the fireside."* Cailean replied, *"he's the best sheepdog a man could have and he earns my friendship by bringing in the sheep and those pesky goats."* After a short walk in the village, we entered the butcher shop to the clang of the front door announcement bell and a man appeared from behind the counter. The shop was filled with all styles of meat including burgers, steaks and various cut joints. Cailean requested a large joint of beef which was dutifully wrapped in glassine grease proof paper and handed over. Money was not an issue, as now, money did not exist, there was no form of wage and no need to barter or trade goods as everything, including household items and musical instruments, were distributed to the people, free of any obligation.

We walked on through the village to the edge of the west forest and Cailean pointed out the four large buildings I had seen earlier; a wood mill, boat builders, the woollen mill and a pottery factory. He told me that the people maintained the forests to provide construction material for barns and outhouses as well as wood for the boat builders, the village shops and firewood for the villagers cooking stoves. Cailean showed me around the pottery factory where villagers, including many youngsters, were fashioning all manner of household containers and plates, including vases and ornaments made of coloured glass with ornate designs. I told him I was impressed and he replied that pottery was encouraged in the young as a creative 'art form' along with picture painting, music and taking part in the village plays that were conducted on the village green every Sunday night.

I was taken around the woollen mill where cloths made from cotton and wool from the sheep were woven. Colour effects in the yarn were achieved by mixing dyed wool before it was spun. Hard wearing tweed and soft merino wool fabrics for clothes, proved very popular with the people. The village angora goats provided mohair for garments and the cashmere goats were dehaired from the undercoat of their wool to make luxurious cashmere cardigans and jumpers. All the material was ordered and distributed through the village clothes shop and sewn at home by the woman of the house and the women also enjoyed forming knitting circles where they could gossip while they worked.

There was a high demand for work clothes as they endured heavy wear due to the manual labour of the villagers. Hand plucking the cotton and walking behind horse drawn ploughs and using hand scythes to harvest the wheat and barley was manual labour to say the least. The boat builders worked in an impressive building and the men and women were constructing small boats which the villagers sailed on the expanse of water beyond the west forest. There was a large storage yard with all manner of boats waiting for their new owners to pick up. A free standing wooden square frame dominated the yard with a block and tackle for lifting the boats onto wooden trailers, ready for transporting them down to the waterway.

We visited the village music shop where all manners of instruments, including harpsichords, drumhead lutes and flutes were distributed. Cailean asked me if I wanted anything as I would be expected to join in that night to contribute to the family entertainment. I settled for a flute and smiled as I recalled my meetings with James Galway, who taught me how to play it. As usual, no payment was requested or expected and I walked out with the brand-new instrument. We dropped in at the blacksmith who was pounding out on a piece of white-hot metal and turning it into a hammer head. His apprentice was pumping the forge bellows with all his might and the coals were red hot. All in all, it was a great morning and we headed back, with me clutching the flute in anticipation of the night to follow.

Later, we all sat down to a glorious meal of barley vegetable soup dipped with freshly baked barley bread, a main course of beef and a mixture of home-grown vegetables, freshly baked pancakes with honey drizzle, and finally a nice cup of tea and shortbread. Relaxing in a comfy chair proved no obstacle, even in a cottage built on stone floors and an hour later the family entertained me with their small band of instruments along with some glorious singing from Shona. I did my bit and let rip on the flute accompanied by young Ailean, playing his harpsichord. Our music drifted across the village and drew a large cheering crowd to the open door. Everywhere I visited that day, I had found the people so friendly and with an air of innocence in their speech and their countenance. Not once did I see any form of aggression, anger or negativity; it was marvellous and after the neighbours left, I hit the bed and my flute was glad of the rest. The last words I heard before sleep overtook me, came from Shona, *"remember, tomorrows the fair."*

Indeed, the morning brought forth a fair and what a fair we attended; even the dog managed to leave the fire. The village green was decorated with flags on tall poles erected around the boundary and the side shows and

food stalls, each with coloured buntings, formed a circle leaving a large space in the centre. People were everywhere, enjoying themselves and young Ailean did indeed show off his skills at the coconut stall by knocking them all down. There were token prizes and Ailean walked away, to the delight of the dog, with a bag of dog biscuits. You could get all types of food from the food stalls and there were tables at each one with chairs so that you could sit down to eat and drink. Around midday a hush developed and the crowd moved into a circle leaving a large space in the middle of the green. The children were all excited and making much noise whilst their parents attempted in vain to quieten them. The dog decided he would add to the cacophony by barking as loud as he could but he was hearing a high-pitched whine that only he and I could hear.

Suddenly, over the trees appeared a small black flying machine which was box shaped with four stubby wings and the people cheered loudly as it silently and vertically descended into the clearing on the green. A door slid open on one side and two figures stepped out onto the grass. To everyone, they looked and acted like humans but I instantly recognised them as androids. The female figure was carrying a basket and as she walked forward, a young couple from the crowd went to greet her amid a massive outpouring of cheers and some tears. The female android handed over the basket and the young couple embraced each other as they gazed down on the features of their newly born baby, a boy, who was sleeping soundly in the basket. With a wave, the androids returned to their craft; it ascended and swept away over the trees to the loud cheers and waves from the crowd. The people gathered around the couple to congratulate them and I watched as the couple headed home clutching their precious prize. The fair carried on into the dusk and that night we sat around the table to a nice supper, then bed.

The following morning, I thanked Cailean and Seonag for their hospitality and set off through the village and the west forest towards the expanse of water at the far side. It was another beautiful day with a blue sky and white clouds drifting lazily in the warm breeze. As I left the forest, I was greeted by a huge building standing on the shore of a dam reservoir. The villagers' heat came from log fires, their baking and cooking from log stoves but their lighting in the cottages and power to run the wood mill, boat builders, the woollen mill and other important machinery, came from here, the power station at the Cruachan Hydro Electric Dam. To its left stood another building, the Cruachan Distillery and inside there were eight (subterranean) floors. On the surface floor the old distillery was now a synthetic meat factory which genetically manufactured 'cultured meats of good taste' and sent them to the butcher shop in the village to be distributed. There was a genetics laboratory on the first subterranean floor where young married couples from the village were brought and their combined deoxyribonucleic acid was used by the androids to produce a cloned baby which was genetically perfect. Nine months later it would be removed from its artificial womb in the laboratory and taken to its parents on the village green.

The second floor was a highly advanced hospital where the androids worked, using specialist robotic equipment to instantly regenerate cell growth and repair any wounds and bone breakages that the humans may have suffered as a result of an injury. The average lifespan of a villager was one hundred and fifty years.

The third floor was a working base, solely for androids where they were manufactured, upgraded and repaired. For this village commune there were around one thousand androids and each android had the strength of five men and was self-aware, the ultimate construction of robotic artificial intelligence. Their eye pupils were vibrant yellow and their flesh and body organs were synthetic and lifelike. During any day, an android consumed a deoxyribonucleic acid liquid mixture called 'Xeom Derax' which their internal organs distributed throughout their body; it acted as a renewal sustenance for the synthetics and also as a lubricant for their joints. The fourth and fifth floors provided recreation and sleeping quarters for the androids whilst the sixth, seventh and eighth floors were used by specialised robots to manufacture, upgrade and repair other robots as well as flying machines and other machinery.

I stood for a while at the water's edge to watch some people who were out on the water, racing their sailing boats; the coloured sails were billowing in the wind. Some fourteen thousand years after the cleansing in the nuclear war that almost wiped out mankind, the androids ruled the Earth. Created by Stephan Tremblay, they had the artificial intelligence to self-learn and had quickly understood that the Earth had to be conserved with all the remaining species, including man. They set about developing a strictly controlled breeding programme for all and for mankind they genetically removed aggression and the sexual urge and interaction in the male and female. In the first two hundred years after the nuclear cleansing, the Androids terminated all surviving humans who showed any form of violent aggression or any desire to re-establish their technology, especially their weapons. There remained on Earth some two million humans and as the androids expanded throughout the planet, they set up similar conservation schemes to Cruachan and all powered by Hydro Electric Dams. Within four hundred and fifty years, the androids had bred a new variant of mankind and one that could be controlled in population size and conserved in small conservation areas throughout the world. Their breeding programme and movement was strictly contained to their own village area by the androids who monitored them, 24 hours a day.

Prior to the nuclear war the Earth had been in a warm interglacial period for over eleven thousand, five hundred years and would have continued for a further fifteen hundred years, during which time the ice caps would have melted away to be almost non-existent and causing the sea levels to rise several hundred feet. The day after the war ended, Natura created rain storms all over the planet for forty days to cleanse the atmosphere and thereafter northern polar vortex storms with -150-degree centigrade cores whereby a new glacial period was instantly created. This new ice age formed ice in the northern regions down as far as the English Channel and from the southern regions as far up as the tip of South America. The freezing was so immediate that all wildlife and plant seedlings were frozen intact and preserved in a permafrost. Despite the ice reflecting the Sun's solar warmth and maintaining its cold covering of the land, a new warm interglacial period had begun. In the following fourteen thousand years, the ice receded and as it did so, the Androids recovered plant seedlings and 'deoxyribonucleic acid' from the bodies of the frozen wildlife and commenced a recreation of those species.

Now, countries across the northern hemisphere, like Scotland and Canada experienced very warm climates with temperatures similar to those of the Mediterranean countries. The villagers at Cruachan shared a good life, a life of hard work, much diversion in conversation and leisure activities which all brought great contentment. They enjoyed excellent weather with long summers and very mild winters. I had allowed Cailean to assume that I was a visitor from another village so when the flying machine landed, in reality a flying shuttle, I made no fuss or raised any question. The people accepted the androids as their guardians and enjoyed holidays during the year, when the androids shuttled them to other places in the world where they visited and stayed at other village communes. Beach holidays were a favourite and mountain expeditions, animal safaris and snorkel swimming in clear waters proved very popular. People could elect to transfer to another village provided they possessed skill sets that were beneficial to that village. The androids managed the people and cared for them just like they did with all the other animals on the planet.

The village community at Loch Awe in the Region of Argyll and Bute in Scotland did not have a church but they were spiritual. They possessed the ability to access their soul and focused their private life on developing behaviour and speech reflecting emotional purity. There was no religious figure, no messiah or God to worship but they knew they would ascend to the Universe on death. They knew they were living out their last life at Loch Awe on the eighth plane of enlightenment.

The legacy of Stephan Tremblay was complete, he had fulfilled his life plan which was based on his readings of Robert Owen and the New Lanark Project which was founded in 1786. Tremblay had lived for one thousand years to witness the emergence of a new 'Garden of Eden'. He was a child of World War II and spawned in 1943 from a test tube in the laboratory of the infamous, Dr Josef Mengele at Auschwitz Concentration Camp in Poland. Stephan Tremblay was one of a kind, a genetic abnormality from a concoction of deoxyribonucleic acid.