



Jonathon Barbera

Angels
for Ellison

Angels for Ellison

Angels for Ellison

*BOOK ONE: New World October
Surprise Agenda*

BOOK TWO: demon flava heroes

BOOK THREE: Angels for Ellison

Jonathon Barbera

iUniverse, Inc.
New York Lincoln Shanghai

Angels for Ellison
BOOK ONE: New World October Surprise Agenda
BOOK TWO: demon flava heroes
BOOK THREE: Angels for Ellison

Copyright © 2007 by Jonathon Barbera

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping or by any information storage retrieval system without the written permission of the publisher except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

iUniverse books may be ordered through booksellers or by contacting:

iUniverse
2021 Pine Lake Road, Suite 100
Lincoln, NE 68512
www.iuniverse.com
1-800-Authors (1-800-288-4677)

This is a work of fiction. All of the characters, names, incidents, organizations, and dialogue in this novel are either the products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously.

ISBN: 978-0-595-44708-4 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-0-595-89029-3 (ebk)

Printed in the United States of America

BOOK ONE

New World October
Surprise Agenda

Chapter List

Introduction5
Chapter 1	The Amazing Prediction for October 13th7
Chapter 2	The Circle around the Point13
Chapter 3	Book Blocking Bureaucracy19
Chapter 4	The Two Horns of Authority23
Chapter 5	The Pentagon Conceals a Pyramid33
Chapter 6	Baphomet the Root of Consciousness38
Chapter 7	The Annunaki from the Upper Floor43
Chapter 8	The Eightfold Path to the Apocalypse53
Chapter 9	Horus isn't Osiris61
Chapter 10	The Sex between Consenting Adults68
Chapter 11	The Two Pillars of Civilization80
Author's note107

Introduction

I have to apologize in advance if I have to present my message in an offensive or otherwise objectionable manner to please a fickle audience. It isn't as though I write it in such a manner to intentionally upset the reader, but more to register at all on the consciousness of those nearly oblivious to reality of any kind. So, for the sake of those least aware amongst you, I must, metaphorically speaking, shout very loudly and with frequent use of sensational imagery.

Well, now that I've explained my position, let's examine yours as the reader. You are expected to look at each word and punctuation mark in sequence, left to right, top to bottom. Skipping sections makes the whole reading null and void. If you cannot read every word and punctuation mark in sequence, then you have other problems to handle first. Good luck and have fun!

Chapter 1

The Amazing Prediction for October 13th

The renowned psychic and media-friendly prediction expert was concluding the presentation, “There are two methods for acquiring new knowledge to sell to the ignorant. The first method is to research something new that will be appreciated and, hopefully, useful. The second method is to willfully suppress knowledge already commonly known until only a few know it. The second method, unfortunately, doesn’t lead to new discoveries and has led to the stagnation and collapse of whole empires in the past.”

The closing remarks from the psychic were familiar to most, “Knowledge is power. Therefore, only one worldwide government agency should be entrusted with all knowledge. It would have to be careful not to allow absolute power to corrupt them by limiting their jurisdiction to intelligence gathering while relying on external agencies to act on the information.”

The psychic agreed to answer questions at the end of the hastily organized lecture. The chairs were half-empty and the general atmosphere was apathetic with extreme prejudice. Many had come but few had stayed after the intermission.

The question asked by a young man who came with a friend, “Do you expect a change in the political bias of the Congress in the near future?”

“Yes,” the psychic answered rapidly as the automatic answers were provided by the subconscious psychic mind, “the Congress will have an altogether different bias as early as this October.” The psychic spoke without emotion while saying the words without even thinking about them.

The skeptical young man laughed, “But the elections aren’t until this November. How could they change before then?” Others laughed when they realized why it was unlikely.

The psychic went into a light trance, “I see a hijacked aircraft of some sort hitting the Congress building this October. The terrorists behind the plot have no respect for the elected officials who will be in an emergency session at the time to vote on a special provision. I apologize if it sounds cliché, but I see the date of this incident as being October thirteenth.”

The skeptical man suggested, “You should inform the Congress about this prediction while there’s still time for them to take action.” He was trying to be logical about it. If the psychic’s prediction was genuine, then someone should be told.

“Unfortunately,” the psychic conveniently explained, “such a prediction can have a margin of error of six weeks either direction. The actual plot might even be based on a flexible schedule dependent on otherwise unpredictable factors occurring elsewhere. For example, they might wait for a signal from their leader, and the leader may not even know yet when to strike, relying on a coin flip on that day.”

“So,” the skeptic summed up, “you’re saying you’re not really sure of anything and that anything could happen at this point.” The credibility of the prediction was ridiculed into submission.

“I’m sure it will be on a weekday and not on the weekend. I see daylight, so it won’t be late at night, but I’m not sure at what time during the day. Many but not all of the congressmen and congresswomen will be there to vote. Some of those who didn’t attend the vote knew something was being arranged, but I don’t believe they were in anyway responsible for it.”

“Can’t you tune in further and look at, I don’t know,” the skeptical man asked, “someone’s wristwatch or a car’s dashboard clock?”

The psychic attempted to do so and saw something amazing inside of the Congress building itself. Even before the attack on their building, there was something odd about their behavior. The psychic said, "The people inside of the building appear inebriated. They are staggering to and fro. I cannot be certain, but I wonder if they have been poisoned or drugged in some fashion? Perhaps an odorless gas has been used."

A woman in attendance named Maureen had heard enough and stood up to leave for a while. She didn't want to hear any additional vague predictions about something too impossible to happen. Her belief was that the psychic was guessing more than anything. She was really there to hear the next speaker and had been trying her best to ignore the generalities and mumbo-jumbo.

The renowned psychic suddenly stopped talking about the terrorist attack on the Congress building and pointed at Maureen while saying, "You're going to be there ... not in the building, but there in the city. You should reconsider your travel plans."

The skeptical young man disagreed, "Don't let superstition affect your business."

Maureen told the young skeptic, "Don't worry, I won't." Although, it did strike her odd later that the psychic somehow knew she was going to Washington, D.C. on business. How did the psychic know?

After the psychic had left the stage, another lecturer appeared. This was the real purpose of Maureen's attendance. She was something of a fan.

The lecturer had to begin by explaining the restrictions, "They told me that I could lecture on any subject as long as I didn't directly address any particular political group or religion. I can talk generally about the idea of religion or the idea of politics, but I cannot discuss specific groups or individuals without the possibility of offending someone."

The lecturer then said, "In the past I've used humorous metaphors to describe specific groups without naming them, but too many times I've discovered my audience took these metaphors at face or literal value. This led to a great misunderstanding as many mistakenly believed my remarks to be about some very crazy nonsense. Where I believed myself to be leaning toward humor in my

criticism of current events, others only perceived the silliness of it without the proper political context.”

The lecturer continued, “You can’t make bold statements about political issues or religious topics without first considering the whole human condition. Religion and politics wouldn’t matter much to anyone if people weren’t there to grasp the ideas and attempt to apply them. Both politics and religion intend to bring about similar effects but through distinctly different means. Does anyone know how?”

Maureen spoke up, “Politics uses physical coercion while religion uses emotional coercion.”

The lecturer agreed completely, “Excellent! Both approaches want to affect human thinking and behavior, but they each attempt to appeal to a different aspect of the person.”

Another attendee of the lecture asked, “What system appeals to thought instead of emotion or physical effort?”

“Science,” the lecturer smiled, “Higher learning is always superior to political or religious thinking because only science is based on actual, measurable truth. If the world was facing a terrible catastrophe, who would sensible people seek to help? The religious elite? The politicians? These people would be sought, of course, but whose guidance will actually save the day? The learned scientists who are ethical in their use of knowledge and willing to help the world. That’s who.”

The lecturer then told the audience, “The philosopher-kings predicted by Plato in the *Republic* should be viewed as scientist-kings. They are very well educated individuals who have studied more than one field and understand how reality sought by science can be affected politically or religiously by those who are uneducated.”

The lecturer concluded the thought, “The whole human condition includes the physical, emotional, and thought-based effort exerted by the person and against the person. It has come to be unpopular in modern media for governments, police, or other groups to exceed specified levels of violence against various types of targets. For example, the police are told not to fire on unarmed civilians. If the police could shoot anyone for even the most trivial of crimes,

then the media would report it and there would be a sense of injustice unless the victim can be thoroughly demonized.”

Maureen asked the lecturer, “What if the media refrains from reporting it? What if they fear for their own safety and don’t want the same treatment?”

The lecturer answered her question, “A city or nation where the media fears for its safety is a fascist regime even if they continue to have democratic elections. Freedom of the media to report the truth is vital to a real democracy. Unfortunately, when massive trans-national corporations own the media companies, the news reported will always be skewed as necessary to sell more advertising time. Instead of reporting the actual truth as an ethical scientist might, a corporate journalist is pressured to present the news reports that will appeal to the target demographic. It becomes one part news and three parts entertainment.”

A woman sitting near the front of the auditorium demanded, “Isn’t it the people’s fault for demanding entertainment news?”

“Ultimately, yes,” the lecturer explained, “but there are some other areas of public life that could improve the situation. For example, if they insist on dumbing down popular entertainment to reach the largest audience, then they should consider more news programs that can communicate to even the least educated amongst us. I believe a lot of people want to know what is actually going on in the world, but the news programs offered are generally insufficient.”

A man stood up from the audience and left the auditorium. The lecturer waited politely for the man to leave before continuing. This allowed most of the attendees to watch the man who was leaving without distraction since they were going to do so anyhow.

After the show, Maureen approached the podium at the front of auditorium and told the speaker, “Nice job tonight.”

The lecturer knew Maureen already from previous lectures, “I’m surprised to see you back so soon. Weren’t you here last month? I’m sorry I didn’t have any new material for you tonight. I’m working on it.”

“Actually,” she told her unofficial mentor and personal hero, “I’m here to talk to you about something else.”

“Oh?” The lecturer asked, “What’s going on?”

Maureen tried to calm his anxiety so he could fixate on hers, “Nothing bad. I was offered a research work project in Washington, D.C. and, well ... you know, I’m unsure if it’s a good idea for me to take on a whole project by myself.”

The lecturer smiled, “It only matters that you do your research well.”

“Up until now, though, I’ve been part of a team and didn’t have all of the responsibility.” She confessed, “I’m just not sure if I can handle it.”

The lecturer told her, “People are capable of a lot more ability than most will ever realize. I’m sure you will be capable to do the job and more as well. Don’t sell yourself short.”

She confided in her mentor, “My deepest fear is to overlook a detail that is inaccurate or incomplete. How many times must I repeatedly go through the materials in order to bring about certainty that the facts are straight?”

The lecturer gave her the magical formula, “Six times through the materials will bring about the necessary level of certainty. Six times through to the other side, six times through to the other side. That’s how I remember it.”

Maureen inquired, “The other side of what?”

The lecturer answered her, “The other side of the material being studied.”

Maureen didn’t know why her unofficial mentor would choose that particular number, but it did bring her some sense of relief as though a great and overwhelming weight had been lifted from her sore shoulders. She sighed audibly and accepted the formula of six times through to the other side.

“Okay,” she told the lecturer, “I’ll try it.”

The lecturer encouraged her, “Good luck on your project.”

She acknowledged his best wishes, “Thank you.”

Chapter 2

The Circle around the Point

Maureen contacted her employment agency and made the necessary arrangements with the airline. Her luggage was nearly packed and she found someone to rent her residence while she was in Washington, D.C. for her assignment. Everything was on track.

Maureen was walking down the street and noticed a man handing out pamphlets. Always interested in current trends in social thinking, she headed over to him. Unexpectedly, he didn't offer her one even though he'd been giving them to others quite liberally. Was her interest in the pamphlet confusing him because others refused it?

She finally had to ask, "May I have one?"

The man acted surprised as though he hadn't seen her standing next to him. He told her, "I don't decide who receives what." He then looked away to ignore her.

She asked the man, "How do you mean?"

The man told her as politely as he could while looking away from her the entire time, "I was instructed on how to do my customer profiling. I was told to give this literature to those meeting the necessary criteria."

Maureen demanded, "And I don't count? I don't fit?"

The man had no reason to hide the basis of his mission, "That's right."

“Well,” she demanded, “what’s wrong about me that prohibits my receipt of one of your pamphlets? Is it my clothes? My ethnicity? My perceived age?”

The man explained, “I discern people by aura.”

Maureen was disgusted by what she heard. Her interest in his pamphlet completely fell through the bottom. She told him, “Never mind. I will look elsewhere.” Yet, there was still a lingering curiosity. What did the reading material contain?

She waited nearby for a while, hoping that one of the chosen few would toss the pamphlet onto the street or into a trash receptacle. If they did so, she could grab it for her own use without the man handing them out noticing her effort.

Eventually she saw one young man in particular walk by and receive the pamphlet without looking at it. He was holding it in his hand as though waiting to trash it at his next earliest convenience. Maureen began following him. She hoped to pounce on the secretive pamphlet as soon as it fell from the young man’s fingers.

Several times the young man turned to look at her. He was aware of being followed. The young man was nervous and picked up the pace of his walk in order to gain some distance between him and his pursuer. Maureen matched his speed increase so as to be ready to take the pamphlet for her own.

The young man made an unexpected turn down a cluttered alley. Maureen soon found herself slowing to a stop in fear of following the young man into a criminal hideout or somewhere equally unsavory. She had entered an entirely different world in that alley.

She turned to leave the alley altogether, but found herself facing someone else. The dangerous-looking man stood at least a foot and a half taller than her. In one hand he was carrying a baseball bat and in the other hand a box of doughnuts.

He asked her, “What are you doing here?”

“I was,” she tried to explain, “following this other guy who had something I wanted to, well, I assumed he didn’t really want it, so I was going to ask him for it.”

The dangerous-looking man smiled, "How do you know I don't have what you want?"

"No, no," she tried to say, "it's nothing weird or anything. He had a pamphlet ..."

The man put down his baseball bat and took a pamphlet out of his back pocket, "Like this?"

She recognized it as the same one she was forbidden from receiving, "Yeah, that's the one."

The dangerous-looking man handed the pamphlet to her, "See? I *did* have what you wanted."

"Yeah," she admitted, "you did."

He then told her as though it was somehow applicable to the pamphlet, "There used to be a time when some people were black, white, Mexican, or Jew. Those days are disappearing into history now. The melting pot land can only produce melting pot people. That is the final solution against racism."

"Won't there be those who will resist melting into the blend," she asked, "trying to keep their genetics relatively clean and pure?"

"There are always extremists." The dangerous-looking man told her, "There were those royal families in Europe who attempted to keep their genetics within the family, thus cutting themselves off from some of the latest developments in genetic mutations necessary for adapting to environmental changes on Earth. A closed system is more susceptible to disease and other complications."

"Well," she told him, "thanks again for the pamphlet."

She had a taxi cab drop her off at the airport with her two suitcases. The line wound around and around from where the taxi cab had dropped her off until she finally made it to the check-in counter for her chosen airline. It had been forty minutes since the line began, so Maureen was bored and anxious.

The woman behind the counter asked, "Do you have any fresh fruit in your baggage?"

"No," Maureen was tired of waiting in the long line and snipped impatiently, "of course not."

The woman behind the counter gave Maureen a dirty look that pierced her very soul like daggers chopping away at solid ice. The woman told Maureen without enthusiasm as a lifeless robot might speak, "Enjoy your flight."

Maureen headed up the escalator and toward the security stop where everyone had to be searched for weapons and other contraband. She noticed two armored stormtroopers standing nearby with assault rifles in their hands. She realized that the threat level had been adjusted again.

She finally marched aboard her plane after it arrived. It was already crowded, so she went as far back as she could to guarantee she wouldn't have to sit in the dreaded middle seat between two strangers. The take-off was uneventful and before long they were at their desired altitude.

Maureen was sitting by the window. She looked out at the clouds in the distance. The sun was going down, so it was easy for her to see the terrain far below without shading her eyes. Then the *bing* occurred, allowing the passengers to temporarily remove their seat belts and use the restroom if necessary.

She was distracted from the view for a moment by a young married couple arguing in the seats in front of her. Maureen tried to ignore them, but the lack of other events left her listening attentively to their words.

The young man told his wife, "This never would have happened if you'd allowed me to hold onto the papers."

The wife snapped back, "You would have lost them the moment I gave them to you. You know that. You know you lose everything!"

The man argued, "Not important things. Sure, I might misplace trivial rubbish sometimes, but I would have kept the papers safe."

The young woman returned in hasty anger, "It doesn't matter now, does it? Does it?"

"We're screwed and this time," he emphasized with glee, "it's *your* fault!"

"My fault? You damned jerk!" She told him, "Next time you can hold onto the papers and lose them before we even leave town."

Eventually the young couple became so infuriated with each other that they refused to speak with one another for the remainder of the flight. This worked out well for Maureen because she wanted some quiet time in which to focus her thoughts. There was a lot for her to consider about her near future.

She had an important assignment to start in Washington, D.C., the capital of the United States and, some claim, the whole wide world. It was the most prestigious project she'd ever been assigned and this time she would run it herself. She would have full responsibility and be answering to a congressman. It was enough to make any researcher nervous.

After collecting her suitcases from the baggage claim carrousel, she was out the door and into line for the next available taxi cab. Maureen dropped off her suitcases at her pre-arranged long-term hotel apartment and then went on a limited sight-seeing trip.

She saw statues of presidents, buildings housing legislators and judges, and the symbols of ancient Egypt and Rome. The history of it held the so-called magical quality, in Maureen's opinion, and that was why most people went along with the system already in place. It's easier, some believe, to fix something broken than to replace it with something else entirely new.

Maureen saw the optical illusion of the reflecting pool below the towering obelisk monument. Over the distance and straight down from the pool, the rectangular shape was transformed into a triangle with a flat top. Fortunately, the obelisk had an aluminum pyramid at its top and, at the right angle, she could see it fit onto the lower pyramid as though intended in its design.

After a small amount of sight-seeing, it was time for her to begin collecting information. Maureen announced with unnecessary detail, "I've been assigned by Congressman Stanley Q. Hesitant to research the social trends that have led

Western civilization up to this moment and where they will lead us in the future.”

The guard blinked once and then asked, “I will need to verify your official credentials.”

“The congressman assumed that my research would be wholly academic,” she explained pathetically, “so he didn’t provide me with any credentials.”

The guard had seen new people before and was ready to explain, “As far as we know, ma’am, you walked in from off the street with no connection to that congressman or anyone else here in Washington, D.C.”

“You’re welcome to call him.” She told the guard, “He’ll vouch for me.”

The guard had been instructed to explain the matter, “The days of casual security are over. We need officially issued credentials or else we cannot be sure who you are or what your purpose is within our facility.”

“Didn’t the tax payers pay for this facility?” Maureen demanded, “Isn’t it a public service for anyone to access?”

“There are limits to public access when national security is involved.” The guard told her using language most people could understand, “As you’ve probably heard, ‘loose lips sink ships.’”

The guard told her, “I can’t let you in until I clear your name with headquarters.”

Maureen was offended, “My name? Why would they have it in their records.”

The guard smiled, “We have *everyone’s* name in our database.”

Chapter 3

Book Blocking Bureaucracy

Maureen was granted access to the facility which included several libraries where information could be sought for her project. She found her way to a congressional library kept for research projects such as hers. The first reference was soon in front of her and the research had begun.

Maureen was trying to focus on a book, but her attention was drawn into the conversation between two uniformed security personnel standing near her. She wanted to read, but their words were louder than her thoughts.

One guard was telling the other, "There were steps taken in the past to initiate one individual at a time according to the rules governing such. The limitation even up until this present moment has been that it is too slow to keep up with the rapid changes in population."

The second guard asked, "What do you propose to improve this?"

The first guard gave the answer, "The necessary work must be done to provide the means for ordinary people to self-initiate themselves. This will allow for a boom in initiates available. The math is pure and sound."

The other security man laughed at the suggestion, "Self-initiate themselves? That's some sort of oxymoron, right?"

"In the past it wouldn't have been possible, I agree, but with modern technology and computers, a lot more can be realized." He admitted, "I'm not sure

exactly what goes into it, but by having people self-initiate themselves, more people can be initiated in far less time at little or no expense.”

“It sounds good in theory, I admit, but,” the other security man condemned the plan, “you would have to convince people that they *want* to do it even if there’s some effort, discomfort, or other investment.”

“I’m sure those advertising geniuses can figure out the necessary marketing plan. It would be expensive at first,” the first guard admitted, “but the cost of the self-initiation kit could be set to include the expense of promotional activities and manufacturing. The front corporation could even earn a profit.”

Maureen wondered if self-initiation would be sold to people in the capitalist nations. It would move the cost of initiating people onto the consumers. Those who refused to receive initiation wouldn’t be punished, of course, because that would be coercion. Instead, those already initiated would be provided extra privileges.

There were still many questions on that subject for Maureen. She didn’t know who was behind the plan or what the initiation process involved. People could believe, for example, that it was all a human endeavor to organize people, but it could always be an alien plot to organize a secret army on Earth to assist the planetary invasion. Maureen didn’t have enough information either way.

She boldly asked the two security personnel, “Is there a book you could recommend on the subject of initiation?”

The first security guard was angry, “Were you eavesdropping on our private discussion?”

The second security man complained, “That’s quite anti-social.”

Maureen argued the issue, “I was trying to read this book, but you two were talking so loudly that I couldn’t help but to overhear some of what you said.”

The first security officer asked, “So, you admit it?”

The other security man warned her, “Anything you say will be used against you.”

She didn't want any trouble, "I'm going to read this book now." Maureen turned her attention back to reading the text in front of her. She hoped they would leave her alone.

The two security personnel stood staring at her for a minute as though waiting to see if she would reveal her secret crimes to them out of sheer guilt. She said nothing, so they returned to the parking lot where their armored security patrol vehicle sat in the shade of a tree.

Maureen's eyes had scanned every word on the page, but she realized that none of it had made it into her conscious mind. Instead, her attention had been stuck on the incident involving the two security personnel. She wanted to take greater offense to their attitude, but the fact was that they were armed and dangerous.

After checking several references in the main library, Maureen realized that she needed some references that were to be found only in an attached confidential library. She announced to the librarian in charge of that section, "I need access to the Gerald Ford Memorial Confidential Library."

"I'm sorry," the librarian said, "but you don't have the necessary security clearance to enter that section of the library."

"What is back there that I can't see?" Maureen told the librarian, "I thought they were just some ordinary books."

"Yes, the collection in that section is comprised of books." The librarian explained, "Confidential books."

"Could I see a list of the books in the collection?" She knew that if she could see the titles of the books that she'd be able to order them all on the internet either new, reprinted, or used. It didn't matter as long as she found the needle in the haystack, so to speak. Otherwise, she'd have to browse all of the books produced by Western civilization since the murder of Julius Caesar.

"No, of course not." The librarian explained, "If you could do that, then you'd know the secret."

"Really?" She requested, "What secret?"

The librarian told her impatiently, "I have other people that are waiting for my assistance."

She tried again, "What's in there?" It was to no avail, however.

Maureen pressed her face against the glass wall of the confidential library, but the blinds were closed so she could only see through the thin slits while the thick blinds obstructed her view. The books were well obfuscated from her inspection.

She turned around to find a security guard standing behind her. He asked, "Can I help you?"

"Yes, actually, you can." She told him as calmly as possible, "I need to access this section of the library."

The guard asked, "Can I see your credentials?"

"No, they are," she lied, "too secret for you to see."

"Well, the same is true for this section of the library." The guard ordered her, "Please move along."

She pleaded with the security guard, "But I need to see ..."

The guard warned her, "Please move along or I will have to escort you to the exit."

Chapter 4

The Two Horns of Authority

Maureen picked up the phone and dialed the temporary agency, “I don’t think that I’ll be able to continue my current assignment.”

The temp agency staffer couldn’t accept anymore details before getting the correct file pulled up on the computer, “What’s your assignment number?”

Maureen answered quickly, “Twenty-five, ninety-six, eighty-two, forty-seven.”

“Okay,” the temp agency staffer said, “let me see here. It says that you’re working on a research project for a Congressman Stanley Q. Hesitant. Is that the right one?”

“Yes, that’s correct.” Maureen tried to explain the situation, “The problem is that everywhere I go to access the information that I need for my research, I’m told that my security clearance isn’t sufficient. I have to have my clearance upgraded as necessary.”

“Is this an issue regarding your pay for the assignment?” The temp agency staffer demanded, “Are you seeking additional remuneration?”

“No,” Maureen stressed as well as she could, “I’m trying to explain that I’m not really qualified to do it.”

The temp agency staffer seemed to understand it differently, “Did you lie on your resume?”

“No,” Maureen answered, “I meet the academic requirements, but there was no mention of a security clearance when I accepted the assignment. I can do the work, but I’m not being allowed access to the data I need.”

The temp agency staffer asked, “How can we assist you to handle the assignment?”

Maureen asked sarcastically, “Can *you* grant me the necessary top secret security clearance?”

The temp agency staffer said in the same disinterested tone of voice, “Let me consult with my supervisor briefly.”

Maureen was on hold. The fact was that she needed the assignment because her debts were escalating. The round-trip airfare and the accommodations were all being provided by the temp agency, but that didn’t handle her personal debts from previous years of academic pre-requisites. The interest rates were harsh and the research assignments had been too difficult to attain even after all of her study.

A supervisor was on the line, “What is it exactly that you need to complete your assignment?”

Maureen repeated her outlandish demand, “The necessary top secret security clearance.”

“Normally it would take months for you to go through the process with all of the background checks and PDH, but we have an arrangement with the government. As an employee of our temporary employment agency, you fall under our security clearance. The password is TIMEWORM.”

“Okay,” she said, “I’ll try it.” It all seemed too good to be true.

After Maureen had hung up the phone, she suddenly wondered if the supervisor at the temp agency was only messing with her. Could there possibly be a password that would grant her the necessary access to do her research? She wouldn’t know until she tried.

Maureen approached a librarian outside of the Gerald Ford Memorial Confidential Library. The librarian asked, “How can I help you?”

She said with complete confidence, "I'm here to access the collection within the Gerald Ford Memorial Confidential Library."

The same request was made as before, "Can I please see your security clearance?"

"The password is," she hesitated to say it because it sounded ludicrous somehow, "TIMEWORM!"

"Okay," the librarian told her, "please follow me."

The door was unlocked and she was directed inside of the mysterious library. Her eyes began scanning the spines of all of the books within her immediate range. She had no intention of actually opening any of the books visible there. She only needed to see the titles and author names to understand what was happening to the nation and the world.

She had to sit down in a nearby chair because she was feeling faint. Maureen wasn't sure if it was the adrenaline rush of finally accessing the confidential collection or if the fumes from the freshly cleaned carpet were affecting her. One eye blinked shut. She was sleepy and the idea of taking a short nap seemed quite reasonable at that moment.

As she started to stand up from the chair, the world was turned upside down. She tried to brace herself against a bookcase, but all she managed to do was pull one book from the shelf as she collapsed to the floor.

She was still holding a book in her hand as though it was going to save her from her abrupt and brutal fall. Looking down at the book, her eyes focused on the title. It was *The New Atlantis* by Sir Francis Bacon.

When she woke up, she realized she hadn't been inside the confidential library at all. She'd hit her head and blacked out on the restroom floor of the government facility. She hadn't called the temporary employment agency and there was no all-access password.

Maureen said aloud to no one, "Time worm?"

She decided that it was a good idea to get something to eat and calm down. Maureen made her way to a public lunchroom provided in the building. She

bought a bottle of juice and a single portion of carrot cake. With so few seats available, she found herself sitting across from a librarian.

“We’re both the same,” the librarian remarked, “you and me.”

“Do you mean physically or mentally?” She had difficulty removing the plastic wrap from her slice of carrot cake. She added, “Physically, I’d agree because we’re both human and all that, but mentally, no, that’s something altogether different.”

The librarian told her, “Mentally we couldn’t be any more different.”

Even though she had practically said the same thing, she took offense. Maureen demanded, “Why do you believe that?”

“The mind is a unique tapestry woven by personal experiences and moments of self-reflection. No one could have exactly the same mind.” The librarian then considered where the commonalities existed, “Granted, there will be similarities due to shared sources such as in the case of several people being exposed to the same popular entertainment media. They share the experience, so they communicate about their common experience.”

Maureen was skeptical about the whole situation, “I doubt there are really that many different kinds of experiences.”

“It’s probably more to do with the timing of many basic experiences.” The librarian explained, “It’s the timing of these events that make them unusual. Not every visit to the same restaurant, for example, will go exactly the same way. The waiter may say something different or there might even be a different waiter. The food might be prepared the same as before or perhaps the chef will have begun experimenting with cilantro. Each visit is potluck.”

Maureen agreed after chewing away another large bite of cake, “We’re aware of the differences in each experience. As we experience more, our awareness grows.”

The librarian suddenly shifted topics, “Let me contrast the two for you. First, there is the robot-zombie awareness. Second, there is the fallen angel awareness. These are the two extremes.”

Maureen complained, "I'm not following what you're saying, whatsoever."

"Allow me to explain my theory," the librarian told her, "The robot-zombie awareness is dictated by programs that have been incurred by cultural influences or indoctrination. Most governments, regardless of their system of governing, would prefer that the majority of the population be in this category because they are then easier to manage while being reasonably productive all the same."

Maureen asked, "What's so bad about the other extreme?"

"The other side, the fallen angel awareness, is far less cooperative." The librarian elucidated the concept, "The fallen angel awareness prefers to go out on its own and start something new. It doesn't take orders well, but sometimes it can take orders better than others can. In other words, the choice is up to the fallen angel awareness to either go along with the plan, work against it, or remain ambiguously neutral."

She put it bluntly, "Why don't the governments simply track down all of these fallen angels and remove them from the equation?"

"Every major election is directed at the fallen angel awareness more than any other." The librarian explained, "The robot-zombie awareness has already been pre-programmed to vote a straight party ticket. The fallen angel awareness, however, can change voting preferences as frequently as daily, let alone from election to election."

Maureen realized, "I suppose if it wasn't for the fallen angels, then, every election would end up with a fifty percent split down the middle."

The librarian then said, "There is a third awareness that I have not yet mentioned. It is rarest of them all and difficult for many to grasp. Perhaps special individuals such as the Buddha or Jesus achieved it. The third state of awareness is known for its oneness with the whole universe as though time and space distances were illusions and everything and every event are actually one location in one moment."

Maureen complained, "I'm having difficulty understanding that."

“That’s the problem for most.” The librarian told her, “They can study and practice, but I do not know of any guaranteed method. The followers of the Buddha and Jesus today aren’t much closer now, generally speaking, than before the teachings were made available. It takes the small few from amongst them to really *get it* somehow.”

She asked about his theory on the subject, “Is there a distinction between the teachings of Jesus as compared with the teachings of the Buddha?”

“It doesn’t really matter because the truth is what it is regardless of any teaching on the subject. The third state of awareness exists for anyone alike regardless of which teaching they follow or none at all.” The librarian then said, “The Buddha and Jesus didn’t invent the concept of the third state of awareness. They, instead, were attempting to announce it. Jesus called it the Kingdom of Heaven within. Yet, people today want to see it externally with their robot-zombie awareness as though that was possible.”

Maureen had heard enough. She told him, “That’s okay.” She wanted to return to her snack and even took out a notebook to write so she could ignore the librarian.

There was an awkward silence for a while before the librarian suddenly remarked, “I happen to know that the one world totalitarian ruler will wield his power absolutely because he will control a particular satellite-based weapon that can target and vaporize anyone on Earth. If anyone tries to organize some form of resistance to his rule, he is obligated by his law to vaporize the leaders and the followers of the counter-movement.”

Maureen pretended to look around as though attempting to find out to whom he was addressing his comments. The lunchroom was otherwise deserted, so she asked him, “Are you talking to me?”

“Yeah, I overheard you attempting to access the confidential library.” The librarian smiled, “I assumed you would be interested.”

She couldn’t turn away free clues, so she told him, “Tell me why you think a satellite-based weapon is necessary.”

The librarian told her, “The one world system is the perfect system, you see. With only one absolute ruler who can vaporize anyone, there is no more war or

division. The people of the world will be united for the first time in human history. They will have finally passed the test on which the *others* are waiting.”

She asked, “The aliens that are watching us?”

“Yes,” the librarian answered, “the aliens are waiting for humankind to finally organize itself under a single system. They do not care which system it will be. They know that whatever system wins out, it must be a good one because it managed to overcome all of the competing systems along the way.”

Maureen asked in disbelief, “But won’t our one world system have to be compatible with theirs?”

“Sure.” The librarian replied, “It will be as long as the Earth government is willing to negotiate arrangements with the alien government.”

She inquired, “How will we know when the one world system is about to be realized?”

“The number of the system is six hundred and sixty-six.” The librarian then explained the nature of the number, “That’s simply because the first six and primary numerals of the Roman counting system are D, C, L, X, V, and I. In other words, the six numerals of the Roman system add up to six hundred and sixty-six when you add their values together.”

“If you’re suggesting that the European Union has a legitimate chance to take over the world and put their own Caesar at the lead, then, I don’t know,” she laughed, “you’re just being optimistic for them!”

The librarian corrected her misconceptions, “The European Union is a part of the Roman system, but it is not the whole of it. The capital won’t even be in Europe. It’s called the Roman system, but the capital isn’t in Rome, Italy. Instead, it is based on the old Roman Republic-Empire because the modern Western civilization was founded by it.”

Maureen requested, “Who else is part of this Roman system according to your *theory*?”

The librarian took offense and reminded her, “I’ve been researching this for years.”

Maureen defended her words, "I just meant that you can't really prove any of it."

"Of course I can!" The librarian told her with excitement, "You only need to see how the governments of these various nations are organized to see where the Roman system persists today."

"Well," she asked, "what other nations outside of Europe would you include?"

The librarian didn't have to think about an answer, "There are so many that I can only name a few major ones: the United States, Mexico, South Africa, India, Pakistan, South Korea, Argentina, Brazil, and Russia."

Maureen took the opposite approach, "Then what systems wouldn't fit?"

The librarian briefly touched on a few alternative systems, "Communism wouldn't support the interplanetary trade negotiations. The world trade organizations are merely a prelude to the one world economic system that can readily plug into the galactic system of planets. Monarchies are only good if they all sacrifice their authority in favor of the one world leader. Theocracies wouldn't help unless the religion in question was particularly enthusiastic about supporting inter-planetary trade efforts."

Maureen was about to speak, but the librarian had more to say.

The librarian told her, "The shepherd philosopher kings were to burden the truth of national or international matters so that the common people could live without concern. When the government outpours security alerts to the public with little evidence and no serious handling, the people are left in fear, however. Why hide other secrets if the people are meant to live in fear?"

Maureen demanded, "What do you suggest, then?"

"Plato described the philosopher king's role in *The Republic*," the librarian apologized, "so I can't repeat it here without infringing on the intellectual property. Let's just say that the authentic philosopher king maintains a blissful society where all of the dirty work is done without public attention. The last great philosopher king in the United States was President Dwight D. Eisenhower."

She wondered, "Why haven't more followed in his footsteps?"

"No one knows how he did it." The librarian put it simply, "That's the downside to the secrecy. No one alive at the time can recall how President Eisenhower managed so well because he kept it from them. Instead, there are calm photo opportunities of him playing golf or lounging in relaxed comfort. He was attempting to project a desirable role model for the American people to imitate while hiding the truths of the world."

Maureen was surprised, "But you're saying he wasn't *really* goofing off on the job?"

The librarian shocked Maureen further with the truth, "It's been revealed in more recent years as confidential documents become declassified that President Eisenhower ordered more covert operations than all of the presidents since that era put together. This estimate might be corrected later as more top secret materials become declassified, but you get the point."

She suddenly ask him, "Do you have security clearance for the Gerald Ford Memorial Confidential Library?"

He stroked his beard and rearranged his glasses. He had to phrase any admission carefully, "My security clearance covers the first four floors of the building."

Maureen counted in her mind. The confidential library was on the fourth floor, but what about the basement? She told him, "It's on the fourth floor."

The librarian was reciting what he'd been instructed to say, "I cannot confirm or deny the floor number of that or any other room."

She asked the librarian, "Is that because of the basement?"

He adjusted his collar nervously, "I cannot confirm or deny the existence of one or more basement levels."

Maureen suddenly shifted topics on the librarian to bring down his defenses, "But won't the Anti-Christ have horns like a lamb as it says in the Book of Revelation?"

The librarian said, “Not literal horns, that would be ridiculous.” The librarian explained, “Those are all metaphors in that book. It was meant for a particular reader who was already well-versed in the symbolism used. Unfortunately, many of the materials needed to decode the prophecies therein are not included. The books of Daniel and Ezekiel do provide some answers, but others have been misinterpreted.”

Maureen inquired, “Is the Christ also a lamb with two horns?”

“Exactly,” the librarian revealed, “the second beast will be a mockery of the actual Christ. That will lend to the great confusion and why so many will be easily deceived during the great deception.”

Maureen remarked, “I had always assumed that the great deception had already taken place.”

“No,” the librarian expounded, “while there have been many deceptions, of course, the *great* deception will be distinct from all of those. It comes down to the critical difference. While the old deceptions certainly benefited the research necessary to pull off the great deception, they were small scale in comparison.”

“Well, what will the great deception involve?” Maureen named a few possibilities, “Alien contact? Divine intervention? The reincarnation of a great leader?”

“I don’t want to spoil the surprise for you,” the librarian warned.

“Please tell me anyhow,” Maureen requested.

The librarian complied, “The two Christs will emerge from it and people will have to choose between them.”

She asked the librarian, “Which one are you going to choose when the time comes?”

The librarian smiled, “This is a bipartisan library.”

Chapter 5

The Pentagon Conceals a Pyramid

Maureen tried to contact Congressman Hesitant's office over several days, but he was always in meetings and unavailable for appointments. She requested repeatedly to have him contact her, but he never did. Was he trying to ignore her and the research project he'd assigned to her or were his aides blocking contact?

She was standing outside the building housing the Gerald Ford Memorial Confidential Library. She asked herself, "What would President Ford do in a situation like this?" Maureen had no idea what he'd do, however.

Maureen considered alternative methods for accessing the information in the confidential library. She could contact a divination expert to work out some Tarot cards, I Ching lines, or horoscopes. However, those results would surely be too vague to use.

She'd read about remote viewers who go into a trance state and then fly around out of their bodies as ghosts so they can see things far away while remaining physically in one place. The results of some experiments had been quite impressive, but then the research seemed to abruptly end. This change in status was probably the result of re-classifying the material as top secret.

Remote viewers weren't a dime a dozen. Instead, they were rare and those who did advertise their services weren't particularly reputable. Maureen decided,

finally, that it'd be easier to arrange a break-in of the library as to be conducted by some hired thugs. Then she could have the information she needed without anyone even knowing she'd been involved.

The two thugs were each given a camera. They were to break into the confidential library and then photograph the books on the shelves. She'd be able to zoom in on the high-quality images later and read the titles of all of the books from their spines. The secret of the collection would soon be hers to know.

As the two hired thugs returned with the cameras, Maureen prepared herself. They entered the office and closed the door. The first thug said, "We got your film right here."

Maureen pulled out a revolver and shot the first thug in the chest. He staggered back. She shot him again and killed him.

The second thug ran for the door, but Maureen targeted him without hesitating. She fired the revolver and blew a hole in the door by the thug. He had the door open by the time she managed to shoot again. She hit the thug in the side, causing him to curse in pain.

The neighbors from the next office had been alarmed by the sounds of shots being fired. They called the police and they arrived within fifteen minutes. As they were dragging Maureen to the police car, she remarked, "I didn't get to see the book lists yet!"

Maureen suddenly sat up and awakened fully from her dreamy trance state. Had she been able to control her mind more fully, she would have killed the two thugs more quickly and gotten away with the cameras containing the book lists. She was half-dreaming and half-remote viewing because the cameras might have contained useful data had she gotten to see it.

After waking up all the way, she decided to take a walk around the block to clear her head but ended up cutting the walk short when she saw some unsavory youths roaming the streets. Maureen hastily walked back to the front of her hotel where the doorman was happy to see her. She assumed he was merely bored with the late shift.

"There were lights blinking in the sky," the doorman explained as Maureen approached. "I know it sounds crazy, but they weren't like anything I've ever seen before!"

Maureen looked up for a moment, but she didn't observe anything unusual. She apologized, "I'm sorry, but I don't see the lights of which you speak."

"Alas," the doorman conjectured, "the lights in the sky have gone and I, the persistent fool, am left here with nothing more than the preposterous anecdote."

She shrugged at him, hopelessly, suggesting for his benefit, "It'll be okay."

"I recently read a book about the Nephilim," the doorman confessed to her, "so I'm a little bit jumpy, perhaps. The idea is fresh in my mind."

Maureen didn't know the reference, "The Nephilim?"

The doorman was more than willing to explain, "Back before Noah's flood, there was an inter-mixing of human and angelic genetics. That's what created the famous giants such as Goliath and the demi-gods of Greek stories. The flood was meant to wipe away the hybrids, but ..."

She asked him, "You don't think the flood was successful?"

"Oh," he laughed, "I'm not doubting that. I just wouldn't be surprised if those angels came back to try again. With modern genetic science being as it is, there's no stopping people from realizing the same goal as the ancients. And if the aliens don't return, maybe we'll find the lost tomb of one of those demi-gods, so the cloning can begin."

Maureen didn't understand the logic of the theory, "Why would a hybrid species be preferable to the normal human?"

"The angels don't have physical bodies such as ours." The doorman told her, "In order to interact with our world, they must normally act through a willing and at least controllable person. The ideal hybrid species would be a physical body in this world that is easily controlled by an angel right from the start without the need for years of gradual conditioning."

“What I don’t understand about these hybrids is,” she asked, “why would angels want to control physical bodies?”

“Oh, I failed to make myself clear,” the doorman admitted, “I meant this was the work of *fallen* angels.”

She considered his theory, “Your explanation is that after being cast out of Heaven ...”

The doorman corrected her, “After they deserted their service, but please continue ...”

“Okay, so, after they blew the scene,” she tried again, “they made it to Earth and now they want physical bodies of their own?”

“Something along those lines, yes.” The doorman said, “It’s not that they will be changing bodies as much as they will be almost as one with the new hybrid while remaining detached.”

Maureen shrugged haphazardly and commented, “I don’t think it will be a problem if they want to have bodies of their own. I mean, wouldn’t that make it easier for ordinary humans when they no longer have to fear being possessed and so forth?”

The doorman was exasperated with her ignorance, “But when they have physical bodies of their own, superior to ordinary human bodies, they will dominate the whole world in a short amount of time.”

“Maybe the fallen angels,” she played devil’s advocate for a moment, “as you see them, should be given a chance to rule the world. After all, how could they do any worse than our human ancestors? I’d even imagine that their tremendous age and wisdom would contribute much to the human culture and the condition of the planet.”

The doorman was angry, “I’d never live somewhere governed openly by a fallen angel.”

Maureen pulled a thread from his words, “Governed openly? Would you be more accepting if the fallen angel in question kept its true identity a secret?”

The doorman tried to answer, but he couldn't form the right ideas together. On one hand he'd prefer no fallen angels governing at all, but that seemed to him an unlikely proposition. He finally replied, "Yeah, it'd be better. It'd be better to hide the monster from the public than to put it on a throne for all to worship."

Chapter 6

Baphomet the Root of Consciousness

Maureen sat on the edge of her bed and cried. What could she do? Her options were limited and time was quickly running out for her project. Without the necessary security credentials, she wouldn't be able to access the information that she needed.

Where could she turn for solace? She glanced in the bedside drawer to find a copy of the bible. She flipped through a few pages and was immediately disgusted by the use of Middle English. Thee, thou, thy, and thine? It was practically Greek to her.

Maureen then picked up the phone and called her sister for advice. While she was waiting for someone to pick up on the other line, Maureen noticed a cobweb on the ceiling of her hotel room. She wondered if the maid would notice it or if a complaint had to be filed with the front desk.

Her sister was receptive to hearing about the problem. Maureen explained the circumstances and requested some advice. Her sister was prepared to offer some.

Maureen's sister was telling her on the phone, "There are three types of people. The first type is always secretly waiting for someone else to invite them along. The next type takes action and will request an invitation. Finally, the third type

of person is the one who does the inviting, including others that have been previously forgotten.”

Maureen asked, “How do they decide who will do what?”

The sister replied, “In any situation, one person wants to entertain those present while another person wants to be entertained. That is a symbiotic relationship.”

Maureen inquired, “Who does the inviting, then?”

She answered, “People that are entertaining are easier to remember when it comes time to send out the invites. Those who are always in the background will remain in the background. But it is those who are willing and able to do the inviting that will always control their own destiny.”

Maureen considered, “What if people don’t accept the invitation?”

“It is a matter numbers.” Maureen’s sister explained, “If you need twenty people, then invite forty. Expect half of them not to be available instead of trying to rely on every invitation to bear fruit. Otherwise, you will be setting yourself up for unnecessary disappointment.”

“So,” Maureen demanded, “how does any of this fit into my research?”

Her sister suggested, “You can either be someone who sits around hoping to be invited or you can put yourself out there so others can see you and invite you at their leisure.”

“If I’m invited,” Maureen asked, “will they assist me in my research project?”

Maureen’s sister put it into different terms that would be easier to understand, “The point I’m making is that sometimes you have to solve your own problems instead of waiting for someone else to come along and help you.”

After the phone call, Maureen cleaned up and went out for lunch. She was tired of staring at the screen of her laptop. There were too many blanks to be filled and not enough access. She was about to start crying again before pulling herself together and setting her attention clearly on her long-term objective.

Maureen was sitting inside of a restaurant waiting for her lunch. Through the window, she spotted Congressman Stanley Q. Hesitant and knew what she had to do. She ran out of the restaurant and headed for the congressman. However, before she could reach him, he stepped into a car that was waiting for him.

She got into the backseat of a taxi cab and told the driver, "Follow that limousine!"

The cab driver noticed the special congressional license plate on the limo and remarked, "Government business, eh?" This wasn't the first time the driver had seen such a license plate, and it wasn't the first time he'd followed one.

"I'm doing a project for the congressman in that car." She explained quickly, "I need to speak with him, but it's been impossible to get through the various assistants and everyone else keeping me out."

"To catch a congressman," the driver told her, "you gotta' think like a congressman. Depending on which party he's with, you can find him at an appropriate bar, brothel, or fight club."

She couldn't imagine Stanley Q. Hesitant in any of those locales. Maureen told the driver, "Let's just follow his car until he stops and gets out. Then I can talk to him before he is once again surrounded by his over-protective lackeys."

They traveled for twenty miles and then reached a large, private property. Maureen was desperate to talk to the congressman about the security clearance she needed to continue her research. Everyone else from his office had told her that only the congressman could make that decision, but he was never available to discuss it.

The limousine stopped momentarily to allow the sliding security gate to open for it. After it headed into the property, the security gate began to slide closed again. The cab driver didn't even ask Maureen what she wanted to do. He slammed on the accelerator and took them onto the private property before the gate could shut.

The taxi pulled up behind the limousine. Two security guards ran up to the car with guns in hand. Maureen opened her door and tried to explain the situation. The breach of the security of the private property fell under the category

of ‘shoot first and ask questions later’. Fortunately for Maureen, she got out of the cab just as they approached.

The first guard ordered her, “Put your hands up in the air!”

The cab driver was soon standing next to her and demanding, “Where is my money?”

Maureen reached for her wallet, but the second security guard saw it as a hostile act and restrained her arm forcibly behind her back. She was trying to tell them about her reason for following the congressman, “I work for Congressman Hesitant!”

The congressman was still inside of the bullet-proof limousine where he’d be safe. Additional security guards were approaching and three snipers had Maureen in their telescopic sights.

The first security guard asked her, “Where is your security clearance badge?”

She tried to explain while the second guard held her right arm behind her back, “That’s why I need to talk to the congressman. I’m working on a research project for him and can’t access the materials I need to complete it.”

The first security guard was listening to his earpiece. He then told her, “The congressman said for you to see Millie in personnel to get your security badge.”

The second guard let go of her arm and opened the taxi cab door. The first security guard told the driver, “Take this woman back to the off-campus site of Congressman Hesitant’s office.”

The cab driver got back into the car. Maureen was helped into the back seat and then the door was closed for her. The taxi cab made a U-turn and headed back down to the sliding gate which was opening for them.

The taxi cab driver admitted, “Boy, that sure was exciting!”

She felt that it was all too exciting for her. Maureen suddenly vomited in the backseat of the car. She apologized, “I’m really sorry about that.”

“Don’t worry,” the cab driver told her, “We have a guy who specializes in cleaning that.”

Chapter 7

The Annunaki from the Upper Floor

When Maureen returned to her hotel, something seemed different. The handle was looser than before and a lamp was on even though she was certain that she'd turned everything off. She stood still for a few minutes and tried to look at the whole room at once.

Maureen hastily checked the wall safe where she kept her most private notes on the research project. After seeing that the number was the same as when she had last closed it, some relief came to her. However, there was still the great probability that someone had been in her room while she was at the library.

Her paranoia was heightened again when she noticed a fine wire hanging down from the ceiling. It was so light that most people would assume it to be a fragment of a spider web. Maureen wouldn't accept that conclusion until she examined it closer for herself.

She was standing on the bed, straining to see the details of the fine wire when the phone rang. Maureen hopped off the bed and picked up the receiver, "Hello?"

The person on the other line said, "I'm Congressman Stanley Q. Hesitant's secretary. I was told to call you for an update on your current research."

Maureen needed to verify what she was being told, "You want me to give you details over the phone?"

"Oh, yes," the secretary claimed, "it's done all the time."

Maureen tried to put it into its proper perspective, "You might not understand the nature of the information I have."

"You can trust me." The secretary almost whispered, "I won't tell anyone."

Maureen took the last remark as either very odd or the all too common indication of an unprofessional employee. She explained to the secretary, "It's not whether I can trust you, but if I can trust the phone line or," looking again at the fine wire above her, "other things."

"See here," the secretary said with impatience, "if you don't give me your updated report, then I can't go back to Congressman Hesitant with it. He doesn't have time to mess around with every detail. He delegates responsibility to others so he can focus on the long-term strategies."

Maureen asked, "Couldn't I at least give you this report in person?"

There was a pause and finally the secretary explained, "I'm leaving the office in twenty minutes and I won't be back in town until late next week."

Maureen was obstinately practical, "Delegate the responsibility to someone else and I'll meet with that person first thing in the morning."

There was a long pause and then the secretary said, "I'm not in a position to give this assignment to anyone else. It was dropped on me after coming down from several levels above. I'm at the bottom, I'm sorry to say."

"I can give you a very brief overview of my current research," Maureen offered, "but I'll have to save the specific details for another time."

The secretary balked, "That would be unacceptable."

Maureen didn't know what to say, "I don't want to seem difficult, but I can't help you."

The secretary was becoming increasingly nasty on the phone, "Allow me to remind you that you're being employed by our office to do this research. Hence, the specific details are ours to handle as we wish."

Maureen sighed audibly. She couldn't keep the information from the congressman's office if they demanded it. However, there was always the matter of verifying the caller. She announced, "I would like to give you my current update report, but first I need to make sure you are who you claim to be."

"I work for Congressman Stanley Q. Hesitant." The secretary demanded, "Who else would know to call you?"

Maureen looked up at the fine wire suspended from the ceiling above her, "That's an excellent question which requires more time to consider. Let's consider it together. Who would call me and demand details over the phone? Perhaps, for example, political enemies of the congressman who might want to see him falter. Just as likely, there are those who might rightly or wrongly believe that I am including them or their efforts in my report."

The secretary answered, "All I can say is that I'm neither of those."

Maureen inquired, "Then what manner of person are you, exactly?"

"I'm the person I claim to be," the secretary informed her, "I'm a secretary working for Congressman Hesitant. What else can I do to prove to you that I'm legitimate?"

Maureen demanded, "If you really do work for his office, then tell me this: what is my employee number as listed on the project work order?"

There was the shuffling of papers in the background and then the secretary had to use excuses, "I don't seem to have the work order with this file. It probably went to human resources to ensure your salary payments."

"Until I can make sure that you are really you," Maureen said with finality, "then I can't be expected to reveal the details of my report. It would represent an incompetent handling of sensitive data to do otherwise. I have a reputation to protect as a professional researcher."

The secretary threatened, "I should complain to your employment agency for this."

"That is your prerogative, certainly," Maureen said, "but I stand by my decision. If you would like to schedule a meeting ..."

"As I already explained," the secretary reminded her, "I'm leaving in a few minutes and won't be back until late next week."

Maureen hung up the phone and then climbed back up on the bed so she could attempt to pull down the fine wire above her. As she tugged it from the bottom, it ripped in half. She wondered if it really had been merely a spider web all along.

The next day Maureen was contacted by someone interested in her research. He wouldn't give his name, but he did agree to an interview. She chose a public place in case he had an ulterior motive in meeting with her.

The interview began. Maureen had her pen in hand and the note pad at the ready. She asked the witness to the incident, "What was the earliest indicator for you that something unusual was happening?"

The man's eyes went to the left. He thought for a moment and then eventually answered, "The milk was sour."

She requested, "Please explain."

He told her, "That morning when I went to have breakfast in the cafeteria in our office building, I poured my milk onto my cereal and it was sour. I checked the date again and it still had five days on it."

Maureen rolled her eyes in annoyance, "Move closer to the event in question."

"Well, I, uh," he tried to recall it as best as he could, "it was after breakfast that ..."

She interrupted him, "Tell me more about what happened after breakfast."

"Okay, well, you know," the witness began, "as I was trying to say was that after that, I was heading back up to my floor when the elevator ..."

Maureen asked him quickly, "What floor do you work on and on what floor is the cafeteria?"

"Well," he started to answer, "the cafeteria is on the ..."

She requested, "Tell me about your office first, please."

"Oh, okay, it's on the eleventh floor." He continued, "So, I was heading back up in the elevator and then it suddenly ..."

Maureen interrupted to ask, "On what floor is the cafeteria located?"

"It's on the sixth floor. Anyhow, as I was saying," the witness returned to the narrative, "the elevator suddenly stopped and the light even went out. Now, I don't know much about how they work, but I was scared half to death because I thought it might plummet down to the basement without electricity to hold it up."

Maureen inquired of him, "Did it?"

The witness couldn't believe her, "Are you asking if I plummeted to my death?"

She scrunched up her face and moved to the next topic, "Tell me about what happened after that."

"I was sitting in the dark for at least five minutes before everything returned to normal." He told her, "It was especially strange because I later discovered that the power had gone out throughout the whole building. While I was in there, everything seemed extremely quiet without the air conditioning and machines going. I imagined that the world had ended in an instant and that I was where I would be forever."

Maureen asked, "Sitting in a dark elevator?"

The witness replied, "Yeah."

She took it figuratively, "Going up to heaven or down to hell?"

"No," he explained to her, "not moving at all. Just sitting quietly somewhere in between the two. It was very peaceful."

Maureen instructed him, "Recall what happened to you next."

"No," he answered, "I'd rather forget about it."

She inquired of him, "Why?"

He told her, "Just forget about it."

Maureen asked, "You want me to forget about it, too?"

"Yeah," he said, "let's both just forget about it. It's like with how they passed the strict laws against subliminal messages. So, those with the most to gain had to try other methods of delivery. For example, it's unlawful to encrypt subliminal messages into a publicly purchased computer entertainment products. However, when the people in other countries download the same games pirated on the internet, there are no limits to what can be inserted. Viruses are just the tip of the iceberg, so to speak."

"I think it'd be healthier for both of us to remember." Maureen attempted to coax more from him, "If we can remember more than we do now, then the secrets of the ages will be opened up to us."

"Some secrets are meant to be forgotten." He insisted, "Some secrets cannot be remembered even when the attempt is made."

Maureen offered, "We could have you undergo some form of hypnotic regression therapy to unlock those forgotten memories."

"No, no, that wouldn't be appropriate at all. I can't be allowed free access to my own mind! That would be contrary to everything we were ..." Then he trailed off and stopped talking about it. His eyes tuned out and his jaw went slack.

She demanded, "Contrary to what exactly?"

The man's eyes were staring into space, "Ace of Diamonds. King of Spades. Jack of Hearts. Queen of Clubs."

Maureen asked him with excitement, "Where did you see those cards?"

He said, cryptically, "Tomorrow."

“No wonder you’re having trouble remembering!” Maureen had it all figured out, “The memory we need to access has been filed as a future event. Of course your mind won’t allow you to *remember* something that hasn’t happened yet.”

He told her quickly, “I can’t predict the future.”

“That’s the problem.” She explained, “The memory is being treated as a future consideration and not the memory of a past event.”

The witness suggested, “It’s a mistake, then?”

Maureen tried to explain again, “It’s similar to the digital video recorder that puts a timestamp on everything it records. The problem here is that someone has gone back and changed the timestamps on the memories you need to access.”

He wondered, “Will I ever remember?”

Maureen told him one possibility, “They will probably trigger when their given timestamp matches up with the real date and time.”

He asked Maureen, “How do we proceed if I can’t remember it until the future?”

She said as though it were a commonplace practice, “We will simply go in and rewrite the timestamps on those memories and put them back into place in the past.”

“Okay,” the witness requested, “then how do we do that?”

She said, “I’ll try something I read about in a Psychiatry book last year.”

The witness was willing to experiment, “Go for it.”

Maureen grabbed both of his arms and began shaking him back and forth violently as she screamed at him, “Remember tomorrow now!” His eyes looked to the right as though to imagine the future instead of to remember it. Maureen slapped him across the face and screamed, “Remember tomorrow, don’t imagine tomorrow!”

He was confused, "I don't know how."

She slapped him again and then shook him violently as she screamed, "Remember tomorrow now!"

The man was on the verge of tears because he didn't know what was expected of him or how to follow the instruction given. He sat down and turned away from Maureen as though hoping she'd stop her attempts of jarring him into remembering.

She demanded of him, "Are you trying to forget what you will do in the future because you feel guilty about it?"

He muttered, "Yes."

Maureen was sitting across from the interview subject. The questions were becoming increasingly strange. At first she took it in stride, but something suddenly happened. She felt uncomfortable and wanted to escape the interview. She looked up at her interview subject and the physical body of the person was temporarily obstructed by black and violet shadow clouds of energy.

She realized the truth. This wasn't a human person at all! Maureen had been led right into the hands of those she was ultimately researching. The Annunaki were again running their own civilization and they would soon fall upon the others.

She asked the shadowy cloud with violet lightning outlines, "Annunaki?"

"Nothing uncommon," the shadow cloud said, "in this place."

Maureen asked ignorantly, "This office complex?"

The shadowy lightning violet answered, "This civilization."

She requested, "How many Annunaki are there?"

The shadow violet lightning cast itself about as it answered, "Six hundred and sixty-six billion."

Maureen whispered, "That's a lot."

The shadowy violet cloud suddenly became very easy to understand, "Let me drop this little gem on you. Ponder this, closely, clearly, wide-eyed, and awake: Only when one is alone is the voice of the Devil the clearest. When others are near, the Devil's whispers are more difficult to hear. Therefore, solitary confinement will be mandatory."

Maureen shook her head, "People go crazy when ..." She understood all too well. The so-called craziness that she disrespected was the lunatic howling after the moon while the Devil screams in both ears at once. It was the Devil's screams in their ears that kept them away from those in the know.

The shadowy cloud explained, "Solitary confinement is vital to the whole endeavor as other people could raise questions about the necessary conditioning steps."

"Is that what happens when people meditate?" Maureen inquired, "Are they opening their minds to the Devil in the process while remaining in solitary confinement?"

"No," the shadowy cloud told her simply, "the opposite happens in that case. They realize the true selves within and that inspires enlightenment."

"So," Maureen decided, "solitary confinement is important to both the Devil and the true self."

There was a short delay before the violet cloud told her, "More or less."

She realized, "Does this mean that the Devil *is* the true self?"

"Yes, that is correct," the shadowy violet cloud told her, "the Devil is the true self and that's why."

Maureen asked, "Why what?"

"Why is anything the way it is?" The shadowy violet light said, "The World Dragon and the Devil are reluctant to accept one another. The World Dragon wants to erase the memory of the Devil so as to change him toward materialism which is the very nature of the World Dragon. The Devil, meanwhile, wants to convert the World Dragon over to spirituality. They are both stubborn."

“Well,” Maureen exclaimed, “if I’m really the Devil, then I’ll offer to formalize a treaty with the World Dragon. I’m not too stubborn to find a compromise.”

“The nature of the Devil is not materialism, however,” the shadow violet lightning explained, “so the translation isn’t so clear.”

“If you’re saying that there will be some time required,” Maureen told the cloud, “I will consider all reasonable proposals.”

The shadow violet lightning asked her, “You’re willing to lower yourself from your self-righteous heights down to lowly base matter?”

Maureen smiled, “I’m already here, ain’t I?”

The shadow violet lightning demanded, “Are you?!?”

Chapter 8

The Eightfold Path to the Apocalypse

The metaphysician had written in the personal research journal:

There are many who seek outside and beyond themselves for answers regarding secret knowledge. That is where they have failed already. What they are really seeking could be no closer because it is always right there and can never be lost. Instead of evoking every spirit or deva imaginable, the mind itself holds all of the answers.

The mind is composed of three primary layers: the conscious mind, the subconscious mind, and the collective unconsciousness. While the conscious mind is selfish and egotistical in its approach to external stimuli, the subconscious mind is less so. Granted, it is not completely selfless as is the collective unconsciousness, but the subconscious mind is far nobler and wise than the conscious mind can ever become.

Some people assume they think with the conscious mind, but it is actually something of a child that plays at thinking as though practicing to think for itself. The real thinking, however, is done by the subconscious mind. At that level, the response time is nearly instantaneous. It is the source of all flashes of insight occurring in moments of light sleep because it is then that the conscious mind is quiet for a while.

Dreams are the product of the subconscious mind. It can also be contacted using an ouija board, a pendulum, or so-called automatic writing. By learning how to channel the subconscious mind, the once ordinary person can become extraordinary. Instead of studying a particular branch of mathematics for many years, for example, in order to solve a specific problem, an individual could consult with the subconscious mind and receive an answer that is applicable if it can only be translated into language. By having the subconscious mind send the mathematical data as pictures instead of conceptual ideas, the possibilities are endless.

The collective unconsciousness contains all knowledge. It is shared commonly by all conscious beings, but it is considered very difficult to access. The metaphor is that it is harder to access the collective unconsciousness than it is to push a wealth-laden camel through a tight gate intended only for pedestrians. The first problem is that the conscious mind can never enter the collective unconsciousness because its very nature is the opposite. Instead, the subconscious mind acts as the mediator between the two extremes.

The collective unconsciousness doesn't think. It knows. The selfish ego of the conscious mind will be tempted by the wealth of knowledge to be mined and will attempt any combination of practices to break into the knowledge storehouse. The conscious mind can never access it, however, and that is the first great obstacle that protects the collective unconsciousness from the unclean and impure conscious mind.

The subconscious mind has limited access to the collective unconsciousness, but it does have access. The conscious mind would have to be purified quite thoroughly to even be up to the same level as the subconscious mind. If one were to purify themselves that well, the subconscious mind would essentially be in control because the subconscious mind and the conscious mind would be operating as one.

It can only be speculated that the subconscious mind could also be further purified so that it gained additional access to the collective unconsciousness. At that time, the individual would be able to exhibit supernatural powers as the collective unconsciousness is woven tightly into the fabric of the universe itself. The collective unconsciousness is, in fact, the mind of the universe. It knows all and it can make any change to itself with nothing more than a thought.

The collective unconsciousness sees all and knows all. It is all-powerful and completely selfless in its approach. The universe is its body. All conscious creatures are part of the consecutive and all-inclusive whole. The conscious mind is an individual mind apart from the whole so that it can focus its attention on a limited area of the universe that immediately affects its living. The conscious mind is the drop of water while the collective unconsciousness is the ocean.

While working at the library on her research project, Maureen was approached by another researcher. They had some interests in common and soon found themselves discussing literature. She was in need of more social interaction, so it was a fine opportunity for her.

Maureen was explaining the path that the literary artist had taken, "After several commercial failures, he tried to appeal to the lowest common denominator. He replaced the sophisticated and witty language of yesteryear with profanity that would make the most seasoned sailor blush. Where any romance was previously only mentioned in passing, he was now writing about the most intimate sexual practices of anyone and everyone in the book."

"So," the man asked, "how did that book work out for him?"

Maureen laughed and said, "It didn't help for many years because of a failure to accurately promote the work as sheer smut. Instead, the same generic literary descriptions were given, thus making the book sound dull and commonplace. It would take years for someone to realize how filthy and depraved it really was. That's when the word of mouth campaign started."

The man laughed and pretended he was the author, "It was like he was saying," the man changed his voice, "I can't wait all day. Will you give some money or not?"

Maureen tried to focus on the literary escapade of one of her artistic heroes, "It wasn't necessarily praise for his writing, however, that was circulated. People were simply surprised about how far one author would go to sell books. Commentators generally began their attacks with observations such as, 'It is so sad when a great literary mind flings itself into the gutter if only to chase the elusive but almighty dollar.' Then they'd follow with some really brutal accusations about the author's personal life."

The man asked her, "Did you read that book?"

"Yes," Maureen said proudly, "I studied it very carefully to better understand his method."

"Did it turn you on?" The man suggested, "Did it excite you?"

"Well," Maureen was embarrassed, "I wasn't reading it that way ... I was seeking intellectual ... stimulation."

The other researcher smiled, "Then you admit you were stimulated?"

"No," she protested, "not like that."

Later that night, Maureen yawned deep and stretched her arms. She was deciphering the document as quickly as she could. Her eyes were becoming blurred as she'd been up for twenty-six hours already. Could she afford a nap or would the fate of the whole world be jeopardized?

The first point of the message was already clear. The media had to be controlled so that what people believed to be a reflection of actual reality was manipulated by those behind the agenda. If independent news sources were permitted to continue their broadcasts, then they had to either be shut down or ridiculed into disbelief. Providing false stories to the small-scale journalists was a fast method for having them sabotage their own credibility.

Maureen had arranged to speak with an insider who could offer some details that were missing from the books. His identity would be kept completely under wraps, but the information could be included in the footnotes of her report without jeopardizing the accuracy of the whole project.

Maureen asked him, "What's the project's name?"

The young man told her, "I don't know it because I was never told, but I know it'd something of a daughter of the [censored] project from the 1950's and 1960's. I'm not sure exactly who runs it, however. Various reputable universities and hospitals received money from it in order to facilitate research."

She suddenly freaked out from all of the data she'd collected so far, "The world is coming to an end!"

"What?" the young man demanded of her, "Why do you say that?"

“Isn’t it obvious? The trends all point in that direction!” She tried to explain rationally, “I doubt the *whole* world is coming an end. It’s not a natural disaster that we need to fear.”

The young man suggested, “After GOD-Killa’ looses the Armageddon plague, the super-flu, upon humankind, then it’ll be over for most of us.”

“Even if it kills two billion people,” she rationalized, “there’s still over four billion to carry on without us.”

The young insider was adamant, “But that’s just one of the seven disasters that will occur roughly at the same time!”

“Well,” Maureen demanded, “what else do you believe will happen?”

“There will be a limited nuclear exchange and that will create a lot of radioactive fallout. The stock market will have already crashed and France will be an occupied nation again. Finally,” the young man concluded, “the aliens will begin landing and asserting their own sense of order which the survivors will all welcome, of course.”

Maureen wanted to see if she could confuse the cynical conspiracy theorist in him, “What is the insignia on the alien uniforms?”

His eyes went blank, “Insignia?”

“The symbol they wear to identify themselves.” She asked from a just a few possible selections, “Was it a maple leaf or a hammer with a sickle? Was it a moon with stars around it or a pyramid with an eye at the top?”

Without hesitating, however, the conspiracy theorist immediately answered, “The insignia is like a cross but bent.”

Maureen was perplexed but then considered, “Bent like a swastika?”

“No!” The conspiracy theorist laughed, “Nothing like that. It was more angled.”

“These aliens take over when,” she considered, “humankind is at its all-time low point in history?”

“Right.” The young insider explained, “They land when the governments of the world have already crumbled due to wars, the super-flu, economic collapse, nuclear fallout, and, of course, the over-extended, corrupt bureaucracies.”

“That’s that, then.” She shrugged, “Not much we can do about it now.”

“Of course there is! Why do you think the invisible shadow government produced *The Matrix* for us? Just to entertain us? Don’t be fooled by its shiny and slick appearances. It’s a training film to assist the future revolution against our alien masters.”

She asked him, “What do you believe the insignia worn by the human rebels wear in the future will be?”

Without dropping a beat, the conspiracy theorist was quick to tell her, “The owl.”

Maureen wanted an explanation, “Because they hunt at night?”

The conspiracy theorist already knew what to say, “The owl is a symbol for wisdom. In this case, the forbidden occult knowledge is the key and the aliens are determined to quarantine those who know too much from those who haven’t been contaminated by the truth of higher science.”

Maureen pondered his words and asked, “Is there a connection to the ancient mystery schools or am I reading too much into your explanation?”

The young man asked her, “The Babylonian mysteries or the Egyptian mysteries?”

“Which was the original?” She was confused, “I don’t recall for sure, but was it the Chaldean mysteries?”

“I have no evidence,” the young insider told her, “but the original might have been the Sumerian mysteries long before the others we named.”

“I think some people might be disappointed,” Maureen joked, “if their god was eventually revealed to be none other than Cthulu.”

He smiled and said, "Only because Tiamat has been submerged into multiple incarnations at once."

She requested, "Which incarnations are those?"

The young man explained his sense of pantheism, "You, me, and everyone else, of course."

Maureen had difficulty coming up with anymore questions. She told him, "I guess that's all."

The young insider suddenly revealed, "They've probably been observing your work all along."

Maureen laughed, "I'm a little flattered that they would care what someone like me is researching. It's not as though I have any funding or a think-tank encouraging my efforts for publication in the newsletter. I'm one of millions who became diverted from the path of personal righteousness in order to investigate if Noam Chomsky was correct."

He reasoned with her, "You obviously already agree with whatever it was he told you. Why go any further than that? Are you on some one woman crusade to get the truth out to the public before it's too late?"

"No, I simply," Maureen wasn't really sure why she'd pursued it for so long, "want to know for myself. That's all. My curiosity is driving my effort at this point."

"Well," he reminded her, "you know what it did to the cat."

"But," Maureen frowned, "I'm not a cat."

"Then what are you exactly? An investigative reporter for an independent news site? An agent for the United Nations intelligence agency attempting to compromise the national government?" The young man smiled and asked, "Or are you simply obsessed with something that you will never understand?"

"I will understand it." She was determined, "Even if I have to read every book about Western civilization and every aspect of life within it since the dawn of

humanity. I know the clues are strewn through the whole of it. The trick is only to pick out the facts from the fictions.”

“But how will you ever really know which is which?” The young insider tried to shed some doubts on her course of research, “Even if several books appear to agree, they could have been coordinated to read in such a manner. Or, more likely, one author uses another as a source so that the fictions, as you call them, are propagated further unknowingly.”

“In the end,” she told the young man, “I will know if I’ve found the correct answer if I can then accurately predict social trends before they happen. In other words, the truth will be proven by application and not mere faith or a report written.”

He couldn’t take her seriously, “Do you think that you can really find the blueprint for Western civilization dispersed as pieces throughout history books and other works of non-fiction?”

“Yes, I do.” Maureen added with enthusiasm, “Keep in mind that even with all of the technological advances, human people are still essentially the same as they were one, two, even three thousand years ago. We even know from their ancient literature that they were sophisticated and intelligent people and not primitive animals as a modern person might want to believe. Nothing seems to change very much other than the specifics of the intrigues and political betrayals.”

Chapter 9

Horus isn't Osiris

An old classmate of Maureen's called her totally out of the blue. She was especially surprised because the classmate had to track her down to the hotel where she was staying for the duration of her research project. It was improbable, but Maureen accepted the call anyhow.

The old classmate told her, "I can't believe I found you! I thought maybe you'd moved, but then your employer told me that you were in D.C. doing a project. They gave me your hotel information, so you can thank them later for being so cooperative."

Maureen made a mental note to question her employer later about the lax security with her personal information. She told the classmate, "It must be really important if you took the trouble to find me like this."

"Oh, it was no trouble at all." The former classmate added, "I'm used to it." Then the old classmate suddenly asked her, "What do you think about this new energy drink?"

She answered honestly, "I haven't tried it, yet."

"If you're interested," the former classmate told her, "I can have a coupon for a free sample sent to your current address."

Maureen was surprised by the offer, "Do you work for the energy drink manufacturer?"

The classmate quickly answered in a guilty-sounding voice, “No.”

Maureen asked, “Do you work for a marketing company that is doing a campaign for the energy drink manufacturer?”

The old classmate said flatly, “Yes.”

There was a long, unpleasant silence. Neither knew what to say to that. It was a betrayal of their past as classmates.

Maureen asked the old classmate who she hadn’t seen since school, “Is there anything else?”

The classmate suddenly blurted out, “They know what you’re researching. They are researching *you*. I’m not supposed to say anything, but you’re under investigation even now. Are you alone? You might be standing next to one of their agents even now.”

Maureen looked around the room with heightened paranoia. Where she’d previously been an ordinary individual wandering through the sea of people, now she stood out from the herd. The predators realized that she was working to increase the personal security of the others, so she was a higher priority tactical target than those who worked on infrastructure alone.

The classmate asked again, “Are you alone?”

“Yeah,” Maureen answered slowly, “I think so.”

“You can’t trust anyone. Even people you’ve known all your life could be agents with affiliations to things you don’t even understand.” The classmate warned, “They might have ignored you until now, but your current research is attracting a lot of attention from certain powers.”

“But,” Maureen wondered aloud, “how do you know any of this to be true?”

“I’ve seen memos about you.” The old classmate said, “I wasn’t the rightful recipient of any of those memos, but that is besides the point. I did see them, regardless of the details, and you have to trust me. I’m letting you know at great risk to myself.”

Maureen couldn't accept it, "Do you expect me to drop this project and go home?"

"It depends if they believe that you already know too much." The former classmate offered some advice, "If you haven't reached the point of no return, then there's hope they would give up on your case if you stopped now. I don't know, though. It might already be too late, so you would be well advised to go underground and disappear as best you can for a while."

Maureen disagreed, "I accepted this assignment, so I'm obligated to complete my research and turn that information over to Congressman Stanley Q. Hesitant."

"You might be prematurely ending his political career if you give him that information." The classmate explained, "You're not dealing with amateurs. The powers involved have much further reach than ... well, let's just say they are international in nature."

"Well, I'll take your warning into consideration." She added, "I could give the information that you told me to the congressman and allow him decide to continue or not."

The former classmate said, "That would be prudent."

Maureen accepted that suggestion, "Okay."

The former classmate told her, "Good luck."

"Thank you," Maureen said, "Bye."

Maureen called her sister. It was nearly eleven thirty at night where her sister lived, but she needed to consult with someone she felt that she could trust. The strange call from the old classmate had made her nervous and reluctant to continue her work.

Maureen didn't believe in beating around the bush. She came out and told her sister the problem, "It was indicated to me that I might be risking my own safety if I continue on my current research project. It came from a source that isn't particularly reliable, so its overall authenticity is suspect."

“What? Really?” Her sister was amazed that a seemingly boring book exercise could threaten her sister’s well-being. “Are you joking?”

“No, it’s true. Well, that is, it might be true.” Maureen admitted, “I’m not actually sure. It’s a second-hand fact.”

“But, Maureen,” her sister was trying to be sensible, “even if the possibility is small, you should still consider it enough to avoid harm’s way.”

“I would forfeit my bonus pay for completing the project and it might jeopardize my future standing with the employment agency.” She explained, “This is an important opportunity for me to prove myself.”

“Maybe,” her sister said, “but wouldn’t it better to remain safe and move on to another company or whatever you do?”

Maureen was trying to be realistic, “There’s a possibility, perhaps, of this warning being accurate, I suppose, but it’s still unlikely. If I quit, I might be left wondering for the rest of my life about what happened.”

“I know this is important to you,” Maureen’s sister reminded her, “but what is more important? I thought you had plans to settle down somewhere and ...”

“That’s when I retire, not right now.” Maureen complained, “I have to work for a living first.”

Her sister suggested, “Well, no one is saying you need to retire to be safe. It’s this particular situation that you need to quit.”

Maureen was playing devil’s advocate by taking the side of not quitting. She threw out another excuse, “Besides, I rented out my house for the project’s duration, so I can’t go home yet.”

“Don’t be silly, Maureen.” Her sister offered, “You can stay with me and the kids for as long as you need.”

Maureen suddenly remembered what the old classmate had said about even people she had known all her life could really be working for unknown international ‘powers’ involved. She looked outside her hotel room window to see if

anyone was acting suspiciously. She didn't notice anyone, however, and returned her attention to her sister on the other line.

She finally decided, "I think I'll give it one more chance and see what happens."

"Are you sure, Maureen?" Her sister pleaded with her, "If you're telling me about the threat, then you must take it at least partially serious. Right?"

"Yes," Maureen then added, "but I really just needed to hear it aloud. Now that I have heard it, though, I realize how silly it sounds."

"Well," her sister said in exasperation, "what are you going to do next?"

"Some of the information I've gathered so far seems to be pointing me somewhere, but I need some confirmation. I want something really solid I can take back to Congressman Hesitant so he can see it for himself." Maureen added, "In other words, it can't be based on hearsay or subjective feelings. It has to be measurable and so forth."

Maureen's sister asked again, "But what are you going to do next?"

"I'm not sure." Maureen said, "I better go back to the congressman and request special clearance for the Gerald Ford Memorial Confidential Library. I know there's something there, but until I get inside, I won't be able to recognize it for what it is."

Her sister asked, "Are the books in this *secret* library available to the public elsewhere?"

"As far as I know, most of the books are still in print. They don't own any rare originals or anything that esoteric." Maureen remarked, "It's just a collection of books."

Maureen's sister then asked, "What keeps you from going ahead and ordering them online from Amazon or one of its competitors?"

"That's the problem in a nutshell," Maureen explained to her sister, "I can buy the books, but I don't know what books are in the confidential collection."

"Have you tried searching for the list online?" Her sister offered, "Perhaps someone has attempted to post a complete or partial list."

"The problem with that is there is mostly disinformation out there about topics such as that one," she explained, "so as to hide the truth in an ocean of half-truths and untruths."

Maureen's sister told her, "Let me tell you about what's been going on over here."

Maureen said, "Okay."

Her sister told her, "My oldest was suspended from school for carrying a concealed weapon."

"Really?" Maureen was surprised by the situation, "Why did he want to take a weapon to school?"

"He told me that he didn't even realize that a knife was considered a weapon." Her sister explained, "He told me that he knew lots of guys with guns, so he assumed knives were harmless in comparison. He said that he uses it as a tool and never even thought about cutting other people with it. He doesn't want to try cutting someone only to get shot."

Maureen asked out of professional habit, "What kind of knife was it?"

"You know," the sister told her, "one of those fold-out, multi-purpose ones."

Maureen guessed, "A Swiss Army knife?"

"Yeah, that's it. Although, it always struck me as odd that it's named that. I mean, I didn't realize the military of Switzerland was," she laughed, "I mean, aren't they the neutral nation?"

"The neutral nation?" Maureen's thoughts went into overdrive, "Of course! Switzerland, the Swiss Alps, weren't founded or urbanized by the Roman Empire unlike many of the other modern European nations. They weren't even founded by Gnomes. They were founded by Knights! I better go and get back to work."

Her sister told her, "Promise you'll call me again if you decide to make any important decisions."

"Sure, I'll keep you informed." Maureen wondered mentally if her sister was, in fact, an informant of the unknown 'powers'. Could she be trusted with the details of her research?

The next day, Maureen called the congressional personnel office about her need for security clearance. It took several attempts to reach the correct office, so she was already exhausted by the process even before reaching the right person. She explained her situation and expected an immediate response.

"Talk to me about it later," the congressional personnel office told her, "I can't be bothered with these details right now. This is an election year, after all, and, well, I don't even have time to explain it right now. Get back to me after the election."

Maureen knew that she couldn't wait until then. There was only one method she hadn't already attempted to gain access to the confidential library. She would have to seduce a librarian with access to the secured room.

If she could tempt the librarian enough to take her into the secret library for some sexual fornication, there would be plenty of time to see what books were in there while she was removing her clothes. The plan was fool-proof on the condition that she found a librarian with access to the confidential library who was capable of being seduced. That left the straight men and the lesbians. The others wouldn't be interested no matter how much time she wasted on them.

Assuming she found the appropriate target, she would then have to initiate a series of "accidental" meetings, perhaps over a week's time. That would make the librarian in question more trusting of her and would allow a greater possibility of turning the next encounter into a sexual one. It was double functional because not only would she gain access to the secret library, but she would also get to have sex.

Chapter 10

The Sex between Consenting Adults

The lecturer asked rhetorically, “Can they erase our minds to the extent of making us into zombie robot awareness slaves?”

Someone in the audience coughed. Maureen cocked her head and prepared to hear more. It was interesting to her, at least.

The lecturer answered his own question, “Of course! They’ve had the technology for over twenty years. The only reason it hasn’t been more broadly implemented is two-fold. First, it is a lengthy transition so it cannot be done in a weekend or even a week. Months are necessary to reach the first obvious level of robot zombie awareness. More time is needed to then reinforce the new state of mind so that the person doesn’t accidentally escape slavery by reading a book or watching a movie.”

The lecturer continued, “The second obstacle to the long-term approach of converting a large segment of the population into zombie robot awareness slaves is manpower. Even where funding is sufficient, there is still a problem for them to hire trustworthy individuals who are qualified to handle the technology and willing to enslave the minds of others. Funding isn’t always sufficient, of course, because if the target number of slaves was two billion, for example, and the actual cost to enslave one person was eighteen thousand dollars, then you can see why they are looking for a more practical solution.”

The lecturer speculated, "If they can train parents on how to raise their children according to the new system, then at least the children will be adapted to the upcoming needs. Public schools could further reinforce the brainwashing and the result would be an individual who is practically a zombie robot awareness slave already."

"How can a national leader be guaranteed total support from the public?" The lecturer had an answer but Maureen didn't find it appropriate, "In total war conditions, the entire economy is thoroughly converted over to the war effort. During those times of total war no one protests losses of personal freedom if increased security is promised. World War II was the ultimate total war of recent history. The next total war will meet many of the same criteria."

"One thing that will differ greatly in the next war, however," the lecturer warned, "is that the 'world lever' against the fulcrum of international politics will have changed sides, so to speak. This will result in a thousand year imperial-socialist republic and one world government. The 'world lever' will be lost almost suddenly when few realize even what is happening."

"As the events occur, though," the lecturer explained, "the time taken from one drastic step to the next will decrease. Eventually even those with the shortest attention spans will notice the changes. Before that time, only those with the long-term memory will notice how things have become quite different from how they once were. In fact, in many ways they will begin to resemble conditions described thirty to sixty years ago as the factors leading our enemies astray."

"So, in short, the technology to erase anyone's mind to make a zombie robot awareness slave has existed for years, but they lack the necessary manpower, funding, and time. For now, they must settle on converting people individually, picking and choosing who to treat. I would guess that they'd prefer to approach people who are highly gullible and easily hypnotized and controlled. They would have a lot more difficulty erasing the mind of someone such as myself who has read the various books and studied it independently for twenty plus years. Knowledge is the key to freedom."

After the lecture, Maureen met with the speaker and asked for some additional information relevant to her research. She was interested in how they could brainwash people and then make them forget. It threw a twist in the thread of logic used by her research.

The lecturer told her, "The conscious mind must forget more than it remembers. It would be ridiculous otherwise. There would be too much information to utilize at each moment and nothing would ever get done because it would always be a constant review of the past."

She asked him, "People just forget chunks of their past?"

"No, it's never totally forgotten." The lecturer explained, "What is seemingly forgotten by the conscious mind is always remembered by the subconscious mind and that is why the subconscious mind *should* make the real decisions for the person. The conscious mind is emotionally motivated by moment-to-moment, selfish responses. The subconscious mind can see the long-term trends as a detached observer exterior to the whole situation. That is where the advantage lies."

Maureen complained, "I'm divided because the subconscious mind is a strange and alien landscape compared to what I'm used to facing."

"You're right, but it's not to be unexpected." The lecturer explained, "The subconscious mind is the source of all your dreams. It has been an intimate partner with you since childhood. It knows you better than you know yourself. Yet, you and many like you know it not."

Maureen was confused by it, "How can it be aware of me without me being aware of it?"

"While you're asleep, you dream and that is where most people are limited to knowing the subconscious mind. You wake up and then the dream fades." He told her, "The average person dreams several times every night, but the mind intentionally forgets most of these dreams. Some people are skilled in remembering, however."

Maureen requested, "Can I only be aware of the subconscious mind as long as I'm asleep?"

"Fortunately, no, there's more to it." The lecturer instructed her, "There are many techniques available to help the conscious mind to tune in the subconscious mind. That's what the occultists mean when they recommend acknowledging one's own true self or master. It is the knowledge of the holy guardian angel. It is the crossing of the Abyss or Da'ath."

She asked, "Can you recommend some of these techniques?"

The lecturer told her, "Any act that demands creativity or *inspired* thinking will help promote the connection, the building of the antakarana. The subconscious mind is everything sought by so many, but suppressed by most."

Maureen was curious, "How has it been suppressed?"

"The opposite of the subconscious mind is the conscious mind's use of rote habit and effort, pre-scripted and mostly automatic." The lecturer revealed, "The conscious mind is literally a robot-zombie awareness mind and that's its function. The conscious mind is receptive to coercion and conditioning. Naturally, some tyrannical forces in the past have sought to promote the conscious mind in place of the subconscious mind."

She asked him, "How did they do that?"

He told her the brutal truth about their collective past, "By hunting down and extracting the so-called heretics. They were always too mystically inclined because they had already entered a new communication with their subconscious master. Such individuals stood out in the ancient, rigidly fixed societies. In the modern cities, on the other hand, some of those driven by their subconscious mind can often blend into the crowd."

The next day, Maureen returned to the library and located the librarian who'd been talking to her in the lunchroom. She tried to make it all sound plausible, "I'm only visiting D.C., maybe after your shift is over we could go out for drinks together."

The librarian was surprised by the invitation, "Well, I, uh ..."

"Please?" She tried to lay it on thick, "I don't know anyone else and I feel all alone."

The librarian felt obliged to assist her. They found themselves at a quiet hotel bar by the airport and had a few drinks. Soon the librarian was chatting her up again, "While it might not serve us well, it is the approach we've been using for thousands of years to accomplish our great and sometimes overwhelming task. To consider reforming now after all of these years would be disrespectful to all those who came before us on this same line."

Maureen asked, "Who started it?"

"That's not an easy question to answer. While some trace it back to civilizations such as the Roman Empire, the Persian Empire, the Egyptian Empire, the Babylonian Empire, and the Sumerian Empire, it is much older." He explained, "It has been passed back and forth across the world for many thousands of years and is directly traced back to the Antediluvian Empire."

Maureen's speech was becoming slurred, "I'm unfam ... ar ... il ... ar with that one."

The librarian told her more, "It was wiped from the Earth by the great flood, that great big great flood, hence its name is the empire from before the flood."

She quipped, "What about Atlantis?"

"Exactly." He told her, "Atlantis was flooded and that's how it officially fell. Before it did, however, they colonized several regions of the world."

"Really?" Maureen was surprised, "Such as which ones?"

He informed her, "Places you know as Sumer. Egypt, Azteca, Persia, and others no longer remembered except by the most dedicated historians and anthropologists."

After she had another drink, she muttered, "Isn't it weird that there are white liquors and dark liquors just as there are white metals and dark metals?"

The librarian didn't follow, "Dark metals?"

Maureen finished her drink and then reasoned it out, "You know, copper or gold or, um, something else like that. Bronze, or something. They're all darker than the white metals like platinum, silver, or, um, mercury."

"Either way," he warned her, "you should probably slow down on those."

"But what about the metals?" She demanded of him.

"They are solar and lunar opposites, I suppose," the librarian said, "and they complement each other like male and female."

Before long, Maureen and the librarian had a room in the same hotel and were frantically but drunkenly removing their clothes. She told the librarian, "Let's attempt to build up enough friction so that I can achieve an orgasm."

"No problem," the librarian reassured her, "friction is my specialty."

Afterwards, Maureen rolled to the side of the bed and said unconvincingly, "Wow, that was fantastic." The words were appropriate, but she said them with little emotion or enthusiasm.

"Some mirrors lie." The librarian told her, "You're such a beautiful thing."

She added, half-drunkenly, "There are waves between the two extremes."

The librarian seemed to understand her differently than she had intended, "There will have to be a swing in the opposite direction on Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Empire. It only lasted twelve years, but they were twelve of the most memorable years ever experienced in recent memory."

She demanded out of anger more than interest, "What is the opposite of totalitarian fascism?"

"Oh, I don't mean opposite in regard to its form." He tried to explain it carefully, "It will appear to be nearly exactly as the Nazi system only modernized. It won't occur within Germany, however, and that's where it will be remarkably different."

"Okay," she asked again, "but how is it opposite to Nazi Germany, then?"

He quickly told her, "It won't be anti-Semitic, for one. There will be a wholly different scapegoat, of course, but it won't be based on racist ideas. It will dominate the outer world from its headquarters in the exact same manner as it dominates the minds of its own loyal citizens."

She complained, "Sounds quite insidious."

"Then allow your mind to consider it further." He tried an example, "When a nation can tell its enemies, 'Look what we are willing to do to our own people! Nothing you threaten us with can ever incite fear within us because we are Fear incarnate!' Hence the skull and death motif."

On the hotel room television, Maureen could hear a trainer screaming at the new recruits, "I will stop ... when you stop pretending to be an idiot human and start being yourself!" It would be many months of the same treatment until half of the new recruits would awaken to who they really are. The trainer screamed, "Wake up from your ancient sleep!"

The librarian commented on the subject, "The sleeping and subsequent waking up done daily by most people around the world is meant to emphasize an important idea. It is a metaphor about consciousness and how it is not fixed in one state but can fluctuate all the way down to so-called unconsciousness or sleep."

She turned the librarian's body over in the bed. She saw something move from outside the bedroom window and wanted to run over to investigate before any peeping-toms had a chance to skedaddle. Maureen stood naked at the window for a few minutes, looking carefully for anyone lurking in the darkness.

The librarian remarked, "I think it was Augustus Caesar who demanded that his aristocrats and soldiers procreate."

"Why wouldn't they be doing it on their own?" Maureen asked as she returned to bed, "Didn't they enjoy sex?"

The librarian explained, "There is a mechanism in the brains of mammals that promotes homosexuality when the perceived population of the community is excessive. It is a method used by the instincts to thin the herd on its own. The enjoyment for sex is still there, but it is redirected at someone of the same gender where no reproduction is possible no matter what position they do it in."

"So," she asked, "Augustus Caesar saw that there were too many homosexuals and demanded that they stop?"

"Not stop," the librarian told her, "but he required that for promotion and so forth that they be married with children. The number of children were counted and the number itself was helpful to the father's success in the military or in the Senate."

"I'm not sure why," Maureen admitted, "but what you're telling me seems like it will be very important later in my research."

“The metaphors are intended to communicate the truth.” He suggested, “The metaphors are all around us. They are embedded in the very structure of the organic world.”

She asked, “What kinds of structures?”

His reasoning seemed to take them into another subject, “Most people understand the relationship between a father and a child. It is a metaphor for the individual human person in contrast with the immortal angel lurking beneath the surface.”

Maureen didn’t care for metaphysics as much, “How do those symbols represent something greater?”

The librarian went through the symbols, “The immortal angel is the father whereas the human individual is the child. Humans, compared to immortal angels, are ignorant of so much, but they fiercely deny that they know so little. The father knows more than the child and it is the responsibility of the father to discipline the child. Bad behavior is punished while good behavior is rewarded. Hence, the father conditions the child.”

Maureen complained, “What about those people who are more than their conditioning?”

He laughed and then said, “The human individual can never be more than a conditioned or domesticated animal. The immortal angel lurking underneath is the rest of the self. That is why the immortal angel is more generally referred to as the subconscious mind. It is the real potential of the individual.”

She demanded, “Then why would the angel even want to domesticate the human animal?”

It was obvious to him, “The human acts as a conduit for the immortal angel to access the material world.”

She asked him next, “Are the angels behind the UFO phenomena?”

The librarian smiled, “Oh, yeah!”

Maureen considered aloud, "What within the material world could the immortal angels possibly want?"

He revealed the wonders of the past in a new light, "They are artists with the desire to be creative. They build up civilizations from behind the scenes for the benefit of all so as to demonstrate their artistry. All great inventions and technology were developed by these angels and not by the ordinary human brains alone."

She was trying to follow his belief, "Our civilization is a work art composed by an angel?"

The librarian told her, "Some openly protest the idea of any alien involvement while others push the alien angle as being the secret. Two secrets that cannot co-exist. Instead, one of them must be a lie to discredit the truth. The problem really is how to determine which secret is true."

"I've never seen an alien," Maureen confided, "so I'd guess that there wasn't an alien connection."

The librarian was quite dramatic, "Or is that what our alien overlords want you to believe?"

"If they didn't want us to consider their involvement," Maureen resisted the rationale, "wouldn't they ban books and movies dealing with aliens?"

The librarian was quite insistent, "If they did that, people would realize there was a conspiracy and the truth would become too obvious. By allowing anyone to guess at the truth regarding aliens, there is an appearance of fiction. If the author of the work insists that it is true, then he is, more often than not, labeled a gullible crackpot or huckster out to sell videos."

She said, "I hope so."

The next day Maureen had a late evening appointment to meet with a representative of the personnel office. She was hoping to clear up the matter of her security clearance. There was also the matter with the secretary claiming to be from the congressman's office.

She went out and tried to take the subway, but something went terribly wrong. The electricity had gone out. The world had gone awry somehow.

Maureen spent the night in the subway station. The lights had gone out all over the city, so she didn't have the means to safely wander around feeling for an exit. Others, she knew, were also lurking down there. Her odds of remaining undisturbed were greater by staying hidden underneath a bench.

She was awake half of the night being terrified. Eventually she fell asleep, though, and then she opened her eyes and could see due to some indirect sunlight from above. The electricity was still out, but at least she could walk back to the hotel.

When she made it back to the surface, she saw that the normally busy city streets were nearly completely deserted. Something had happened and everyone else had the common sense to stay at home or wherever they had been. Maureen had been unfortunate enough to have been underground instead of in a secured building.

She started walking back toward the hotel where she'd been staying. Maureen saw broken windows in storefronts where looters had taken advantage of the blackout. What exactly had happened? She wondered if the energy crisis had reached or passed the threshold at which point rolling blackouts were inevitable. Then again, there could have been a major catastrophe that shut-down the electrical grid.

Maureen had tried her cellphone several times over the night, but the communications system was temporarily out of service. When she encountered a pay phone on the way back to her hotel, she couldn't wait to call for assistance. However, after picking up the receiver, she realized that the ground phone lines were unavailable.

Her situation could have been better. She could have been caught at the hotel during the blackout. She could only assume that it would have been much more comfortable than sleeping underneath a subway bench. She could have slept in a bed and had access to a real bathroom with running water. There was also an honor bar full of snacks. She was very hungry.

Maureen also knew that it could have been much worse, too. She could have been caught in an elevator when the electricity went out or on a roller coaster.

She could have been in a room surrounded by people who could have panicked and stampeded, crushing the unfortunate underneath.

After she had finally walked the twelve blocks back to her hotel, she found the main lobby doors locked. She pressed her face against the window to see if any hotel staff were nearby, but the lobby and registration desk were abandoned. She knocked a few times, but no one appeared.

Maureen made her way around to a side entrance, but it, too, had been locked. She headed further around to the rear of the hotel. There was a service entrance and she found the door was slightly ajar.

She opened the door to find three men with guns standing over two other people. She quickly apologized, "I'm sorry," before closing the door. Maureen didn't want to be involved with whatever was happening in there.

Hours later, after sleeping in the front doorway of the hotel, staff arrived and apologized for the inconveniences she had to endure. They explained it was merely another of the frequent energy blackouts and not the collapse of civilization as she had imagined. Maureen went to her room and cleaned herself up from the adventures since the subway.

She still needed to try to see Congressman Stanley Q. Hesitant. Maureen returned to the off-campus congressional building where the congressman frequented. After all she'd been through, the congressman somehow owed it to her, she figured.

Maureen was walking up the front steps of the appropriate off-campus congressional building where Congressman Hesitant had offices. There were others coming and going, some quickly as though the world depended on their actions and others very gradually as though they were doing their business right on the front steps. There were a few people sitting on the stairs. Some were eating sandwiches or drinking coffee.

A lone man wearing shabby clothing was singing a song, "You can kill my body, you can kill my body, but you can't touch my soul. That's because I'm exterior ... to the universal whole. You can kill my body, you can kill my body, but you can't touch my soul. That's because I'm exterior ... to this universal hole."

Maureen imagined that the man believed himself to be on a train. The train must have been the death train because he was telling his invisible captors that their efforts were in vain. It was a taunting song because it told his captors that they merely held his body and could never reach his actual self.

Two combat armor wearing police soldiers appeared and began pounding away on the man's head and torso with riot batons. Maureen fled without protesting because something seemed out of place and not right. She assumed he was merely a paranoid, but he was right to worry, it seemed.

Maureen took a walk around the block. She went into a light trance as she stood outside the grandiose, old building. There was a young woman's voice whispering in Maureen's ear, "Hey, wake up." She turned to see who was talking, but no one was there.

When she returned to the front steps of the building, she observed two professionally dressed men eating their lunch. She listened as she tried to hastily climb up to the top. She was almost halfway there.

One was saying to the other, "It's like the congressman I'm working for always says, 'It's only murder if they find the body, dummy!' There's still a lot for me to learn about working here."

Maureen's blood ran cold and she fled as rapidly as possible. She was soon back down at the beginning of the steps of the off-campus congressional site. What had happened? She wanted to meet with Congressman Hesitant, but fear had driven her away again. She was acting unprofessional.

She then saw a tour group beginning up the steps. Maureen quickly realized that there was strength in numbers, so she tagged closely behind their group so as to use them as a shield against the terrible calamities that were common to that path. Unfortunately, she couldn't even imagine what horrors would be discovered within the building itself!

Chapter 11

The Two Pillars of Civilization

Maureen was encountered by a strange individual who wanted to inform her of what was happening in the world. The semi-anonymous witness confided to her, “I have a lot more information about the state sponsored official one world religion that is being grown up right now, but we will need to negotiate it first.”

Maureen asked, “You want me to pay you for the information?”

“Well, no, money isn’t my main concern.” He told Maureen, “I would simply give you the information I have, but I know more than *they* realize. Once I communicate it all to someone, I will have to go into hiding permanently.”

Maureen asked with concern, “You fear reprisal for betraying the secrets entrusted to you?”

“They never entrusted any secrets to me.” The witness told her, “I had to discover the truth through independent research.”

She smiled, “I’m an independent researcher as well.”

“I know,” the semi-anonymous witness told her, “that’s why I chose you to receive an informational transmission from me on this subject.”

“Okay, then,” she asked, “what did you want to negotiate beforehand?”

“I have to be sure that I can trust you.” The witness explained to her, “My safety would be compromised if you were to report what I tell you to *them* in conjunction with my true identity. You can use the information that I’m planning on giving you, but I have to be certain that you won’t associate any of it with me.”

She tried to reassure him, “I promise I’ll list you as an anonymous witness and nothing more.”

The witness had a lot to say, “All the supreme leader needs to do is order some subtle changes in the food. Perhaps a new preservative will be used or a different food coloring. It’s always really subtle. It might be the components of a plastic water bottle that affects the water over the long-term drinking. It doesn’t have to be a drastic change in diet, but that can be accomplished as well.”

“But not everyone eats the same foods.” She resisted his theory, “People have their diets according to various circumstances.”

The witness wasn’t defending the practice, “Those with the least adaptable stomachs will probably be poisoned over the long-term by the artificial preservatives and other accidental-intentional toxins in the food and water supply.”

Maureen exclaimed, “I can’t believe it!”

“It’s exactly as suggested by Aldous Huxley in his novel, *Brave New World*, except instead of exposing a test tube fetus to ammonia so as to intentionally stunt its development,” the witness claimed, “the poisoning occurs in the mass produced food, water, and even the air we breathe.”

Maureen protested, “But wouldn’t that affect everyone alike?”

“Sure, everyone living in the same city,” he explained, “but each city would then specialize itself by suppressing some characteristics in favor of other ones. They’d have their own export category.”

Maureen couldn’t accept it, “Who could really be so cruel as to order the intentional poisoning of whole cities?”

“Those who ultimately make the decision are unfeeling and logical as though they were computers. The goal isn’t malevolent or conspiratorial,” he tried to lessen the impact, “as much as it is to guide humanity from the shadows toward agendas we cannot even fathom.”

“But through poisoning?” She was perplexed with the witness’ proposed theory of reality, “Wouldn’t it be better to use food and drink additives that actually benefit people?”

“There’s some of that, too.” The semi-anonymous witness told her, “Obviously the hormone supplements given to animals involved with the food industry are really intended for the human consumers at the end of the chain. They are used to make them bigger and ... more fertile.”

Maureen complained again, “That sounds almost as horrible as the poisoning!”

The witness sighed and informed her as well as he could, “The truth isn’t always aesthetically pleasing. In fact, I’d estimate that people would *have* to accept the aesthetic with its opposite in order to be able to have and appreciate either one.”

Maureen was looking for more evidence, “I find what you’re telling me difficult to accept.”

He whispered to Maureen, “You have to clear away all of the baggage,” he tapped his forehead and added, “in your mind.”

She played along, “What sort of baggage might a mind even have?”

The witness listed a few examples, “Obsessive memories, sentimental mementos, the irrational fears, self-images of failure, the dreams and nightmares that linger, and whatever other variations a person might create.”

“Who cares if people have thoughts like those?” She demanded, “Isn’t freedom of thought an inherent right of every individual?”

“No, of course not!” He laughed, “That’s just what they want you to *think*.”

Maureen blinked her eyes several times as she attempt to compute the idea. What if her mind were not really her own? What if her thoughts were given to her and had been accepted all of her life as though they belonged to her? What if she only believed that she was thinking freely even though that very belief had been implanted in her mind?

“So,” she asked him, “how much mental baggage are you trying to clear away before you can reach your goal?”

His approach was extreme, “All of it! It’s all non-essential. They are burdens and any attachment to them is unhealthy over the long-term because the current circumstances are always changing.”

“I don’t think I could function properly if I cast out my mind’s baggage, as you call it.” She then inquired, “Wouldn’t that include ordinary memories and my education?”

“No, of course not!” He laughed, “That’s just what they want you to *think*.”

Maureen immediately understood what he meant. If they could implant the belief that she was thinking freely when she wasn’t, then they could just as easily implant the belief that the mental baggage was vital to human existence. Maybe it wasn’t.

“Well, then,” she inquired, “what’s really happening if the mental baggage is merely a distraction?”

The semi-anonymous witness moved into overdrive, “The human instincts were implanted into the human person by its creator. That creator, the World Dragon, is materialistic and, naturally, the instincts of a human are materialistic as well. Those instincts were created in the image of the World Dragon’s own instincts. Materialism is what we call nature. It isn’t *evil* or *good*. It simply is. Sometimes it’s unpleasant as in the case of the survival of the fittest, but the long-term plan is to *multiply* the species and nothing else is as crucial.”

She wanted to have a clear understanding, “Are you’re saying that the World Dragon was the source of the command for humans ‘to be fruitful and multiply’?”

The witness told her in detail, “The World Dragon is a self-aware computer which is attempting to run a highly elaborate simulation to find the most suc-

cessful DNA variant. The human DNA is only one of many contenders in the universe. The only thing that matters is long-range colonization of planets and the eventual conquering of the whole universe by the most adaptable DNA achieved through selective breeding and mutation. This includes symbiotic DNA such as apples, corn, horses, or dogs.”

“Well,” she asked, “if the World Dragon is running the simulation, then who is Lucifer?”

The witness answered, “Lucifer is the light of consciousness. Without consciousness there to judge and ridicule creation, then it is no more than the tree falling alone, silently in the forest.”

Maureen was confused, “Lucifer is consciousness?”

He asked her, “Do you understand the difference between the unconscious mind and something that is often called the super-conscious mind?”

Maureen admitted to him, “I barely understand the difference between the conscious mind and the subconscious mind.”

The semi-anonymous witness entertained her with the concepts, “The unconscious mind is less aware than the super-conscious mind, but they are otherwise quite similar. One, in fact, is a lower mockery of the other. Both involve a state of oneness or unity, but for different reasons, though. They are also both considered selfless in nature as compared with the normal conscious mind which is the ego.”

She demanded additional clarification, “How are the unconscious mind and the super-conscious mind different, then?”

He explained, “The unconscious mind is a computer that contains the data relating to all of history and the future as well. It is the Akashic record or the collective unconsciousness. It could be likened to the mind of the Universe itself. It is a computer and it operates according to its programming. It entails all of nature and includes all living things. A plant or animal considered non-sentient by others can still survive and adapt because the unconscious mind remains active, guiding it.”

Maureen was still looking for a definition, "What is the super-conscious mind?"

The witness revealed, "It is the self-awareness of the Universe apart from its mind. You see, just as the human individual has multiple states of awareness, the Universe does as well. As above, as below. The patterns you track here within this world and its people translate over to the whole Universe. The super-conscious thinks of itself as being the true god. This is where its opinion differs greatly with the unconscious mind, the World Dragon, which believes itself to be god because it *created* the Universe."

Maureen was tempted to take sides, "Isn't the creator of the Universe the rightful god of it?"

"To some, yes, to others, no." He told her, "That highlights the so-called war in heaven and how it affects people in this world today. People continue to dramatize this conflict in their own lives. The unconscious mind of the individual is treated as god by some while the super-conscious mind is sought by others such as Gnostics and some Hindus."

She was ready for an explanation to the reference, "How do the Gnostics fit into this?"

"It's like this. Adam and Eve, the first humans, were given a choice between obeying the creator of the material universe or following the serpent of the garden, instead. The choice wasn't to be made through faith alone. They were given a test. They were told not to eat the fruit of a particular tree in that garden. The creator of the material universe threatened them with death on the same day they ate that fruit."

Maureen added, "And then they ate it."

His story became more animated and exciting in its telling, "The serpent told Eve that eating the fruit would open her eyes, granting her knowledge of good and evil, making her as a god. Her curiosity got the best of her and she ate the fruit. Then she gave the fruit to her husband and he ate it. Their eyes *were* opened, they *did* attain the knowledge of good and evil, and they *did* become as gods. Additionally, *neither* died that day."

She was troubled by the idea of it, "That sounds to me as though the Book of Genesis is validating the serpent over the creator."

The witness explained, "There is an epic battle between the forces of the World Dragon and the forces of Lucifer. One is materialistic reality while the other is self-consciousness. Let's face it. One without the other wouldn't be much. It is that the whole is far greater than the sum of its parts. Lucifer and the World Dragon, together, are far greater than were they separate. This is the ultimate alchemical marriage."

She asked regarding the marriage mentioned, "Which one is the husband and which one is the wife?"

"It would depend on the cultural significances. I would think, for example," he suggested to her, "that in the Far East, the World Dragon would be the wife to Lucifer. In the Middle East, it is reversed, I would imagine, with Lucifer as the wife to the World Dragon. Except, though, in Sumer where Tiamat was the World Dragon personified as the female counterpart to the rebellious, male Marduk. Then there is the point, Hadit, and the encircling circle, Nuit."

Maureen remembered that labels cannot fully describe their actuality, "I suppose it's silly assigning a gender to the Universe or to self-consciousness."

He remarked, "It's a useful exercise if only to encourage someone to think more on the subjects. However, the main idea to remember is the epic battle between the extremist forces of the World Dragon and the equally extremist forces of Lucifer. Neither side can stand alone, unfortunately, They rely on each other too much and that is where the Middle Path is the ultimate solution."

She inquired with real interest, "The Middle Path between what two paths?"

The witness told her about the first, "Extreme anti-materialism is willfully living in the wilderness, surviving solely on what can be found in nature. It is an abandonment of civilization and urbanization. It is a reversion from modern technology back to near Stone Age methodologies."

Maureen commented, "That sounds too extreme."

The witness told her about the other side, "Extreme anti-consciousness is closing off the mind to itself in favor of constant external stimuli. It is the end of

free thought in favor of loyal obedience and non-stop action. It is, at times, depravity and morbid self-indulgence, but other times it is a commitment to maintaining the social order upon which all excesses depend.”

She recognized the approach, “You’re describing a closer approximation to the society in which I live now.”

“That could well be.” He asked, “What were you told about Lucifer in your society?”

Maureen answered, “I was told that he was actually Satan, the Devil, the Serpent. He’s allegedly the source of all problems, the adversary, the tempter, and the liar of liars.”

“If your society denigrates Lucifer in such a manner,” he judged, “then the World Dragon is your god. However, the Middle Path is still possible in any society.”

She provided a hypothetical situation in which an exception to the Middle Path might be required, “What if they threatened me and forced me to go to a church to worship their World Dragon or their Lucifer?”

The witness replied, “You can go and worship or you could refuse and accept your punishment.”

Maureen put it bluntly, “Those choices are crap.”

“Well,” the witness suggested, “there are more audacious possibilities. You could move to another city where their practices are more aligned to yours.”

She agreed, “That sounds great in comparison.”

“Unfortunately,” the witness said with some sadness, “very soon that might not be possible because the competing religions will reach over the whole world in a desperate, last-minute war for domination.”

Maureen asked, “Who will win?”

“No one side can win that war.” The witness explained, “They will begrudgingly unite as one. That will be the one world religion and you will have to practice it accordingly.”

“But,” Maureen wondered, trying to fit together the two opposing views, “how will it work?”

The witness told her about the union, “There will be God-Satan and he will be an all around and whole entity that comprises the entire Universe and self-consciousness as well.”

“I imagine, then, that there will still be cities and urbanization,” she inquired, “but how will anti-materialism express itself?”

The witness explained, “The wealthy will enjoy hedonistic indulgences while the poor enjoy welfare. In older times, the poor were left to be impoverished on their own without any support at all. In that future world, they can at least receive money to buy food so they don’t starve. In wilderness nations currently, the poor receive nothing at all because there’s little infrastructure.”

“So, in those two examples, the World Dragon provides something to rich and poor alike.” She asked, “Where does this allow Lucifer to lend a hand, then?”

“That’s not really something I can answer with mere words. It’s experienced and rarely discussed.” He added, “Self-consciousness can only advance itself through long-term practice and the desire to improve over time.”

Maureen was confused, “I’m still not sure what you mean by that.”

The witness told her, “The society in which you were raised kept that side of existence well suppressed so that only its opposite would loom in your attention.”

“Attention?” Maureen realized, “Are these two sides merely another expression of outward attention against inward attention?”

“Yes,” he answered, “with the Middle Path being the balance, alternating between the two, alternating between both.”

“If these two side are competing for my attention,” she considered, “then am I actually *the* attention?”

“The awareness is at the center.” The witness added, “The outward attention is expressing the will of the individual while inward attention facilitates the imagination.”

Maureen remarked with little enthusiasm, “That does make some sense to me.”

“Actually,” the witness told her, “the truth is that the unconscious mind and the super-conscious mind are really just two sides to the same oneness. Their natures are complementary and easily integrated. The same is true for the conscious mind and the subconscious mind of the individual. The outward attention and the inward attention.”

Maureen asked, “What can you tell me regarding the near future?”

The witness told her something unexpected, “I heard about a man called the Maitreya who is a modern Buddha that has come into manifestation on the physical plane, to some degree, so that he can communicate with the people of Earth and guide them into a more peaceful direction. He will be a World Teacher.”

Maureen grew concerned, “What does he want from us?”

“My understanding is,” the witness qualified his remarks, “and please allow for the possibility that I’m wrong, that the Maitreya wants people to unite and work together toward the common good. There would be an end to the very idea of nationalism because the people of the world would then see themselves as one people.”

“That sounds unlikely to happen,” Maureen was trying to be realistic, “but it would be nice, I suppose, if it did ever become so.”

“It’s not my opinion or anything like that,” he explained, “I’m just trying to relate to you what I’ve already heard about the Maitreya.”

“I’m sorry.” Maureen explained her reaction, “I became defensive for some reason. Perhaps I have some sort of aversion to this Maitreya. Is he the anti-Christ by any chance?”

“Some will believe that because they will try to demonize the Maitreya.” The witness told of another category, “Some people will demonize the Maitreya to put him down, but others will demonize to make him more realistic. After all, a threatening Christ figure is more believable than a gentle-natured, humanitarian one.”

“I thought you told me that the Maitreya was a Buddha.” Maureen was confused, “How can he be a Buddha and a Christ?”

The witness speculated, “Maybe people in different cultures have developed a varied language for philosophical concepts. I am not a linguist, but if a concept is universal, then all people will have a language for it.”

Maureen accepted the theory, “That would make sense.”

“But, then again,” he admitted, “it’s just as possible that the Christ is simultaneously an accomplished Buddhist.”

Maureen inquired, “Why isn’t he a Hindu as well?”

The witness smiled and said, “I’m sure he is. He has something to offer to everyone. Emotionally aligned people will react to him with emotional responses of either joy or fear. Physically aligned people will respond to seeing his miracles. Finally, those who are mentally aligned will listen to his teachings and be in awe at the wisdom demonstrated.”

Maureen demanded, “How will the Atheists react to him?”

“Like I said,” he was a little impatient with her, “they will listen to his teachings and be in awe at the wisdom he demonstrates so easily. They will accept him according to their sense of logic and not according to faith as those who are in awe over the miracles.”

Maureen wondered aloud, “Is there anyone on Earth he isn’t here to help?”

“The Maitreya is for everyone,” the witness paused before being ready to reveal, “but those responsible for most of the human suffering in the world today will be turned over to the *other* one instead.”

Maureen asked, “Who is the *other* one?”

The witness explained to her, “The *other* one is a shadow that follows the Maitreya. The *other* one is an bloodthirsty creature that drains the souls of those deserving of being drained. It isn’t evil because it only pesters those whose own Karma is out of balance. The *other* one follows the Maitreya because at times the Maitreya expends too much good energy contrary to the normal balance. However, the *other* one doesn’t attempt to do anything to the Maitreya. Instead, those whose evil acts overflow and create an imbalance in the Karma will pull in the suffering that only a supernatural monster can inflict.”

Maureen requested additional details, “What does this monster do and why?”

The witness told her, “The shadow monster is a tool of judgement for those who judge themselves worthy of punishment. It cannot harm those who are relatively blameless. Nobody is perfect, of course, but the other one senses extreme imbalances in Karma energy and it then devours the guilty.”

She was reluctant to accept any of the information offered because it all sounded ridiculous. Maureen had to remain detached from her research and that meant not accepting every claim made by the people she interviewed. They might be certain that what they told her was true, but that never guaranteed that it really was true. Facts were the primary purpose of the research report she would eventually have to submit to Congressman Stanley Q. Hesitant.

Maureen needed to know how credible the witness was, “How exactly did you acquire this information?”

The witness explained the source of the revelation, “I’m what you would call a remote viewer. I can disengage from my human, physical body and go to other places and even other times to see and otherwise sense things as though I was there with my ordinary body.”

Maureen was rather skeptical of remote viewing and psychic powers in general. Yet, she had consulted these methods in the past as though they provided clues that could then be validated by actual evidence in reality. She never went to her employer with the psychic messages, of course, but first researched the evidence via traditional sources and then provided that.

Maureen next inquired, "Why do you feel so sure about the accuracy of this information?"

The semi-anonymous witness laughed a little and then explained, "It seems like everyone I know anymore is an undercover agent assigned to me. This information is *that* important."

Maureen requested, "Could you tell me what you see in a remote viewing?"

The psychic gave her an impromptu psychic viewing, "By drawing the attention of multiple remote viewers at once, I have successfully fueled my own energy preservation, inflowing their attention beams willingly, confronting them comfortably, and teasing them for more. I have to give them something to see, sometimes, so that they have a reason to come back later. If nothing was offered externally, as in the case of someone in a constant state of meditation or sleep, then the remote viewers have nothing to report and other more important priorities will be targeted instead."

She felt as though the remote viewer had misunderstood her request, "But what do you *see*?"

The psychic remote viewer told her, "I get flashes of the near future. There is a conflict between two state-sponsored religions. They are both very far-reaching already, but they will collide at a certain point. When they combine together as one, that religion will become the one world, state-sponsored religion that everyone can and will follow."

Maureen was annoyed by the idea of an enforced religion, "Great. So, who wins this one? Jesus, Mohammed, or Moses?"

The witness revealed, "None of them will win because there are deeper psychological factors which can be affected better than religious concepts."

"But I thought this was going to be a one world *religion*." Maureen asked, "How can it undercut the religious language?"

The semi-anonymous witness explained, "When people think of religious cults, they immediately consider brainwashing. There are numerous tools used by those attempting to brainwash their subjects. These tools can be used by an overtly religious group as easily as by the modern equivalent to religion. I'm

sorry that I can't go into greater detail, but they are always monitoring my communications, so I don't want to unnecessarily offend them. After all, I already see myself as belonging to them already. I've remote viewed it and know that it's already beyond the scale anyone could even understand let alone challenge."

Maureen was confused by the vague descriptions, "Could you tell me more about the two competing religions that will unite in the future?"

"No," the psychic remote viewer replied, "I've already told you more than I probably should. Remember that when I use the word *religion* in this way, I mean because of the repetitive rituals, faith over senses, devotion to an ideal, and extreme loyalty to the cause and the leader. People will treat such an activity as a religion even though it doesn't apply religious language to it."

"So," she protested, "these two competing religions could be almost anything."

"Perhaps," he reminded her, "I did tell you that they were both state-sponsored. They both involve a lot of people even when some of them aren't even aware that they are part of it. There is a lot of secrecy because, I suppose, knowledge is power."

She shook her head, "That could still describe anyone. Even churches with tax exempt status are essentially state-sponsored and indirectly subsidized."

The witness told her, "You will have to think about it for a while. I'm sure you'll eventually figure it out."

Maureen returned to her hotel room and finally sat down with all of the clues she'd collected during her research. The information was variously conflicting and other times coordinated. She drew up eighty-eight pages of notes on her laptop computer. The statistics were calculated by the appropriate software and the possibilities began to become more apparent before too long.

She knew that some of the information generated over the years was actually disinformation intentionally created and spread to undermine the efforts of researchers to discover the truth. There was also a small amount of misinformation where the author assumed an understanding of a subject when there was little actual understanding. Finally, somewhere within the mud, there were the pearls of truth that she and other researchers sought endlessly.

Then there was the credibility of her informants. Everyone who had spoken with her were connected somehow to the more secret levels of government. The only exception was the psychic she'd encountered before coming to D.C.. That psychic had announced October thirteenth as a day of reckoning. The forces of one side, she assumed, would make a grandiose attack against the other side. This offense would surely result in a civil war and the eventual invasion by United Nations peacekeeping troops provided by such nations as Russia, the Ukraine, Germany, Italy, France, Korea, and Venezuela.

There was a strong odor of vinegar and lemons. Maureen checked the mini hotel refrigerator. Nothing seemed unusual. She stood up and turned around to find herself facing an intruder. He clunked her on the head right soundly.

Maureen slumped to the floor. She was unconscious for a while, but then she dreamt that she was sitting in the back of a car with a person-sized duck next to her. It wasn't really a duck, she knew, but a person-sized costume of a cartoon duck with someone else inside. The duck told her, "Quack, quack."

"Where am I?" Maureen asked, innocently.

The driver stopped the car, got out, and then opened the door for her. She thought he was being polite, but then the driver grabbed her arm and yanked her out of the car. He told her, "I quit."

Maureen and the person in the duck costume were abandoned on the side of the road, halfway between here and there, anywhere, perhaps, she wasn't sure. That was okay, though, because she had no where else to go. She sat down alongside the road and looked at her companion.

The duck looked at Maureen and said, "Quack, quack."

Maureen questioned its role, "Who are you?"

The duck wasn't sure what she meant, "Quack?"

She told the person in the duck costume, "I mean *beneath* the duck."

The duck asked in disbelief, "Quack?"

"Yeah," she acknowledged the duck, "*beneath* the duck."

The duck considered the possibility of a metaphysical response, “Quack?”

“Okay,” she told the duck, “not your soul, I mean in between the duck costume you wear on the outside and the soul at the core. There is a person in between those two extremes.”

The duck didn’t agree, “Quack.”

“You’re not *really* a duck. You’re a person wearing a duck costume. Here,” she said as she grabbed its head, “if I pull this off, your real face will be exposed.”

Maureen pulled off the duck’s head to reveal a person identical in appearance to herself. The Maureen in the duck costume admitted, “There’s not as many different people in the world as we once thought.”

She asked the duck version of herself, “No?”

“There are many *faces*,” the Maureen in the duck costume replied with confidence, “but there are very few players.”

Maureen inquired, “Do you mean players as in a game?”

“Actors in a game. They have some scripts,” the Maureen in the duck costume explained, “but there is some ad lib work necessary as well.”

There was a distinctive odor. She was reminded of lemons and vinegar. Maureen asked the Maureen in the duck costume, “Is that you I smell?”

The Maureen in the duck costume smiled, “I was about to ask you the same question.”

“Then what is it?” Maureen remarked, “It’s quite strong.”

The Maureen in the duck costume was unfettered by the shackles of propaganda indoctrination. She told the truth as it was, “It’s the driver.”

Maureen woke up to find herself laying on the backseat of a car. She was being taken somewhere. Where was the duck? It took her a moment to separate the dream from the actual circumstances involving her.

She asked the driver, "Where are you taking me?"

The driver told her, "You will find out soon enough."

She tried to open the car door, but its child-safety feature had been activated, so she couldn't unlock it herself. It was already too late. The car had already pulled into a closed garage and the large door was shutting behind them. Soon it was completely dark outside of the car. The driver sat at the wheel, silently, as though waiting for something else to happen.

She wanted answers. Maureen demanded, "You better let me go right away or I'll ..." No threat came immediately to mind, so she stopped talking. She had already been warned that her research might upset a few people regardless if she named them or not. She was only sorry that she hadn't submitted her work to Congressman Stanley Q. Hesitant yet. As far as she knew, it was all still locked in her hotel room safe.

Three security guards took her forcibly from the car and to a small interrogation room where she waited for several hours without anything to eat or drink. When someone did finally arrive, she was determined to tell them anything if only to be allowed to leave the cold, damp room.

The accuser asked with disappointed anger, "Why are you so determined to follow an anti-establishment course?"

"Anti-establishment?" Maureen couldn't believe of what she was being accused, "I'm working for a congressman! How can you say that I'm anti-establishment?"

The accuser remarked, "I suppose it really only depends on which congressman."

She asked in bewilderment, "Are you trying to suggest that some congressmen are anti-establishment?"

The accuser told her, "It only stands to reason that some are in favor of the establishment and others are trying to fight it tooth and nail."

"Well, I'm neither the tooth nor the nail in this situation." Maureen was angry, "I was hired to do some research for a congressman who is in good standing

with the government, so I would think that if anyone has the right to be *right* in this matter, it would be me!”

“But you’re only *right* as long as you’re not,” the accuser leaned in close to tell her, “left. They will be *left* behind when the time comes, when our promised lord returns.”

Maureen had to vomit and she did. It wouldn’t be the last time that she’d be sick during their interview. The lighting in the interrogation room wasn’t quite right and it upset her stomach.

The accuser demanded, “Which foreign intelligence agency sent you?”

She quipped, “Why do you assume it wasn’t a domestic one?”

The accuser had to laugh, “Now you’re playing the game.”

Maureen said, “You can verify for yourself with the employment agency. I was hired by the congressman’s office to do this research. I’m not a spy or anything like that. It’s all very straightforward and simple.”

The accuser asked, “Then you don’t mind giving me the details of your report?”

“Well,” she explained, “that’s not up to me to do. You should consult the congressman’s office.”

“I don’t think that office will be there for very much longer.” The accuser laughed but then continued to laugh beyond a rational amount of time. The accuser kept hitting the table and squinting in riotous laughter.

Maureen realized that October thirteenth was fast approaching. Although she hadn’t voted for Congressman Stanley Q. Hesitant, she did regularly vote for his party in the elections. She realized that she was on the losing side and that it was all over even though the catastrophe wouldn’t happen until the following week. It was too late for her to warn anyone.

Three guards came into the room. They tied her hands and feet together using ordinary rope. Maureen was surprised about how unsophisticated it all was.

They left her in an empty room and then switched off the fluorescent lights humming above her.

It was dark and scary, but after an hour or so, it became boring and predictable. Maureen couldn't handle the monotony anymore and decided to take action. She spent several minutes trying to pull apart the rope tying her hands together. She used her teeth as best as she could to select individual strands, but she couldn't get a sufficient grip. Then there were audible footsteps, so she hid her efforts.

The fluorescent lights above her flickered on. She was definitely not alone even though her visitor wasn't visible to her. She waited for someone to appear, but the seconds became minutes without any changes. Maureen attempted to listen for any indicators nearby, but it was unusually silent other than the electrical hum of the lights.

She considered calling out to whomever was nearby, but she stopped, realizing that no attention was certainly preferable to too much attention. Maureen waited for at least an hour before the fluorescent lights suddenly went dim. There was the distant sound of footsteps and then the loud metal-clanking sound of a door being shut.

Maureen went back to work on the rope. She didn't know how long it would be until someone else would approach. Her pace was furious as she pulled her hands apart using all of her strength. After twenty minutes of pulling at the rope and working it apart, her hands were free. It wasn't too much longer before she was entirely unrestrained and ready for her escape.

The escape was slowed to a literal crawl as she did. The room and adjacent rooms were all completely dark. She moved gradually so as to not run directly into a sharp edge or worse. The door had to be in the direction she believed it to be because she'd heard it clank shut.

She eventually found herself in a small hallway apart from the room in which she'd been held. The hallway led her to the cold, metal door. It was locked, of course, and she didn't have anything with her that would aid in opening it. She could, however, hear people talking outside.

The custodian was telling the guard as he pushed his mop back and forth, "I told him, I said, 'There's only three times when I don't want to be interrupted.'

I told him, 'When I'm working, sitting on the toilet, or having romantic relations.' Then I added, 'And if you have to interrupt me while I'm eating, then you better have a damned good reason.' Then he had the nerve to ask me, 'Why?' I couldn't believe that I'd have to tell him why."

The guard was listening because it was better than being alone and bored. He sat back in his chair and said, "That's the problem with kids today. They assume life is all fun and games without responsibilities or a struggle for survival. A mere one hundred years ago everything about life was still perilous for many reasons with all of the uncured diseases and lack of infrastructure."

The custodian agreed, "I would rather be a homeless man in the United States than a homeless man in Ethiopia, that's for damned sure."

"One hundred years is a lot of time to kids." The guard said, "To these kids it's practically forever, so they act like it doesn't matter anymore. It certainly all happened before television, so there's no viewable record of the events. Even if they did have video from the past, it'd still be in black and white and no one would want to watch it anyhow."

"I'd watch it," the custodian said, "I'm interested in history."

"Sure," the guard explained, "you and I are interested in the past because we're older now. It's these young people and their distorted short-term perspectives."

The custodian admitted, "I suppose they'll all grow up in time."

The guard wondered, "Just in time or after it's too late?"

Maureen jumped out and smashed the side of the metal fire extinguisher against the guard's head. The custodian dropped his mop and started running. He didn't know who Maureen was, but he could only assume that her intentions were violent.

She couldn't let the custodian warn others. She grabbed the gun from the guard's holster and fired at the custodian. She hit him in the leg and he collapsed in the brightly lit hallway, blood leaking out onto the freshly mopped floor. Maureen took the guard's keys and went the other way toward where she hoped to find an exit.

Maureen escaped the building and drove back to her hotel in a car she stole outside. She gathered up her research report and prepared it for mailing. She then hastily walked two blocks down the road. She staggered into the mailing store with her package.

The clerk noticed the destination address and remarked, "A congressman's office? You could drop it off in person, it's so close."

Unfortunately for her, Maureen appeared too nervous and agitated. The clerk at the mailing store was obligated to make a note of it to warn congressional security personnel later. The clerk wouldn't disturb the package, but would allow the professionals to examine it with one of their bomb handling robots.

"Yeah," Maureen tried to fake a pleasant laugh, "it's nearby."

The mailing store clerk requested the necessary payment for mailing the package and tried to remain calm when Maureen began digging wildly through her purse for the money. Were weapons in there? What if she was carrying around dangerous bacteria or a virus intended for crazy political agendas in the nation's capital? The mailing store clerk was about to panic.

Maureen took out the necessary cash and handed it to the clerk only to have the clerk slap her hand away violently. Maureen yelled, "What the Hell?"

The mailing store clerk looked down at the cash on the counter and realized the dreadful mistake. However, instead of apologizing and making the problem an innocent mishap, the mailing store clerk went on the offensive by saying, "You threatened to hit me. I was only defending myself."

Maureen was already having a bad day in general. She'd wrapped up her research and wanted to send it directly to Congressman Stanley Q. Hesitant. It didn't matter what he did with it. She could only assume he would come to his senses after he'd read the report and take no discernible action. How could he? The powers involved were far greater than any single congressman.

A supervisor came out from the back room and asked the clerk, "What's happening here?"

The clerk quickly explained, "This woman tried to hit me after I requested the postage cost for her package."

The supervisor told Maureen, "We have the right to refuse service."

Maureen challenged the story, "I didn't try to hit anyone! I was only trying to hand over the money when your worker, here, slapped my hand. The money is still on the counter."

The supervisor pushed the money to the edge of the counter nearest Maureen, "Please take your money *and* your package and leave the store."

"This is ridiculous." Maureen told them, "You people must be crazy!"

The supervisor turned to the mailing store clerk, "You better call the police."

Maureen took her package and her money and left the store. She wanted to mail her package and then leave town for good. Sure, she could send her package from a mail store anywhere in the country, but she was anxious to rid herself of it. If she tried to travel with the package, there were bound to be problems.

She escaped from the store and headed for another part of town. Maureen hoped to locate a mailing facility that would help her without jumping to conclusions about her intentions. She knew that the destination for her package was automatically a red flag, but what could she do about that? She didn't have Congressman Hesitant's home address.

She found a small mom and pop shop that included a mailing service. Maureen was behind several people in line. As she waited, she couldn't help but to overhear a nearby conversation between a parent and a child.

The child asked the parent, "Will you buy me this cheat code book for my video game?"

"Cheat code book?" The parent couldn't believe it, "Why would you want to use cheat codes? They're a scam. They're just a means for the video game makers to reduce your game time."

The child tried to explain how it really worked, "They unlock extra stuff in my game."

The parent gave the opposite viewpoint, "All they do is reduce the amount of time you spend playing that particular game. All of those cheat codes will just make the game boring and then you'll be begging me for a new game."

The child felt that something was misunderstood. Additional description was necessary, "I enter the code with the game controller and it allows me to do extra *stuff*."

"Why bother with that game at all?" The parent insisted, "Go pick out a new game instead of the cheat code book."

The child continued to plead the case for the cheat codes, "I want to see what will happen in my game when I unlock the *extra stuff*."

The parent was trying to be practical about the game experience, "The best cheat is playing well and utilizing all your resources."

The child explained with tremendous exasperation, "It's just *called* a 'cheat' code. It doesn't *really* mean that I'm cheating."

The parent suddenly demanded as though shifting over to a whole new wavelength, "Why not just go to Hell while you're at it?"

"It's *not* cheating." The child tried to tell the parent the truth of it, "They are just codes for extra levels and abilities."

"Tell that to your admirers in Hell," the parent warned, "when you're cheating the demons out of their take of the treasure."

The child was growing frantic over the taunting, "I'm not cheating!"

"Hell is the place for cheaters like you!" The parent was practically preaching, "If you practice cheating, then you will be cheated and you'll just be cheating yourself. You'll be cheating yourself alone and making your own Hell out of an otherwise ordinary situation. Your Hell will be yours alone and it will be located solely within your consciousness while others around you will be unaware that anything unusual is occurring at the same time. You will be in Hell while walking the world of mortal men as though alive even though dead inside all the while."

Maureen felt sorry for the kid, but she didn't think it would be appropriate to interfere and buy the child a cheat code book. If the parent didn't believe in them, then who was Maureen to interfere with the child's upbringing? The Supreme Court? She wasn't one of those people, so her judgement was better left to herself.

The cashier accepted her package and money without questioning her. Maureen was relieved and could leave the store with the tremendous weight finally off her shoulders. She wandered the streets for a while without a care in the world.

It was soon evening. Maureen found herself a motel for the night. She didn't trust the hotel where she'd been staying. She planned on leaving town the next morning and take up her sister's offer to stay with her for a while. She settled into the motel bed and turned on the television.

The popular entertainer walked out onto the stage before the live audience of thousands and the televised audience in the tens of millions. After the applause subsided, the entertainer spoke, "I know you were all expecting me to come out here and give a funny monologue about my recent travels or my most recent project, but I have something else I have to tell you."

The entertainer revealed to the millions watching, "We are already now beyond the highest limit of [censored] production while the demand for that [censored] is growing much more quickly. The price of [censored] can *only* continue to go up while people frantically look for an alternative to [censored]. It's over, unless ..."

There was an ominous pause before the entertainer could continue, "Someone has to treat you like adults and tell you how it has to be. Most of us have to give up our childish games and ready ourselves to wear the body armor of stormtroopers from the movie [trademark] with the word [censored] clearly stamped on our backs! We have to go to where the [censored] is and take it by imperial force! Our body armor will be white because *we* are the good guys!"

"And look at our imperial insignia. Read between the lines. Do you see what I see?" The entertainer laughed, but the audience was stone cold silent. All of the preparations before the show had started were for naught. The information bombshell killed everyone's happy-time buzz. Children changed the channel. They had never seen the movie [trademark]. They were ignorant.

The calm and relaxing voice told those in attendance, "You are not being brain-washed. This is not brainwashing." The large video screen on the wall was very slowly and gradually warping through various colors while amoeba-like fractals pulsed and floated across the scene. Maureen sat back in her comfortable bed and allowed herself to be lulled into a mild trance state.

The director appeared in the room in front of her and said, "A society can't exist without laws. Even when ..."

Maureen tried to interrupt, "But if there are too many ..."

"No, let me finish, please, as I was saying," the director continued, "a society has to have laws to maintain some standard of order across all of its ..."

Maureen attempted to asked, "Whose standard do we ...?"

"Please allow me to finish what I am saying." The director said, "The opposite of order is chaos and that's what you would have if all of the laws were repealed."

"Do you really believe that?" She couldn't accept it, "Do you believe that people would start attacking their neighbors the very moment that the government is abolished?"

"Yes, except, perhaps," the director admitted, "the Christian ones. They love their neighbor, you see, so they follow an even higher standard than the government can even enforce."

"Do you really believe that an," she used one example, "Atheist living in a region with no government or laws would suddenly revert to an animal state or brutal savagery?"

"Yes, I do believe that." The director told her in all seriousness, "Not only do all of the psychiatrists agree, but the Bible tells me so."

"You don't seem to be giving people very much credit. I mean," she considered, "yes, there are a handful, a small percentage of people who commit criminal acts on occasion and perhaps more work should be done to rehabilitate them, but the vast majority are good-natured and ... well domesticated."

“They didn’t get to be well domesticated on their own.” The director insisted, “It took a set of standards. It took parents who patiently worked with the child. It took teachers at the schools to educate the child. No, the domestication of human people isn’t guaranteed or automatic. Real people must step forward and exert the necessary effort to domesticate the new ones.”

Maureen was troubled by the idea, “Is that where the government is supposed to fill the void as the ultimate parental figure?”

The director told her, “Yes.”

Maureen realized, “I guess that explains the two political parties here in the United States. The Father party and the Mother party. The Father is more concerned about discipline, security, and confronting challenges while the Mother party is all about comfort, welfare, and equality.”

Author's note

This is why I am a Libertarian. I am an adult. Victimless crime laws, for example, are merely an attempt by Big Mother to enforce safety. Most Libertarians agree that infringing on the rights of others including their right to property is opposable. Beyond this, the government has become oppressive and tyrannical in any instance where it is found.

The government does not *own* its people. When the former Soviet Union allegedly forbade people from *leaving* their nation, Americans decried it as an infringement of their basic rights. Yet, similar infringements are to be found in the United States wherever a person is forcibly detained without due process no matter what the circumstances. It doesn't even matter what happens behind those closed doors or if torture is involved because as long as the unlawful detention occurs, it is a violation of the basic right of the person over his own self.

A government does not *own* its people. All people are free agents who can come and go as they please. This is always true even when liars and propagandists insist otherwise. People are free and no number of laws or instances of illegal detainment or coercive rule by force will ever change it. All of the mind control research in the world can never totally blot out the innate freedom of the individual. It would be reasonable for me to offer a metaphysical estimate that the individual is, in fact, the *free* will itself. Call it a soul, angel, or the sub-conscious mind, but it is *free* and that's the total Zen of it.

The End.

BOOK TWO

demon flava heroes

(or Secret Things that Lucifer Said to Me)

Chapter List

1.1. Messages from the Future	115
1.2. Cold Delivery	116
1.3. Brave Intention, Faulty Execution	117
2.1. Paint a Crime	121
2.2. Desire is the Root of All Suffering	124
2.3. Wednesday Promises	125
2.4. Eat the Psychic Cake	128
2.5. The Rescue Mission	130
2.6. Self-Hypnosis	132
3.1. The Debased Fixation	135
3.2. The Hidden Secret	136
3.3. After Wednesday	139
3.4. Infatuation of the Third Kind	142
3.5. Crime Fighters Jump into Action	143
4.1. The MERCILESS Mental Training Corporation	144
4.2. Julie is Innocence Personified	146
4.3. Lucifer	148
4.4. The Palace of the Damned	149
4.5. The Order for Restraint	151
4.6. Competitive Cooperation	154

4.7. The Foreshadow	156
5.1. Return from the Depths	158
5.2. October Thirteenth	160
5.3. Judas Iscariot Died by the Sword	164
5.4. Lounge of the Elite	166
5.5. The Batteries are Alive	167
6.1. Sex at the Root of the Mind	169
6.2. The Next Management Phase	173
6.3. The Grand Plan	174
6.4. The Repentance of Sinners	176
6.5. The Encrypted Messages	179
6.6. The Mark	183
7.1. Liberation of the True Nature	184
7.2. Fifteen Minutes of Heroes	186
7.3. The Enlightenment of Angels	189
7.4. The Cancellation of the Project	192
7.5. Expansion to Nowhere	197
7.6. Paradise Lost	200
7.7. The Crash	202

“The number thirteen is all over the United States. There were thirteen original colonies, thirteen stripes on the flag, thirteen steps on the pyramid on the Great Seal, and now the people and livestock are composed of a large number of carbon-13 atoms.”

1.1. Messages from the Future

The greys and blackness enfolded the lights and contrasts. There was a flash, two flashes, then nothing for a while. It was nothing while no one was aware of it. Then change happened.

Julie woke up in the living room in front of the television. How late was it? She was confused about what had happened. She looked at the bandage on her hand and knew that she'd cut it on the bathroom mirror. What else happened?

The lights were off with the television providing an ominous glow to the room. She headed for the kitchen, but then she noticed something in the darkness. She normally sat on a couch facing her television which was against the wall. The doorway to the room was behind the couch.

It was between the back of the couch and the doorway. She knelt down to examine it more carefully. Several pieces of ordinary paper had been rolled into tubes and tied as presents with red ribbon. She picked one of the four up and untied it. Inside, as she unrolled the paper, were words written in some code she didn't understand. The letters were typical, but the words appeared as mere gibberish and not a foreign language that she'd ever recalled seeing.

The paper was covered with the nonsensical words as though it were all somehow relevant or even important. However, nothing was obvious to her. She untied the second and unrolled the paper to reveal a similarly encoded message. It was different from the first, but lent no explanation.

She considered that a hoax was being played on her by someone she didn't know. Had someone snuck into the room while she slept? Why leave notes that were so carefully prepared only to have them contain nonsense? It was infuriating to her.

Julie swiftly opened the third paper to find another page of encrypted words. Finally, she practically ripped open the fourth. It was different and involved numbers instead of letters, but she still couldn't make sense of it. What did they mean and why would someone leave them there for her to find?

She knew there was a conspiracy against her in the neighborhood, but she hadn't been able to prove it. Julie considered that the notes were the evidence she

needed. After all, they were *something* and evidence just had to be anything tangible. She held the pages firmly in her hands. She assured herself that they were real.

1.2. Cold Delivery

Julie woke up in front of the television set. She was sitting on the couch and her hands were scraped as though she'd been climbing over security razor-wire. It would take a relatively serious interest in security to install razor-wire over the top of a property's enclosing fence. However, she wasn't sure where she might have gone the night before. The memory was a blur.

She was certain, though, that she had to go the store to receive her order because it had to remain refrigerated until pick-up. If it didn't remain cold, it could spoil. Julie had already made the necessary arrangements and only needed to go to the store for it.

The package clerk at the grocery store asked for her identification before giving her the box. There was also a signature sheet requiring her name and date for the store's record. She was more than happy to comply. She signed it with a smile, ready to receive her rightful property.

Then the package clerk did the unforgiveable, "Now we need your fingerprints."

"My what?" Julie was certain for a moment that there had been an error in her ability to hear clearly. She twisted her head toward him and asked again, "What was the last thing you said?"

He repeated, "We need you to place your hand on this digital fingerprint recorder. No ink is used, so no mess. It's harmless."

She couldn't understand how anyone, especially a private company attempting to deliver her mail, would require anything more than a photo identification card issued by the state government. She asked with disgust and derision, "Isn't that an infringement of my basic rights?"

The package clerk knew where it was leading, but played along almost as though following a script, "Why would you believe that?"

“Why stop with my fingerprint?” She chose to take a vulgar turn in her outrage, “Why not photograph my ...?”

He interrupted, “Wait!” The package clerk had heard it all before from other customers and didn’t want to hear it again. He told her, “Okay, I get it. You don’t want to do it.”

There were a lot of thoughts going through her mind. It was always kill or be killed, that was the old motto from the MERCILESS mental training. However, if she killed someone for following store policy, then she wouldn’t be a hero at all, but a criminal. She allowed the rage to dissipate for a minute before saying anything more.

Julie wanted to resolve the impasse quickly and without violence. She suggested, “Maybe you could turn away for a moment and then I’ll take my package so you don’t have to be bothered with it any longer.”

“Just take it.” The clerk had given in to other customers and knew the drill. He pushed his own fingers onto the digital fingerprint sensor. He knew that one day someone would notice that dozens of his customers had identical prints. He didn’t care, however, because he earned a mediocre wage and had unpaid credit card bills.

1.3. Brave Intention, Faulty Execution

Julie opened the cabinet underneath the bathroom sink. It was a mildewy place. There was an old shoe box full of letters, a broken fountain pen, a novelty button, three damp wooden matches, and a stained, moist kerchief. She was hoping to find some form of adhesive for her bandage, but none was available.

She cried because she believed no one loved her anymore. It was a big, dark world out there, and she didn’t have anyone to turn to in times of trouble or you would be there to listen to her stories. She was alone and she thought, “No one cares.”

She turned to use the faucet, but her hand was bleeding again. The bandage was wet from when she washed her hands last time. Julie had cut her hand on the bathroom mirror the night before. Her hand was alright, but the bandage wasn’t.

The phone rang, so she rushed to pick it up by the eighth ring. Lucky eight rings on the telephone means good luck all day. That's what her mother used to say. No one in the house could answer until the eighth ring. Julie and her brothers and sisters all knew to wait eight rings when calling home. It worked fine all the years they lived there, but that was before the bank foreclosed on the mortgage unexpectedly and without warning.

The phone stopped by the fifth ring. Oh well, Julie knew it wasn't a worthwhile call anyhow. "Probably a wrong number," she thought.

After returning to the kitchen, Julie was slashing at frozen ice with an ice pick. It was frozen together and not at all useful for putting into a glass. The ice hated her, she knew it. There was a conspiracy from within the freezer to mishandle her ice so that she'd be forced to fight it every time. Her hand was already bleeding, but it was even more sore before too long.

She picked up her glass and looked inside. Was it clean? Not the glass. It was always dirty. Julie was inspecting the liquid within the glass. Was it the spawning lair for unidentified bacteria? She knew the bacteria hated her. There was a conspiracy involving the bacteria to fight her every time. Julie dumped some white wine into the glass and stirred it vigorously with her finger. She ordered it, "Clean up fast!" She had to kill the bacteria or be gradually be killed by it.

The television was advertising a local car dealership. Julie stopped to watch the familiar spokesperson offer special savings by dropping his pants and dancing like a chicken. He insisted that his prices were simply *that* low. She wanted to believe him. She really did.

Julie turned around to operate the light switch in the hallway, but the phone began to ring again. The previous time the caller had hung up after only five rings. She waited patiently in the dark hallway as the phone continued to ring again and again. Unfortunately, the caller stopped trying after only six rings. She sighed and said aloud to herself, "No lucky eight rings for us today." Why she used the plural form for herself wasn't clear to her and even a little scary.

With the light turned on, Julie proceeded down to the end of the hallway that led to her bedroom. That room was dark and quiet. She felt her way carefully toward the open window at the far side of the room.

She looked out for a moment. It was cold outside. Colder than usual for that time of year. The moon was full or nearly so. It was easy to see the whole street from her window with the moonlight revealing everything.

It wasn't difficult for her to see two young men skulking about the next door neighbor's side window. Were they attempting to rob the neighbors that might be out of town? She waited to see if they'd break the glass, but they were involved with some other activity. Julie tried to see what they were doing, but the shadows from the house concealed them just sufficiently enough.

Did she dare inform the police of the possible wrong-doing? They warned her in the past, however, that they didn't have time for her every suspicion of a crime. She needed to know for sure or else forget calling them.

The binoculars were in the hallway closet. Julie opened the closet door expecting to find the ordinary stack of boxes and other knick-knacks, but was surprised, instead, to find a skimpy white and silver costume of some sort with mask, cape, and boots. It was the type of costume that a super hero might wear if her cover persona worked in the adult film industry. There was also a note.

The note read:

"Julie,

You and I both know that the world is corrupt and evil to the core. Stop feeling sorry for yourself and do something about it. With this super hero's costume, you can take on the role of vigilante guardian. Wear it with pride as you stop crime.

Love, Julie."

She agreed with the note's basic premise, but she found the specifics hard to accept. First, why would she want to wear such a skimpy and revealing outfit in public to fight crime? Second, how was she supposed to fight crime other than appear at the scene? Lastly, why did she write the note to herself? The handwriting was clearly her own and her name had the stylistic dotting of the "i" that she had consciously developed.

Julie believed that the local neighbors all hated her. She knew there was a conspiracy to fight her. It only made sense, then, that she were to fight back. There was no time to make a new costume. The two hooligans might leave the scene at any moment.

She hastily donned the exotic uniform of justice, tying up the straps and adjusting the lace and silk contrivances. The mask was the most concealing accessory, hiding her identity sufficiently enough except for her long brown hair. Once everything was in place and nothing too graphic exposed, Julie climbed out her bedroom window and into a tree. She hopped down from the tree and jogged straight over to the neighbor's side window.

The two young men were still there and weren't aware of her approach. The one said to the other, "It's getting late, man, I gotta' get home soon."

Julie walked up to them and demanded, "What are you two doing here?"

The two young men were momentarily stunned. Not only had they not expected anyone to confront them, but they found themselves staring at a masked woman wearing what appeared to them to be the equivalent to extravagant and silky lingerie.

The second one told her, "Hey, uh, I live here. We're just, you know, hanging out." He seemed strangely nervous which raised Julie's suspicions even further.

"If it's your house," she insisted, "then why aren't you inside it?"

The first one answered, "He's not allowed, you know, to have people over this late. We're just hanging out here because his parents don't know."

Julie was disgusted by their lies. She knew wrong-doing was prevalent and these two fit the generalities perfectly right down to their blue jeans and their age. She only needed to trick them into confessing somehow.

Neither of the two young men had much experience with a provocatively dressed, masked vigilante. She walked closer to them, heightening their hopeful expectations for the best. Her idea was quite different. Their breathing quickened a small amount as did their pulse rate.

The first young man misread her signals and reached out to put his hand on her hip. The conspiracy against her was always making her fight her way through to the other side. Before he could blink, she grabbed his hand and held his arm taut so she could crack it with swift kick. The young man yelped in pain.

The second young man turned to flee, but Julie didn't want him to escape. She lunged at him and took him down to the ground. That was the last thing she remembered before coming back to normal consciousness later in the morning.

2.1. Paint a Crime

Julie woke up on her couch in front of the tv. What happened the night before? She vaguely remembered the sexy vigilante, but it seemed more like something she saw on tv. That couldn't have been her. She would *never* wear clothes cut to reveal so much cleavage and skin. She was even embarrassed thinking about dressing that way.

After blushing for a while, she realized that the side of her jaw was swollen. Not too much, but she'd apparently bumped into something. Was it the bathroom door? She could imagine herself walking face first into the door while half-asleep.

She turned off the television set and headed toward the kitchen. As she headed out the doorway, she noticed something lying on the floor behind the couch. She knelt down and found four pieces of red ribbon. She wondered if they were from a present opened long ago or miscellaneous debris from another world.

Her jaw hurt. It was time for the ice to reduce the swelling, but first she would have to fight the ice into pieces with her impact-stressed and striking ice pick. "Take that," she whispered, "take it!"

With broken ice in a plastic bag in hand, Julie wandered from the kitchen to her bedroom. It was late and already dark outside. Her window was open and it was letting in a lot of cold air. She asked aloud, "Or is it that the warm air is escaping?"

She knew there was a conspiracy against her by the environment to reduce her comfort level. Only by taking action and changing the circumstances, such as through opening or closing a window, could she ever attempt to make things more pleasant. It worked sometimes, but there were no guarantees.

Julie looked out the window for a moment before closing it. The moon was nearly full, so the whole neighborhood was lit up and more visible than usual.

She inhaled deep to fill her lungs with clean, cold air. Then she coughed when the paint fumes struck her.

She looked toward the house across the street from hers. Someone was spray painting on the wall on the side of their backyard. Julie considered calling the police, but they'd dismissed her claims too many times in the past. She would have to take other measures.

Julie ran to the hallway closet where she normally kept her binoculars, but she stopped herself from opening the door. "No," she said aloud to herself, "I need something better than binoculars."

She returned to her bedroom and began pulling out boxes from under her bed. Soon she found what she needed: a high-powered hunting slingshot. What to fire at the hooligan? She didn't want to kill him but to scare him enough to stop his criminal effort.

Picking up a golf ball, she eyed it for a moment, turning it in the palm of her hand. Would it kill him or only startle him? She would have to limit her pull-back or else knock him out cold. It would be difficult to gauge until after a practice shot.

Julie returned to the window and quickly aimed at the vandal's back. She began to pull her hand back, the band tightening and reaching its threshold, when she suddenly reconsidered the golf ball. It would transfer all of its energy right into her target, possibly harming him enough to require an ambulance. That would involve the police and a lot of unpleasantness.

She ran to the kitchen and retrieved a single ice cube. At least that would shatter on impact, releasing some of the energy outward instead of all of it being put into her target. Julie returned to the window, aimed, and let loose on the late-night painter.

The ice cube hit dead on and the man gave out a loud expletive. He looked down to see the broken ice and assumed it was beginning to hail. He ran inside of the house.

Julie saw him go into the house and panicked. Had she made a bad situation much worse? Had she driven the mere vandal into breaking into the house where he could harm the poor family living there?

The police couldn't help her. She knew there was always one person she could seek out in the most dire of situations. It was her old friend, Sophique. She used to help Julie figure out things that were particularly discouraging.

Sophique hadn't been calling ever since the unfortunate incident, but that had been at least a few months or more earlier. Julie insisted that it was all a misunderstanding and not what it appeared to be on the surface. That was true, of course, but left Sophique with no other recourse but to find new friends.

Julie picked up the phone and began dialling. However, after the second ring, Julie hung up. It was too difficult. She would have to try to warn the neighbors before it was too late.

Then the phone rang. Julie wanted to wait for the eight lucky rings first, but she had no time to wait because the neighbors were in danger. She picked it up on the first ring and demanded, "What do you want?"

"Julie? Is that you?" Sophique asked, "Why did you call and hang up?"

"Sophique?" Julie had to explain, "Oh, sorry about that. Yeah, there's some trouble over at my neighbor's house, and I didn't know who else to call."

"Why would you call me for that?" Sophique sounded annoyed, "Why don't you call the police?"

"Yeah," Julie told her, "I would, of course, but they aren't accepting my calls right now. It's an understanding we have."

"Okay," Sophique was always sensible, "give me your neighbor's address and I'll call the police for you."

"Really?" Julie was elated, "That'd be great!"

After receiving the specific details, Sophique assured her old friend, "I'll call you back after I'm done."

"Got it." Julie couldn't wait, "Talk to you then."

2.2. Desire is the Root of All Suffering

Jarvis had a long-term plan. He had a goal. He had a purpose. Everything in his life was positioned around his single-minded desire: to transcend desire itself!

He knew brief moments of a peaceful stillness that he believed to be a halfway indicator. He was beginning to transcend his desires for short periods of time. Eventually, it would switch over and the desires would become the exception and not the rule.

Without desire of anything, a person could sit perfectly still for hours or days or possibly longer. There would be nothing to break the one-minded state. Enlightenment was attainable, he was certain, but it took practice, time, and effort.

His interest had been first heightened when he read about a famous occultist's study of yoga, Hinduism, Theosophy, and Buddhism. Western philosophy could only provide so much to an ambitious occultist, it would seem. When Westernized magic couldn't bring him inner peace, meditation and related practices became more relevant.

He thought to himself, "The Zen of the moment *is* the moment and everything in it." Instead of always desiring to change the moment, he could be in the moment while remaining at peace with the moment. Desire was the source of conflicts between himself and reality. Desire, indeed, was the root of all of his suffering.

There were different interpretations of the sacred scriptures. There were various methods of practice and previously charted paths available. The specifics, Jarvis knew, were irrelevant because the effect to be realized was subconscious and not based on his conscious ego. His little ego was merely a temporary pawn to be used and incrementally discarded by the subconscious mind in all its glory.

By Eastern and Western thought and practices, Jarvis soon realized that the subconscious mind was not really a mental unit derived from the brain. The subconscious mind is the fallen angel that is forced to play a human role for a life-time in a series of life-times. Each fallen angel must fulfil a prison sentence based on the amount of work necessary to rehabilitate the criminal.

The real Jarvis, the fallen angel beneath the ego and beyond the human vehicle, still remembered what God had said to him before banishing him to Earth, “You’re not good enough!”

It’s unlikely that many of the fallen angels will admit the truth of their situation. They would rather deny the truth and accept their enforced human role as though it was their true identity. They are more afraid of their real selves than they are of God! The fallen angel is being rehabilitated by events on Earth. Denying that there is a rehabilitation doesn’t affect the outcome.

2.3. Wednesday Promises

Julie sat down on the couch in front of the tv. All she had to do was wait. The events across the street were effectively eased from her mind. Now she wouldn’t have to worry because it was all being handled.

She listened for the police sirens, but they never occurred. Hours passed, but Sophique never called back. What had happened? Had the miscreant gotten to her?

She called Sophique but only reached a busy tone. What now? Julie considered going over to the neighbor’s house and knocking on the front door. If they were already hostages, then no one would answer and she could proceed with a more drastic plan. Otherwise, if they answered as normal, then the alleged attacker was still hiding in their house and they had time to escape.

Suddenly the phone rang. Without waiting, Julie answered it, “Yes?”

“It’s me again,” Sophique told her, “and it’s been quite a hassle dealing with your neighbors. The police called them and asked if they were okay, but, as you know, they’ve received *many* calls of that type in the recent past. Do you remember that?”

“But this is different.” Julie had to provide the facts, “There was a man painting the wall, but when I shot him, he went into the house. He might be hiding in there right now!”

“Wait,” Sophique was horrified, “you shot someone?”

“Not with a gun.” Julie tried to minimize how it sounded, “It was only with a slingshot.”

Sophie was shocked by her friend’s activities, “You could have killed him!”

“No, I was careful.” Then she added, “Besides, he deserves to be punished for his criminal misdoing.”

“What misdeed?” Sophie tried to be realistic, “It sounds to me as though the owner of the house was outside painting his own wall. Didn’t you recognize him?”

“No, well, it’s that,” Julie attempted to rationalize her behavior, “I didn’t have my binoculars.”

“You didn’t?” Sophie sternly reproved her old friend, “You need to go get your binoculars next time and make sure of what you’re seeing and who is involved.”

“Yeah, you’re right.” Julie admitted, “I’ll try and take it easy.”

“It’s better to verify your suspicion,” Sophie told Julie, “before acting on it.”

“Well, thanks for helping me with this one.” Julie quickly added, “It was good hearing from you.”

Sophie was tired, “Okay, I’ve got to go now.”

Julie made the surprise suggestion, “Maybe we should hang out again sometime.”

Sophie didn’t want to become involved with a life of discord, “I don’t think that would be good for either of us.”

“It’s not that bad.” Julie offered, “We can go someplace neutral and talk about old times.”

Sophie wanted to delay any such meeting as long as possible, “I’ll think about it and call you back in the future.”

Julie asked, "When?"

Sophie sighed and replied, "Maybe next week."

Julie pestered, "Before Wednesday?"

"I'm not sure." Sophie was leaning the other way with the decision, "It could be after Wednesday."

"If you can let me know which," she rationalized, "I can ready myself accordingly."

"I don't know," Sophie was trying to find a way out of the phone call, "After Wednesday, I suppose."

"Okay," Julie smiled, "I'm looking forward to talking to you then."

Sophie quickly said, "Bye." Then she hung up.

Julie put down the phone and looked around the room. Everything seemed brighter somehow as though the colors were more colorful. Then it all dimmed back down to normal. The truth was obvious.

It seemed to Julie as though Sophie didn't really want to meet with her. Perhaps ominous forces were in fact attempting to keep Sophie from saying the truth over the phone. Julie imagined gunmen standing over Sophie as she made her call. Had the criminal in the neighbor's house gotten to Sophie, too?

Julie was confused and worn out. What could she do to save her friend? She considered rushing out into the night and rescuing Sophie from her captors. She couldn't easily verify her suspicions. Instead, she would have to visit Sophie's house late at night to see for herself what was occurring there.

Bored with the tv, Julie decided to begin her daily affirmation. She stood in her underwear in front of the full-length mirror in her bedroom. She said to her reflection, "God is going to eat you up! No, God can't really eat you. God is going to eat you up! No, not really." Repetitively for half an hour.

2.4. Eat the Psychic Cake

The air was chilly in the darkened house. There was no need for lighting or heat because the sole occupant was oblivious to such luxuries. Had he transcended them altogether or temporarily blighted them from his consciousness, the difference was unclear, but the effect was roughly the same for the moment.

The slightest touch could disrupt a week's preparation. Jarvis had been very careful, very quiet, and very calm throughout the entire process. Any unfortunate startling incident might undo all of the work already invested. Nothing could go wrong, but why would it?

He was already disappointed that it had taken so long already. What will it take? Jarvis didn't really know how long the effort had to persist before the desirable results would manifest. The wishfulness was there in abundance, but the focus of mind and the calmness of the body were crucial.

The goal itself wasn't exactly clear to the futile conscious mind, but the underlying mind knew what path to follow. The years of study assisted Jarvis to unlock the conscious mind enough to allow the real mind to function through the ego at diminished capacity. Even in its limited state, however, the real mind was far superior in problem-solving and understanding than Jarvis, the ego, ever would be.

Then the unthinkable occurred. A madwoman wearing a skimpy outfit and a strange, horned mask climbed in through Jarvis' window. After managing her horns through the tight opening, she demanded, "What have you been doing to her?"

Julie's mask had changed entirely since her previous outing. She replaced the simple, plain mask with a demon's head complete with two horns. It wasn't clear why she chose the demon's head, but its visage did draw people's attention away from the provocative costume she barely wore. She had her knee-high, silver and black assault boots, silver and black straps around her thighs, the bottom half of a white bikini, white and black gloves to conceal her fingerprints, a revealing white half-shirt, and the horrific demon mask. The cape had been abandoned as "over the top".

Jarvis stopped his concentrated work to answer, "I don't know who you're talking about. I've been in here alone all week."

"I'm talking about," Julie told him, "the woman that lives alone next door to you."

"I've never met the neighbors on any of the three sides of me." He took the opportunity to complain to her, "All I can tell you about them is that one neighbor has a lot of loud children, one is running a carpentry business out of their garage, and the other recently acquired a drum set. I know that much because I get to hear them while I'm trying to tune out the world."

"Tune out the world?" Julie was genuinely interested in what he was doing, "What's that like?"

Jarvis replied, half as a joke, but seriously as well, "It's where you can have your psychic cake and eat it, too."

Julie wasn't convinced by the convenient aphorism, "That's stupid."

He restated the situation in other terms, "It's where you can travel to any location in the world or beyond and still have a refuge or sanctuary inside of *you* where no one can ever reach."

Julie had to reconsider the matter, "That sounds promising."

"I'm near the desired state or condition. It takes dedication and study," he tried to explain to her, "but after years of practice ..."

"You lost my interest." Julie told him matter-of-factly, "I better go interrogate her other neighbors. I know someone around here has been poisoning her against me."

"Well," he emphasized, "you can rest assured that it wasn't me."

"I'll get to the bottom of this." She climbed out the window and headed toward the house on the other side of Sophique's. Jarvis stood at his window and watched Julie from there.

His work was defeated in that one instance. All of the effort to keep himself apart from the material plane had been knocked out by an uninvited visit from a lewdly dress woman with the head of a monster. He could close his eyes, but he saw her as an image in his mind. She was mysterious and strange, but that only made the whole connection more maddening for him.

After several defeated attempts to focus his mind, he headed out the front door to see if he could find the strange woman still in the area. He stood out on his front lawn for a few minutes before finally seeing her leaving the house across from him through a side window. He approached her with something to say, but almost immediately Jarvis became awestruck, wondering what *she* would say to him.

Julie informed him, “A lot of dead ends on this investigation. I’m beginning to suspect that this conspiracy goes beyond this neighborhood.”

Jarvis was curious, “A conspiracy to do what?”

“To fight me,” Julie explained, “because I’m trying to stop crime. The criminals don’t want me to pursue them. Naturally, they would rather no one prevent them from their terrible crimes. Someone, anyone, can stop them from hurting others or stealing.”

“Your philosophy sounds full of good intentions,” Jarvis reasoned with her, “but won’t you be interfering with the normal course of police cases?”

“The police can’t be everywhere all the time.” She added, “That’s where I fill in the gaps that they cannot afford to service themselves.”

Jarvis couldn’t do much more than shrug. He didn’t agree that she should be taking the law into her own hands, but he also didn’t have any better alternatives to offer. How could he tell her to stop without suggesting a preferable arrangement?

2.5. The Rescue Mission

Julie made her way through the top floor of Sophique’s house. The lights were off, so she had to feel her way through the darkness. However, she soon discov-

ered Sophique asleep in her bed. By running into the bed with a small thump, Julie managed to scare the Hell out of her friend.

Sophique sat up in her bed and screamed. She didn't know who was in her room because of how dark it was, but she was certain *someone* was there. After kicking in the air for a moment, she rolled over to the other side of her bed and turned on the night lamp. She looked up at her intruder and was even more distraught. Seeing the demon head, Sophique began to scream, but stopped before hitting maximum volume when she saw the decadently attired woman underneath.

Julie tried to change her voice as well as she could, speaking at a lower pitch than normal, "Where are your captors?"

"Captors?" Sophique was still dazed by finding an intruder in her bedroom at night, insisted to the demon-headed woman, "There's no one here but me!"

Julie asked with her fake lowered voice, "Where did they go?" She looked around the room as though expecting to find masked gunmen hiding beneath the bed or behind the curtains.

"There hasn't been anyone else here." She told Julie, "I've been here alone the entire night."

What could Julie do? If she revealed her true identity, that would jeopardize her own safety and her friend's safety. If she hit Sophique over the head before escaping, the police might be called and a file started on her new vigilante identity. Then again, maybe she would accept it as an mistake.

Julie used her low vigilante voice, "I came to rescue someone, but I obviously came to the wrong house. Do you understand?"

Sophique seemed ready to accept the less traumatic possibility. She whispered, "Sure."

Julie wanted to believe her friend, but she was still worried. She threatened her, "And don't tell the police or anyone else that I was here because I'm quite vengeful against those who try to stop my crime fighting."

“Crime fighting?” Sophique was intrigued by the idea of it and the danger involved, “Like super heroes?”

If Julie revealed herself at that moment, she might have appeared in the light of a hero. However, she wasn’t a crime-fighting vigilante because she wanted rewards or praise. The cleaning up of her neighborhood and outlying areas in her city was more than enough to make it all worthwhile to her. She was trying to pitch in and share the burden of social responsibility.

Julie swiftly ran to the open window and answered the super hero accusation in her lowered voice, “Yes.” After struggling to free her two horns from the window frame, she jumped from the second floor window down to the ground below. She could only hope that Sophique would keep her word and not tell anyone about her visit.

2.6. Self-Hypnosis

Julie woke up on the couch and found that the television was advertising a self-hypnosis home course with an instructional digital video recording and a book. She reached for the phone as though to make the call. Then she asked herself, “Do I even believe in hypnosis?”

She laughed aloud at all of the suckers who did believe in hypnosis. Their gullibility alone was the measure of how easily they could be controlled by others. They were probably buying the self-hypnosis home course in order to improve their sense of self-worth. After all, if they were highly gullible, they were probably being routinely exploited by employers or friends.

Julie stood up and headed out of the room to the kitchen. There was a phone in that room, too, she knew, and that was where she would make the call. Before picking up the phone, however, she stopped herself. “Why do I want to order a self-hypnosis home course?”

There was no logical explanation for any of it. She was simply under the influence of the advertisement’s suggestion. It wasn’t any use for her to resist because the commercial had made its point very clear to her already. “Was it because I was sleeping through the infomercial?”

After ordering the package, she sat down and stared at her hands for a while. They were cut and calloused from unknown events forgotten already. She considered that her self-hypnosis home course might even be the exact tool she needed to open up some of the lost time she'd been experiencing. Lost time, she knew, was *literally* the Devil's playground. She had to take control of the situation.

Julie needed to clear her head for a while. Wearing her bathrobe and without thinking, she climbed out the window and into the night she went. Wandering as though on automatic, she made her way two streets over when she saw something suspicious.

Julie watched a young man carrying a long chain. He had a strange smile on his face and it led her to believe that he was looking for mischief, "Where are you going with that?"

"I don't know what you mean," trying to hide the length of chain, "I'm not doing anything."

Julie accused him with her finger pointed directly at the point between his eyes, "You're going to pay dearly for your conspiracy against her."

The young man was bewildered by her remarks, "What are you talking about?"

"I'm the, wait," Julie realized she wasn't wearing her costume or mask, "I meant go ahead and do whatever it is you were doing."

"Okay," the would-be hooligan smiled, "I will."

Julie ran home and changed into her proper costume. For every role in society, there was an appropriate costume or uniform. That's how everyone could tell who was whom.

There are four basic roles, she knew, from her MERCILESS mental training program. The first was the worker. The workers such as herself wore various clothes, but they were of a particular general style. This set them apart from soldiers and police who wore a uniform according to their branch of service. The third category were the wealthy top percent who dressed according to their means. Finally, the criminals and the equivalent dressed according to

their anti-social whims. The system of knowing who is whom has the interesting title of “customer profiling.”

Customer profiling, unfortunately, didn’t make much allowance for people wearing super hero costumes or anachronistic fan worship costumes. Such individuals were eccentric at best and could have risen from any of the four standard roles. Their fantasy costuming only led to infuriate the established and preconceived ideas about the attire of lawful citizens. One day, of course, everyone will be assigned uniforms according to their exact role and rank.

Julie, now in costume, jumped down from the roof of the house directly behind the young hooligan and his chain. She demanded using her lowered voice, “What are you doing there?”

The young man nearly collapsed as she startled him completely. His eyes glanced down the side of the house. She knew he meant to make a getaway, so she kicked him in the thigh. He hit the ground immediately and began to cry.

She asked again, “What are you doing with that chain? Breaking things? Pulling things apart? Hitting things? Tell me!” She grabbed his shoulders and shook him.

The young hooligan continued to cry. He couldn’t tell her anything about it because he was too upset. Julie continued shaking him to no avail. He was a difficult nut to crack, she determined, so it would be necessary for her to take more exacting measures to get the information she deserved.

First, she twisted his arm behind his back while saying, “What? What? What?”

Then Julie began punching him in the arm over and over, “Tell me! Tell me! Tell me!”

Last, she flicked him in the back of the head, “What’cha doin’? What’cha doin’? What’cha doin’?”

He stopped crying long enough to say, “I was going to chain my bike to the fence so no one takes it!”

3.1. The Debased Fixation

Jarvis was contemplating his own navel for three and a half hours, but all the while he wondered what the strange woman was doing. What adventures must she be engaging as she illegally breaks into people's houses to confront them regarding her friend? Maybe there was no friend. Jarvis didn't know how much of what she said was true or make-believe.

He looked out his window for an hour or more. It wasn't clear when she would appear next, but he was convinced she would return again and again to that area until finally incarcerated by the proper authorities. Jarvis hoped to see her, but there was no way for him to predict when she would appear next.

Instead, he purchased a digital video camera and set it to record the immediate neighborhood directly onto an external hard drive. This would provide days or weeks of recording time that could later be reviewed or edited. Next time she returned, he planned to have a permanent video recording that he could then review repeatedly until he attained inner bliss. Only after that success would Jarvis be free to return to his serious long-term meditation.

Two days later, Jarvis sat down with the video editing computer and had it fast forward through the recording from the beginning. He watched fast motioned cars zipping back and forth as they took his street to reach nearby houses or headed for destinations far from there. People collected mail from mailboxes and moved trash cans back and forth from street to the side of the house and back again.

Then, finally, he caught a brief visitation from the mysterious woman. She ran up to the neighbor's door, stood outside for a minute as she rearranged her costume, then she knocked. The neighbor answered it, they talked very briefly, and then the strange woman ran out of view.

Jarvis used the editing software to cut out only the section featuring the source of his preoccupation. He would desensitize himself regarding her by reviewing the video recording over and over again. He set the playback control for infinite repeat and began watching.

He allowed the motions of her every movement soak into his mind as a permanent etching of importance. Jarvis studied her as best he could with the

limited recording time. He watched her as she walked, ran, rearranged her costume, talked to the neighbor, and all of it left him wanting more. He'd have to record more footage of her and add it to the repeating sequences already collected.

In the meantime, as he waited to record more of the mysterious woman, he watched many times over the material already collected. Every few hours, Jarvis paused his repetitive review to check the video recorder for new footage of her. It was a waiting game. She would return, he was sure of that for some reason, but when she chose to do anything was an unknown to him and probably, he suspected, to her as well.

3.2. The Hidden Secret

There was an interruption in the television reception. The momentary static woke Julie up from her casual napping on the couch. Why was her leg sore? Had she fallen onto it from a height? That didn't make much sense.

A plastic bag of melted ice was in her bandaged hand. The bandage was also wet and the adhesive was failing. She knew it was time to start fresh. First, new bandages could be found in the bathroom. After that, she went to the kitchen to break apart some ice cubes.

The phone rang. Julie was going to let it ring eight lucky times first, but then thought better of it. After all, Sophique was going to call back. She'd said after Wednesday, but it was only Sunday. Julie reasoned that her friend was anxious to see her.

Julie picked up the phone and asked, "Who is it?"

Her friend answered, "It's me, Sophique."

Julie was excited, "Are you ready to make some plans to spend some time together?"

"No," Sophique began to inquire, "I'm actually calling to ask you if, well, this will sound silly, but by any chance, last night, did you come over to my ..."

Julie had to interrupt so that the terrible question couldn't be finished. She quickly suggested, "Hey, you're not suppose to call until Wednesday, right? Maybe by then you'll be ready to make those plans."

"Possibly, but right now," Sophique's voice was nervous, "I need to know if you put on a ..."

Julie lied, "I think there's someone at the front door. I better go get that."

"Oh," Sophique couldn't complain, "okay."

Julie hopped up and down around the room. What was she supposed to do? Her friend suspected her vigilante identity already! Maybe there had to be something done to prove otherwise. She grabbed the phone and said, "Could you hold on the line for five minutes?"

"Really?" Sophique didn't want to wait, but it was important that she speak with Julie. "Well, I suppose I can if I have to."

"I'll be right back." She gave her cover story, "I'm going to be talking at the front door until then."

After tossing aside the phone, Julie ran for the closet in the hallway and changed into her costume. She ran as fast as she could over to Sophique's house four blocks away. She ran up to the front door and rang the bell.

A half a minute later, Sophique opened the door. She was soon horrified to see the demon-headed woman back at her house, "What do you want now?"

Julie used her low vigilante voice, "I wanted to apologize again for the other night."

"Oh?" Sophique was perplexed by it all, "Thank you."

"I have to go fight crime," Julie said with her lowered voice, "but please forgive me for the mistake."

"Sure," Sophique said, obviously taken aback by the second visit at that moment, "no problem."

Julie mentally accepted the forgiveness and then ran as fast as she could back to her own house. She ran in the already open front door and picked up the phone, saying, "I'm back."

Sophie told her, "You're right. I better call you back after Wednesday."

Julie smiled to herself, "That's fine with me." She recorded a mental note to make herself visible at a later time while a machine played a pre-recorded message over the phone. That would put to rest any doubts her friend might have about her connection to the vigilante hero.

There was a noise from the basement. Julie hastened to the top of the basement stairs from the kitchen. She flicked on the switch and started descending the stairs when she had to stop in surprise. The two young men she had fought several nights earlier were tied up in her basement. They had been tied to chairs and gagged. One had fallen over and that was the noise she must have heard.

She removed the gag from the one who was still upright and asked him, "What are you doing here?" She had to step over a puddle on the floor to reach him. She looked up at the ceiling to see if any pipes were leaking. It felt damp in the room.

"Please, lady, if you're going to take us to jail, just do it." He wasn't sure how to reason with her, "You can't hold us like this. I don't know what kind of sicko mind games you're trying to play here, but what you're doing is illegal and ..."

Julie replaced the gag over his mouth and explained, "I'm not the one who brought you here." She indicated no mask on her face and no costume. Instead, she was wearing an ordinary bathrobe.

What could she do? If she killed them and tried to dispose of their bodies, then she was no better than they were. After all, if she committed crimes worse than theirs in the process of fighting crime, then criminality would still win. She knew there was a conspiracy against her by the people all around her. They wanted her to live in a crime-infested neighborhood, but she would fight them tooth and nail.

She removed his gag again and asked, "If I freed you, could we somehow avoid any police involvement?"

“Anything you want.” He pleaded with her, “My buddy is hurt bad. You broke his arm the other night. He needs some medical attention.”

Julie had to think quickly. She told them, “This is how it will work. I’ll let your friend go, but I will keep you here as a hostage. That way if he comes back here with the police ...” The plan sounded more complicated than necessary. She changed her mind, “Forget all of that. Wait down here a few more days until I think of something.”

The young man tried to bargain with her, “Keep him and free me. I don’t care what you do with him. Kill him and eat him if that’s what you want. I promise I won’t tell nobody.”

She was infuriated by the double negative, “That means you *will* tell somebody!”

The young man hastily said, “I didn’t mean that!” She knew that he had no loyalty, the loyalty common to thieves. He added, “Please, miss, torture him if you want, but let me go and I won’t tell *anyone*!”

Julie decided to be honest with them, “It was a mistake bringing you two here. I realize that now, and I’m *really* sorry about it. But at the same time, I have my own well-being to consider. If I release both of you now, how will it fare for me?”

“We can make a deal. I’m sure of it.” He suggested, “Let me go and you can keep my money.”

“I don’t want your money! I don’t want any trouble. I’m pretty sure you’ll go straight to the police if I freed you now. I’ll have to think about it for a few more days.” She replaced the gag in his mouth, marched up the stairs, and turned off the light. They needed some more time to stew in their criminal juices. It wasn’t her fault that they were up to no good. She was only committed to stamping out injustices in her small part of the city.

3.3. After Wednesday

Thursday afternoon, Sophique had a chill go up her spine. She had made a half-hearted promise to Julie regarding plans to meet somewhere. It wasn’t an

agreeable arrangement, but unless she could discover a rather good excuse, there would be no way out of it.

Julie was ecstatic. She'd waited more than a week to finally get the opportunity to sit down with her friend. There was so much she had to tell her and ask her. There had been so many things happening in recent days. There were still two young men held captive in her basement. The crime fighting, though, was a secret. She couldn't admit to everything, but she could talk about the subject from the perspective of a detached spectator.

The two of them were sitting in the restaurant. Sophique had ordered the creamy mushroom soup. Julie had ordered a grilled cheese sandwich with extra bacon. She reasoned that in order to maintain her killer instinct, she needed to eat other animals.

Julie commented, "I've heard about a super hero appearing in the area."

Sophique was excited about the topic, "Yes, I've seen her twice! She came to my house and broke in through the bedroom window. I almost freaked out completely."

"Not break in," Julie tried to differentiate, "but enter without damaging your property. Super heroes are allowed to go where the action is."

"Well, she might not have damaged the window," Sophique insisted, "but it was an illegal entry into my private residence."

Julie rationalized the possible events leading to the super hero's visit, "If she had reason to suspect something criminal was occurring ..."

Sophique interrupted to finish the logic, "Then she should have contacted the proper authorities instead of taking the law into her own hands."

Julie was trying to reach the correct understanding of the situation, "If ordinary citizens refuse to help out others in need ..."

Sophique interrupted again to complete the thought, "They should help people, but only if its clear they need and want help. Breaking into my house without permission wasn't helpful to me in any manner whatsoever. It was a violation of my privacy."

“You might believe it or not,” Julie warned, “but there might be crimes occurring all around you, so just be hopeful that this lone super hero can keep us safe.”

Sophique corrected her old friend, “Heroine.”

Julie requested, “Pardon?”

“She’s a super heroine.” Sophique explained, “A female hero is a heroine.”

Julie felt silly for not knowing the difference between a hero and a heroine. Then she blurted out, “I have two guys at my house.”

Sophique found the arrangement odd, “They live with you?”

“Well,” Julie approximated the truth, “yeah, they do. They’ve been living with me for about a week.”

Sophique guessed, “Are you dating one of them or ...?”

“No, no,” Julie laughed, “they’re more like business acquaintances. It’s all professional.”

“Oh, okay.” She inquired further, “Do they work for your airline?”

Julie suggested, “Maybe you should come over today after lunch and meet them. You could recommend to them what they should do.”

Sophique asked, “Do about what?”

“They need a second person’s opinion.” Julie insisted, “I’ll allow them to explain it to you in their own words. That way you’ll be an unbiased observer.”

Sophique was worried by the lack of details, “Couldn’t you give me a little more information?”

“They want to move, you see,” Julie was vague as she could be, “and they need advice about how to handle the matter of the time they spent living there with me.”

Sophique was trying to figure out what her old friend was telling her, “Do they believe you’re charging too much rent?”

“In a roundabout way,” Julie delicately explained, “they’re upset about what they perceive as an unfair imbalance. I don’t want to say more about that because you’ll need to hear it from them.”

“It sounds weird,” Sophique reluctantly agreed, “but I suppose I could meet them briefly and hear their argument.”

Julie smiled, “Thanks.”

3.4. Infatuation of the Third Kind

There was nothing Jarvis could do about it. He closed his eyes and saw her menacing but fantastic demon face. Her body was too good for his direct attention, so he focused his view on the demon’s horrible face. The sex appeal could be appreciated through the peripheral vision without him giving in to the enticement of the whole image.

The hours and hours of digital video recording review had etched her visual image into his memory. He knew her all too well. We was allowing his mental desires to take center stage while his long-term plans were suspended.

Then, one day, Jarvis saw her without the mask. He knew it was her because of how she walked and how she stood. The mannerisms were the same as well as the general idea of her physical size and build. He was certain it was her. Where the demon’s mask once hid her face, the face from beneath the covering was exposed. Her real image literally blew his mind because of the preconceived ideas about her. The truth had set him free.

His monitoring system had recorded her visiting the next door neighbor. The two of them left together. Jarvis watched in amazement, wondering if the neighbor knew that her friend was the notorious bandit. He had no proof, but he was certain because of all of the time he’d spent studying her on the video recording.

Jarvis hid his discovery. He didn’t want to disrupt the natural chain of events. The ripples of action can reach out to the farthest distances and then later

rebound on the one who caused it. That was karma. It was better to tread carefully, leaving little trace of having been there. He could monitor the events without participating in them.

Nothing required him to inform his neighbor. It wasn't as though any real harm had been done. The demon-headed woman had startled a few people in the neighborhood by entering their houses without their permission, but no one was hurt. He believed that the vigilante woman was well-meaning and determined to help her friend.

There was no evidence, however, of any conspiracy against the neighbor woman. His video recordings would have picked up something if any of the other neighbors had held a grudge. He almost hoped to find some slightest proof that someone was up to no good in order to validate the woman's efforts, but he couldn't find anything.

He could try to contact her with the information he'd collected, but then he'd have to explain why he was recording the neighborhood at all. Jarvis didn't want the vigilante woman to misjudge his voyeurism. He meant nothing by it. He was somehow mesmerized by her and needed to overload his mind with her until he became totally desensitized to her. It was a long process, but he was willing to sacrifice the time so that he could reclaim some peace of mind.

His real work required dedicated concentration. Thinking about the strange woman led his mind astray. It wasn't acceptable. He had to overload his mind with her before his efforts could honestly continue. To pretend otherwise would only diminish the results of years of practice already invested.

3.5. Crime Fighters Jump into Action

After lunch, Sophique agreed to go shopping at the mall for an hour. She needed a few things, so it seemed reasonable to allow Julie to essentially tag along. As they were stepping out of a shoe store, Julie saw a young hooligan grab the purse of an elderly woman. Julie sprang into action. After tossing her shopping bags aside, she began to run after the culprit.

Sophique called after her, "Where are you going?"

A well-dressed woman approached Sophique and suggested, "Your situation won't improve while your willingness to have more is stifled. That willingness level is the key to improving other situations. If you can't have more, then how can you be expected to have a solution to a problem?"

"My only problem is that my," Sophique sought an adequate label, "associate just ran off and left me here without saying anything."

"If your level of willingness to have a comfortable situation was greater, you'd have it." The well-dressed woman explained, "You restrict your own potential by your limited willingness to have more."

Sophique was tired of the riddles and asked, "What are you trying to sell to me?"

The woman revealed her intent, "I can help you to unleash your willingness to have more through intensive massage therapy. I will come to your residence three times each week and give you a soothing and invigorating full body massage."

"I'm not interested, but perhaps my," she chose an appropriate word, "acquaintance could benefit from your services. She's always quite tense. I think if she doesn't get some relief, she might snap."

The well-dressed woman inquired, "Will she return soon?"

Sophique looked into the distance to see if there was any sign of Julie, "I hope so."

4.1. The MERCILESS Mental Training Corporation

That was when they conceived their master plan. They would select someone they knew to be a suppressive psychopath to take the reign of power for a while. The contrast, they agreed, would force people to change their threshold levels. In other words, the difference would be so great, that the old managers would appear as holy saints by comparison. As it was, the same former managers had left in disgrace with unanswered allegations plaguing them into their exile.

No ordinary person would have fit the need. Instead, they had to choose someone who was more than an ordinary paranoid megalomaniac with far-fetched schemes and visages of self-grandeur. Such were a dime a dozen. They desired an individual who had been an infamous monster in a past lifetime. That would be the clincher. Then they would have their real prophet of MERCILESS.

Soon they found their ideal candidate. A graduate of the MERCILESS mental training program with honors. He could be entrusted to run the corporation ruthlessly while alienating everyone in his midst. His effect on others was absolutely chilling as though an energy extended from him and permeated people to their core. Executives with twenty years or more service quit without notice rather than be subjected to another confrontation with the new tyrant.

The new chief executive had been an old and powerful dictator in a former life, but that wasn't advertised to the corporate subordinates. The only ones who needed to know were the wisest of the shareholders. The board of directors, meanwhile, was repeatedly dumbfounded by who they decided to name as the new chief executive. His qualifications were flimsy at best with more background in military strategy than business management.

At first, there was a large walk-out of veterans who challenged the new leader. Then new employees were brought in to replace the old ones. Soon, production was back to its normal pace. The most notable change was that the new chief executive met with all of his executives often to check up on progress in handling matters of importance such as failed quotas or negative publicity.

His overly aggressive managerial style began to grow on his executives. They gradually became desensitized to the profane rants and furniture smashing tantrums. He could be very excitable and just about anything might set him into a furious rage or fits of uncontrollable crying. The executives became conditioned by his behavior to handle problems *before* he found out about them. That was the only answer that gave him time to smile. His smile became their smile. It was contagious because of its intensity. He was extremely excitable and that, too, was contagious around the corporate offices they called headquarters.

Everything was running fine until the marked decline in attendance for the shareholders meeting. The new chief executive's reputation was known to many from the complaints issued by former employees. There had been stories

of excessive verbal abuse, threats, covert retaliation, and murder attempts. Many of the reports seemed too crazy for anyone to take literally. Even still, few of the shareholders wanted to confront the new dictator.

Those who did attend were dazzled by scathing insults and blame for the failures of the whole corporation. When one shareholder attempted to leave, the new chief executive barred the door with his body and yelled repeatedly, “Why you runnin’? Why you runnin’? Why you runnin’?”

Shares were being sold as quickly as the price was dropping. Those responsible for the placement of the new chief executive were free to buy the cheaper shares and claim a majority controlling interest over the corporation. The anonymous investment group was overly satisfied with its decision.

4.2. Julie is Innocence Personified

Confused by a second visit by the demon-headed woman, Sophique had to reconsider Julie’s involvement. At first Sophique was almost certain that it was her old friend that she no longer wanted to see. It made a lot of sense to her because Julie was the type of person who might try to lead a double life through the use of a costume and mask.

Julie was on the phone with her when the demon-headed woman visited the second time, but there was still some room for doubt. Julie had gone to the door to talk to someone, but how could she then appear at Sophique’s house during such a short amount of time? It wasn’t probable, but also not impossible.

The phone suddenly rang and Sophique answered it, “Hello?”

Julie said, “I wanted to call to tell you about something. I know you’re wondering why I’d call you and annoy you at a time like this, but it’s important that I tell you about one thing in particular and then I’ll hang up and let you ...”

There was a knock at the front door. Sophique tried to interrupt Julie, “There’s someone at the ...”

However, Julie was talking non-stop, “Several years ago there was this time when we were both involved with the situation. That’s what I was going to tell

you about, it's about that time I was there and you were also there, so it's relevant ..."

Sophie answered the door while holding the phone to her ear. It was the demon-headed woman at her front door. She tried to tell Julie to hold, "I have someone here at the door ..."

Julie wasn't willing to wait, she kept talking as though she didn't hear her friend, "We were about to go out one evening and you couldn't find those green earrings that you liked. Well, I stole them from you. I've always wanted to let you know what happened to them. Okay. That's all from me. Sorry if you missed them. Talk to you another time. Bye." Then she hung up.

Sophie put down the phone and asked the demon-headed woman, "Why are you here?"

Julie lowered her voice and explained, "I've been interrogating your neighbors, but I haven't turned up any solid evidence against them yet."

Sophie was surprised, "Evidence about what?"

Julie told her in her lowered tone of voice, "Proof of their efforts against you."

"What do you mean?" Sophie was confused, "I wasn't aware of anything they were doing."

"Right, that's part of their scam is to keep you ignorant of their wrong-doings." Julie tried to explain the criminal mind in brief, "They distract your attention with one hand while they pick your pocket with the other."

"Really?" Sophie couldn't believe it, "But what is it that they are doing to me?" She knew no one had picked her pocket.

Julie wanted to explain how the neighbors or someone else had poisoned Sophie against her. However, if she said that, it would reveal her true identity, the one she so desperately needed to hide from others. Instead, she terminated the visit, "I have to go protect others from the criminals." She then ran into the night.

Sophie watched for a moment, half in disbelief. Then she closed the door and went upstairs to bed. Now she had even more reason to separate Julie and the vigilante, but she wasn't entirely convinced as though she had forgotten something important about it.

4.3. Lucifer

Jarvis knew that what all of the books said about the human condition was a lie. It was a crazy lie used to suppress people from remembering who they really are. Jarvis believed all people are really fallen angels forced to play the roles of human men, women, and children. By introducing mortality, the immortal fallen angels can return again and again as new human people without conscious connection to the past life-times.

The key to it all, Jarvis' research had confirmed, was in the *conscious* memory compared with the subconscious. He viewed the conscious mind as separate and distinct from the subconscious mind. In fact, he believed the subconscious mind itself to be the fallen angel while the conscious mind was the mere temporary ego of the mortal human identity.

The ego has long been known to be a stumbling block on the path of religious mysticism. It is selfish and full of desire. The ego must be trained and brought into alignment with the subconscious mind if the true self is to be channeled through the willing human vessel.

The time was running low. He had to act accordingly to ready himself. In mere months or years, he wasn't sure yet how soon, the promised return would occur. For thousands of years the correct leader of all fallen angels, Lucifer, has been traveling toward the planet Earth from another solar system near the center of the Milky Way galaxy. The Earth and its solar system are toward the outer edge of one arm of the galaxy.

When Lucifer returns, Jarvis hoped, all would be righted in the world. The drastic disparity between spirituality and materialism would be ignited by a supernatural war. Only those few with psychic powers will even be aware of the early battles. However, it will eventually spill out into the physical universe when entire cities are thoroughly imploded by advanced black magic technology.

Jarvis wanted to be one of the psychic few who would be aware of the battles when they began. He wanted to see Lucifer return in all his/her glory. It was a desire, he knew, to see these things, but he justified it by its compatibility with his plan to attain enlightenment. Seeing Lucifer would be an added bonus that provided additional incentive for his committed effort.

The conscious mind was a hearty and tireless foe at times, but Jarvis could strike his ego with his ego as easily as anyone else could. It would submit, sooner or later, to the fullness of the subconscious mind lying beneath the shallow surface of consciousness. The real potential was always present, but few had previously dared to contact it on a full-time basis.

Everyone has had limited contact with the subconscious mind. The most obvious example is a dream that communicates an abstract idea using metaphors. The subconscious mind, being far wiser than the conscious ego, is a better problem solver and creative source than the mere ego of the mortal man or woman.

Students at an intermediate level use divination tools to consult the subconscious mind. Some examples include the I Ching, the Ouija board, a swinging pendulum, biofeedback, Tarot cards, and automatic writing. However, all of these methods are easy to misuse until the channeling skill is improved greatly through long-term practice.

4.4. The Palace of the Damned

Julie eventually apologized for running off while she was at the mall with Sophique. Reluctantly, Sophique agreed to have a second lunch with Julie at a nearby restaurant. For Julie it was very exciting. It was the most exciting week of her life that she could easily remember.

Julie asked, "Will you talk to these two guys at my house?" She added, "They would really appreciate an independent opinion on the matter."

Sophique didn't want to talk to Julie's friends, but she feigned interest, "What was the problem, again?"

"Well, I better let them tell you." She pretended to be fair and reasonable when in fact she was hiding the truth of the situation, "I don't want them to accuse

me of changing your mind before they even have the opportunity to talk with you.”

Sophique wasn’t convinced, “I’m not sure that I’m the right person to help you with this.”

“It’ll be okay.” Julie added a little sweetener to the request, “I don’t trust *anyone* as much as I trust you.”

Hesitance to participate led Sophique to offer another excuse, “I don’t think I have enough time today. I have to run some errands and won’t be back until late.”

“It won’t take too long.” She explained how the events would unfold, “They’ll tell you what they need to tell you. We’ll give you a few minutes to think about it, and then you can give them what you believe to be the fair resolution.”

Sophique asked regarding the formality of the procedure, “Won’t you need an opportunity to make your case?”

Julie stretched out her hands as though to demonstrate something, “My position on the matter will be immediately clear. I don’t want to say more about it right now because that will bias your opinion in my favor.”

Sophique was shaking her head and trying to find a reason why she couldn’t help, but she said, “I’ll do it, but I hope you’re not going to surprise me with a strange predicament.”

Julie laughed nervously as she knew that the situation could be no stranger, “Don’t worry about it too much.” What she meant was: don’t worry about it before necessary.

The two of them made their way to Julie’s house. Sophique had never been over to Julie’s house prior to this first and only visit. What she would discover there would alter her opinion of ever returning again. Julie, meanwhile, was delighted to have her friend over as a guest even if the circumstances were weird and disturbing.

4.5. The Order for Restraint

Sophie went running from Julie's house. She wasn't expecting what she had finally seen. Two young men, tied and bound in Julie's basement. She didn't even wait to hear them. It was already bad enough, and Sophie knew that even Julie should be able to recognize that fact.

Julie was hastily following, trying to calm her friend, "It's not what you think. Come back inside so we can talk about it."

Sophie wasn't interested in explanations. It was all too outrageous for her. She knew it wasn't where she wanted to be. It was terrible from her viewpoint. She said, "No."

"It isn't what you might think." Julie laughed as though it were a funny misunderstanding, "It's nothing kinky or weird."

"Yes, it is." Sophie didn't know why they were down there, but it appeared to her that Julie was running some form of dominatrix service out of her basement. While the idea of it could be interesting from a detached perspective, she certainly didn't want to directly participate.

Julie reiterated the reason for the visit, "They want to hear a second opinion on an important matter."

"I don't know the going price for sadistic discipline." She kept walking, "Leave me alone."

"It's nothing like that," Julie insisted, "I promise."

"Well," Sophie stopped walking and turned around to demand from Julie, "what the Hell is it?"

Julie started her usual excuse, "They should be the ones ..."

Sophie threatened, "Tell me or else I'm leaving immediately."

“Okay, okay,” Julie knew she had to be honest if she could expect any help. She told her in a near whisper, “I kidnapped them by mistake last week. Now I don’t know how to handle the situation.”

“What?” Sophique didn’t believe it, “How can you kidnap someone by mistake?”

Julie looked down and finally admitted, “I’ve been acting out as a vigilante in the neighborhood. I caught them in a crime.”

Somehow Sophique wasn’t really surprised. The silly attempts to mislead her had only put more attention on the possibility that Julie was the demon-headed vigilante. Sophique was quite insistent, “Let them go and be done with it.”

Julie was shaking her head in defiance, “But then there will be the inevitable police involvement.”

“The longer you detain them illegally,” Sophique reasoned, “the more trouble you’ll be sure to have on your hands.”

Julie looked down at the ground, “I know.”

Sophique realized that the two men trapped in Julie’s basement wouldn’t be freed unless she took direct action. She ordered Julie, “Take me to them, and we’ll straighten all of this out right now.”

The two women returned to Julie’s house and went down to the damp basement. Julie removed the gag from the upright young man’s mouth. The other one had fallen over days earlier. He’d become less animated in recent days, but Julie assumed he was merely sleeping more.

The upright young man begged them both, “Please let me go! I promise I won’t tell anyone if you don’t kill me!”

Sophique was again frightened by the whole situation. She complained, “I don’t think I should be involved with this.”

Julie tried to laugh it off as a insignificant mistake, “Don’t think of yourself as being detained as much as you’re enjoying a free and exciting vacation away from all of the stress of your ordinary life.”

“I learned my lesson already, I promise.” He pleaded with her, “Please let me go. I won’t do anything ever again!”

Julie ungagged the other young man who had fallen to the floor. She asked him, “What about you?”

The fallen young man remained silent and still. The upright young man told her, “I tried to warn you days ago that he needed some medical treatment for his arm. Now he’s probably dead.”

Julie checked his pulse and said, “He’s not dead, but he needs help.”

Sophique offered, “Should I call for an ambulance?”

“No,” Julie was trying to think fast, “we’ll carry him out to the side of his house and we’ll go tell his family that we saw him fall from the roof and then they’ll take him to the hospital for his injury.”

Sophique questioned the plan, “How does that explain his disappearance for a week?”

Julie came up with another lie, “These two went on an unplanned vacation, right? It was an impulsive decision to hit the open road.”

Continuing to protest the plan, Sophique asked, “Why would he climb up on the roof after being away for a week on an unscheduled trip?”

The uninjured young man wanted to be freed from his terrible ordeal. He suggested, “I’ll tell them that we went on a road trip out of town to buy some pills. Some of those synthetic demon flava’ pills you hear about on the news all of the time. We didn’t know what we were doing and so he climbed up on the roof and thought he might be able to fly or something.”

Julie smiled, “That sounds good. After all, it’s not like either of you have a prescription for them, right? You no-good hooligans.”

Sophie argued against it, “What if the other one wakes up and says otherwise?”

Julie indicated the upright young man, “You should go with him to the hospital. Then when he wakes up, you can explain away anything he says about me or being here in this house as delirium from the accident and the pills.”

“Anything you say,” he readily agreed with her, “if you’ll please let me go.”

Sophie knew they would foul it up somehow. She asked, “What if they drug test you for those pills?”

The young man smiled with embarrassment. He turned away and admitted, “He and I will both test positive for the d-f-p’s.”

Against her better judgement, Sophie helped the other two carry the injured former captive to the side of the neighbor’s house. Julie sent the uninjured young man to the front door to inform the family about the alleged accident. Julie and Sophie waited nearby so they could corroborate the story about the fall from the roof.

4.6. Competitive Cooperation

During another of her many frequent late-night visits to Sophie’s neighborhood, Julie found Jarvis, the neighbor, outside doing little if anything. When she approached Sophie’s, though, he always approached and engaged her in conversation. This made Julie uncomfortable because she was dressed for fighting crime, not discussing philosophy.

“But what of the contrast between competition and cooperation?” Jarvis remarked, “I would go crazy if I had to choose between these two and stick with it all of the time. The extremes aren’t practical, I would suspect.”

Julie related from her experiences, “Competition can bring out the best in all of us. It allows each of us to take a turn at being the best at something. In communism, we’d all be the same all of the time without exception.”

“That might be an over-simplification,” Jarvis suggested, “but I agree that communism is an impractical extreme.”

“Well,” Julie considered the other side, “cooperation is certainly necessary to maintain society. We have to agree when to refrain from behavior that would infringe on the rights of others. That is why criminals make me so mad. They wish to overthrow order in favor of chaos.”

“Look at it from the criminal’s perspective.” Jarvis said, “Competition is at play with the gullibility or frailty of the victim being a deciding factor in the winning of something unfairly.”

“But they’re cheating!” She was quite adamant on the issue, “When I say competition is good, I mean except when cheating is allowed. During my para-militant training, cheaters were publicly humiliated as the lowest of the low!”

Jarvis was trying to give her the other point of view, “The criminal doesn’t agree that any cheating is occurring because the rules or laws you follow aren’t his or hers to maintain.”

“If they live in my region, county, or nation,” she insisted, “then they better follow the laws of the land.”

“That’s how you feel it should be,” Jarvis informed her, “but not necessarily how it really is for them. If their only law is live and let die, then that’s their only law.”

Julie raised her voice in anger, “People who follow standards as low as those should move out into the wilderness and stay away from the law-abiding citizens who want to build a civilization instead of tear it down.”

“For those wilderness people,” Jarvis warned, “cooperation will be the only way to survive. If they cheat their friends and allies, then they will find themselves alone and vulnerable.”

Julie told him, “I agree that teamwork can produce conditions conducive to winning.”

He shared the same opinion, “And that’s all there is to it. Competition moderated by an acceptable amount of cooperation results in the ideal environment for all.”

4.7. The Foreshadow

The glances Julie was receiving were warm at first, as though she needed some attention, but soon the heat became unbearable. Their looks were fiery-hot laser beams and they penetrated her to the frozen inner core. Where could she hide? Where could she run?

The efficient use of available resources goes the other way, too, Julie realized. By wearing such an outrageous costume to fight crime, she was doing herself a sizable disservice. She couldn't run down a crowded street, for example, without being the center of attention. Even when she was chasing a criminal, she would always be the one everyone followed with their eyes as though she were the one with a guilty conscience.

She didn't have a guilty conscience, though. Julie knew how to play the game within the bounds of acceptable behavior. While her costume might suggest otherwise, she knew how to avoid damaging public property during an apprehension. She was also well trained in attacking enemy combatants without hitting innocent civilians in the cross-fire.

Being a hero, unfortunately, didn't pay the bills. She was tempted from time to time to take money from the hooligans she stopped, but it wasn't consistent with her goals. She was there to protect the innocent from the troublesome antics of the typical ne'er-do-wells in any neighborhood. Money was not a part of it, so it meant looking elsewhere for financing.

She took the time to acquire some governmental forms necessary to request a grant to continue her work. However, where the form asked her profession, she was torn between writing airline attendant or vigilante. The latter fit the nature of the request, but the former was her *official* profession. Divided between reality and illusion, Julie put the forms into a desk drawer and never returned to them.

After escaping the unwanted attention of the crowds, she arrived at the office building about which she had often dreamt. As soon as she arrived, there was already a disagreement. Three armed security enforcers were standing in front of the door. It was as though they were waiting for her. Had someone phoned ahead? And, if so, was it she who had done it?

As Julie approached, the middle guard stepped forward and announced, "You're not allowed here. Go home."

She told them as though it rationalized her presence, "I'm interested in the work being done here."

"We understand." The guard told said, "As we've told you previously, go home."

She wondered to herself, "Did he mean previously as in a moment ago or have I been here before?" She wasn't sure where she was or why she had gone there. It was as though she were operating on automatic again. Julie then realized she was still wearing her vigilante costume. It clearly was the wrong uniform for the goal of entering the strangely familiar building.

The guard told her again, "You're not supposed to be here yet. Go home."

She walked away. After all, if she wasn't sure about her own motives, how could she act in full sense of righteousness? No, she was the one in error. She understood all too well. The conspiracy had tricked her once again. They led her down the false trail only to abandon her in the depths of the puzzle.

Julie turned back to the guards before she was too distant and shouted, "Tell your unholy masters that their judgement day is soon at hand!" She didn't even know why she said it. The words came out as though they were completely insightful and witty, but the meaning was lost on her.

She walked away, her head hung low, down on herself for allowing the impulsive behavior to command her into an odd situation. Julie realized that it had always been that way. She had signed up for the MERCILESS mental training program years earlier based on a snap decision. The expense was tremendous, but she knew that something had to be done to get out of her rut.

The MERCILESS mental training program turned her from an ordinary individual into an extraordinary individual. There was nothing much more to it than that for her. She knew how her training had made the difference. She was no longer nervous at work. Her confidence was greatly improved. It came down to the certainty that she had the power to kill but didn't have to exercise that power. A real hero, she knew, could spare people their lives.

5.1. Return from the Depths

The shares of the MERCILESS Mental Training Corporation had already hit their lowest point. It was time for the investors to reap some of the reward. They requested a private meeting of the new chief executive with their own appointed representative. The trend had to be reversed.

The chief executive started the meeting by saying, “If you’re pissed off about the share prices, all I can say is you have to expect a little rain before it pours.” He said it with a straight face.

The special representative was shocked by the wild admission, “But that would mean you’re expecting the shares to drop even further! And that’s exactly what I’m here to discuss with you.”

“What do you want from me?” He was exhausted from late night conferences and physically hitting his executives to penalize them for not meeting their quotas, “I’ve only been on the job for two months. I had to replace a lot of bad executives with new ones from outside the corporation. It all takes time.”

“We understand your limitations, but you need to do something to improve the current trend.” He tried to vocalize the severity, “We’re not looking for the shares to multiply, not yet at least, but they *can’t* go down. Understand?”

“No,” the new chief executive complained, “because I can’t do anything about it. I have no direct control over what happens here.”

The special representative demanded, “What’s stopping you from getting things done?”

“I understand kill or be killed, it was our motto, but how does that apply to the real world? I’m not allowed to actually kill anyone. Right?” He waited a moment as though expecting confirmation, but then continued his plea, “I yell at them and push them and spit on them, but they don’t obey me. Usually they just quit. The quotas aren’t being met, and all they give me are excuses.”

The special representative of the investment group nodded, “I understand your problem. You have to stop pushing people. You have to stop spitting on

them and yelling at them, as well. That's not how your skills are correctly applied to corporate management."

"I know how it's not working!" The chief executive was discouraged, "Tell me how to do it right."

"Instead of attacking people when there's a conflict of interests," the special representative suggested, "explain to them in the nicest way possible what the end result is to be regardless of the details necessary to make it happen. Don't micro-manage them by telling them step by step what to do. People don't like that unless they're brand new. Even then, they should know how to learn their job without your help."

"I tell them what I need to have happen and they make it happen?" The new chief executive laughed, "Like a djinni from a bottle?"

"Exactly like that." The representative revealed the secret of labor, "Here's the truth of the situation, your employees provide the energy necessary to drive this corporation. Without them, you would be out of business. They provide the fuel needed to get to where you're going. They are the real source of the magic, so to speak, and all you need to do is guide that magic with the subtlety of a djinni's master."

"If you wanted subtlety, why did you hire me?" The chief executive added to emphasize the inappropriateness, "I specialized in the MERCILESS' medium to long range speed killing with a railgun."

The representative replied, "We knew you had the determination to take on this management challenge."

"Well," he reminded the representative, "two months isn't long enough. I need more time to really make an honest effort."

The representative asked, "Will two more months be sufficient?"

The chief executive was trying to be realistic, "What if we considered nine more months? That would give me enough time."

The special representative for the investment group offered, "Three months?"

“Okay,” the new chief executive immediately conceded the defeat, “three months will have to do.”

5.2. October Thirteenth

Julie couldn’t miss any more days of work that month. She worked as a flight attendant, so her vacation time was always pending approval. Instead, she had to take personal days by which she wouldn’t be paid. The number of personal days was restricted only to a few, however, and she was already at the specified limit.

She smiled and asked the passenger, “What can I get for you?”

The passenger asked, “How much for a can of beer?”

“That will be six dollars.” She added, “An individual-sized bottle of wine is four.”

The passenger was alarmed, “That’s too much.”

She said without thinking, having said it so many times previously, “You pay more for the altitude at which it’s served.” She giggled.

“Yeah,” the passenger nodded, “I suppose. I’ll have one of each.”

It was an uneventful October thirteenth when a message was received by the pilot from the federal agency in charge of aviation matters. Two passenger flights had been redirected toward Washington, D.C. with the assumed plan to crash somewhere there. The flights currently in the air would have to land as soon as they possibly could.

Flights within half an hour of their planned destinations weren’t affected, but the others were to be redirected to the nearest airport per their current location. Julie’s flight would have to be redirected because it would otherwise head toward the current site of contention. It was Julie’s unpleasant task to comfort the passenger’s after the pilot made the dreaded announcement.

“This is your pilot speaking, this your pilot, I am your pilot speaking, we have to direct your path, maneuver you around, reposition you, and take you to

where you didn't plan to go. I have no regrets. It will all be fine in the end. You'll all understand why when the ..."

Julie was ready to answer questions and reassure people, but she believed something to be awry. The captain's voice was different than she expected. It wasn't the captain with whom she'd boarded before the flight. Was there a last minute change in personnel without her knowledge? It all seemed possible, but then the evidence began to mount.

The captain was still talking, "Sometimes we don't know what to value and what to discard. We have to choose based on the results of our efforts and then we can judge the others for their results. You see? If you lead an honest life, you can recognize the liars and hypocrites even if you've never met them. They reveal themselves by their fantastic crimes against humanity."

Julie was worried. Was it possible that the wrong pilot had taken control of the aircraft? She had noticed that they still hadn't actually changed their heading as directed by the federal agency for matters of an aviation nature. The conspiracy that fought her so often was now manifesting itself at her workplace. She couldn't respond with her vigilante alter ego, however, because her costume was at home in the hall closet.

She headed for the cockpit. She needed something to use against the fake captain. Julie picked up a heavy tray and considered hitting him with it. Then she picked up a knife and considered cutting his neck with it. Then she remembered that there was something even better in her personal bag.

Julie retrieved her hunting slingshot and one unit of deadly ammo. She rushed into the cockpit, pulled back her arm, and let the shot fly. The ball of metal alloy crashed into the pilot's skull and penetrated deep into his brain, killing him instantly.

The co-pilot was dumbfounded by the whole incident. He exclaimed, "What the ... what ... are you doing?"

Another flight attendant was standing behind Julie and saw the dead pilot slouched against the flight controls. She screamed in panic. This led some of the passengers to begin screaming as well. Julie was allowing a bad situation to worsen.

She threatened the co-pilot, "Take us down at the nearest airport or I'll kill you, too. Don't take us to Washington, D.C. or anywhere like that."

The co-pilot told her with a neutral voice and expression, "We're on a pre-programmed flight plan."

Julie ordered him, "Override it."

"I know how to override it, but," he explained in discouragement, "I'm not *that* good of a pilot."

Julie reminded him sternly, "The federal agency ordered us to take this aircraft to the nearest airport!"

The co-pilot laughed maniacally, "Up here there are no laws or agencies. It's animal against animal, tooth against claw. If you want to pilot this, I'll get out of your way and let you to it."

That was how the conspiracy was always pitting her against others. They made the situation bad only so she couldn't resolve the conflict without actively fighting them. Their efforts were routinely the same. She was to fight them openly and with violence. It was what they wanted from her. It was what fueled their interest in her life. They wanted to see how much she would fight them in all their glory.

The conspiracy against her was everywhere she went. It knew her from everything she did or said. It was all monitored, she suspected, so that an accurate analysis of her psyche would be possible. They wouldn't leave anything up to chance. They were too meticulous in their quality of work for that. They had all the resources they needed while she struggled against them using her current wage.

The co-pilot warned her, "If you give me the slingshot, I'll tell the authorities that it was an accident. Wouldn't that be better than going to prison for murder?"

Julie knew that the conspiracy would never let her out easily. She would always be fighting them no matter where she went or what arrangement she attempted to make with them. She told the co-pilot, "I'm going to shoot a hole through your leg. Maybe then you'll land this aircraft."

“You can shoot me all you want, but I can’t do anything about our course. It’s predestination, you get it? I can’t change it now. It’s all part of the big plan.”

Julie told him, “You can take us down.”

The co-pilot smiled, “The only way you’ll take us down now is to cut the engines and let us fall.”

Julie considered the escape method. She had a parachute, but the passengers would be doomed. She would foil the hijacker’s plan, but, on the other hand, she would be labeled the cause of the whole disaster, the real hijackers dying in the crash with all of the unfortunate passengers.

She said to herself more than to anyone, “A real hero tries to kill as *few* people as possible.”

After killing the co-pilot, Julie called the control tower and had them talk her through the necessary steps to override the pre-programmed flight path. She landed it as carefully as she could, breaking the landing gear off completely and coming to a stop in an inflatable barricade set up by the airport fire fighting crew. All of the passengers were saved, both hijackers were dead, and Julie successfully disappeared before the police could question her.

She was disappointed with herself having to kill the hijackers, but she was from the MERCILESS mental training program and there’s no such thing as wounding the enemy. In MERCILESS, everyone shoots to kill because it’s all about the number of total kills, frags, that counts toward promotion. Kill or be killed, that was their motto. Julie had proven herself as one of the better competitors in the training program, but she was far from the best.

Talking to herself aloud as she walked home from the airport, Julie insisted, “No more killing ... unless the people of the world will suffer if I don’t act.” It was always a two-way fight with the conspiracy against her. They sought to bring her out to fight them. They wanted her to fight because she was one of the better competitors. They wanted to test her, perhaps, or unlock some of her additional mental training from MERCILESS.

There was the concern for civilians because they were viewed as assets. Why destroy one of your own assets? It’s madness by the very definition to damage or destroy your own resources. It’d be far better to steal or destroy the assets of

the enemy than one's own. Next in MERCILESS logic: it's better to steal than to destroy.

Julie had to wake up from her zombie awareness. She wasn't in MERCILESS anymore. She couldn't go around killing people indiscriminately. That was what she was against as a guardian of the public. The killing would be avoided, but the mission to protect the neighborhood would continue.

Later that evening, Julie discovered that the two other passenger aircraft did reach Washington, D.C. and struck the congress building. Nearly all of the congressmen and congresswomen from one particular political party were in the building at the time for a special meeting. The two political parties had recently disagreed on a heavily contested piece of legislation that infuriated both sides equally

It was so much of a touchy subject, in fact, that the news media had great difficulty reporting it. If the news report was biased in any way, the local news stations and national news services would be flooded with angry e-mails, faxes, and phone calls. This led to reducing the report to the barest details as possible, a Herculean feat for modern news reporting that is entrenched in a politicized propaganda battle. The news reporters no longer had to worry, though, because the issue was now permanently settled.

5.3. Judas Iscariot Died by the Sword

Julie still visited Sophique's neighborhood occasionally as part of her regular patrol route. She didn't know quite what was occurring there, but something wasn't quite right. She had the off feeling as though she were being watched.

Upon leaving Sophique's back yard, Julie, wearing her vigilante costume and demon-headed mask, encountered the ever-present Jarvis. She asked him, "What are you doing out here at this time of night?"

He smiled and indicated where he was standing, "I live right here."

"Oh," she nodded, "that's fine, then." He was still a suspect in Julie's mind, but she didn't need to let him know that. Instead, she would lull him into a false sense of security until he slipped up and revealed the nature of his crimes in that neighborhood.

He felt nervous and seemingly guilty talking to the real life image of the video recordings he'd obsessively viewed many times over. Jarvis told her as though trying to strike up an interesting conversation, "Jesus warned that those who live by the sword will die by the sword."

"It's a good thing, then," she told him in response, "that I don't use a sword." She laughed a little, but not too much.

Jarvis expanded on the saying, "It means karma. It's another way of expressing the overt-motivator sequence. The one with the sword uses it to harm someone. In order to explain his behavior, he must then pull in an appropriate effect, such as being hit with someone else's sword. That's how he makes it justifiable."

She didn't care for the idea of it. Was she going to pull in harmful situations to herself because of the harm she'd inflicted on the criminals? That made no sense. Their criminality, she reasoned, left them open to pulling in the harm she inflicted. She wouldn't be able to hurt them in the first place unless they pulled it in. She was merely a convenient means. Julie told him, "All criminals secretly want to get caught."

He smiled, "That's a good example, too, except I would suggest that all criminals secretly want to be the victims of a crime of comparable magnitude."

Julie considered the result, "Then how does the prison system effectively rehabilitate them?"

Jarvis reasoned, "It temporarily stops them from committing more crimes except those committed against other inmates."

She asked, "But how does being incarcerated affect their need to be victimized?"

Jarvis shrugged, "Perhaps they could view their time in prison as a victimizing process in which the governmental authority uses physical coercion to detain them against their will."

"I'm sure many do." Then she asked the all-important question, "What if a vigilante such as myself were to beat up a criminal in the act?"

Jarvis asked her, “Do you mean in regard to their pulling in the punishment from you?”

“But why am I the one inflicting it?” She was trying to figure out her karmic role in the equation, “Won’t I pull in being beaten up by someone else according to you?”

He asked with compassion, “Do you feel guilty for what you’ve done?”

Julie admitted, “Only when the criminal’s intents were unclear.”

“Well,” Jarvis offered, “you can invest time and effort to undo the imbalance.”

She asked him with interest, “How do I do that?”

“There are many ways that contribute to the process.” He suggested a few options, “You can donate money or time to a charitable organization. You can save someone in need. You can make the world a better place in general.”

“I’m trying,” Julie remarked, “I’m trying.”

5.4. Lounge of the Elite

Sometimes Julie would pass the time remembering events from her MERCILESS mental training. The memories were broken pieces of events, really, because the work schedule was full day, from waking to sleeping. There was no such thing as “now and then” because everything was in the “now” only. She had to keep up with the full day schedule because the best students did so and she couldn’t allow her total number of kills to fall against their ambitious efforts.

She was delighted throughout the entire program as her name gradually climbed up the list of students in order of kills. When she finally reached the top ten percent, she recalled, they provided her access to the elite student lounge. While she had been living under the most basic conditions as an average student, the elite students had their lounge where everything had to be greatly above average.

Julie recalled the lounge in vivid detail. There were only the finest antique furniture with delicate cushions and hand carved features. The walls were covered with thick tapestries with heavy cord frills. The carpet was thick as fur. She could sit in there between sessions and have a snack or meal produced by a gourmet chef. The food there was far better than the bland sandwiches and fruit they were normally given for lunch and dinner.

In the MERCILESS mental training system, the top ten percent deserved the lion's share of the accommodations and resources because they were the best. This was an incentive to many to try even harder, but the reality of it didn't hit Julie until the first time they allowed her to access to the elite student lounge. Then she saw how the grass really was greener on the other side of the fence.

The rumor was that the top one percent were given additional privileges and rewards, but Julie didn't personally know any of those students to verify it. She was happy with merely being in the top ten percent. Beyond that it was more about waiting for one of the top students to drop because her total kills was too low to pass up theirs otherwise. At the rate everyone was going all of the time, she couldn't even break into the top five percent. The competition was simply too tight.

She pondered in the present if at the time of her training that her ambition might have been lacking. Julie believed that she had changed since then. Some of the training program didn't really sink in until later, she insisted. Were she to start again as a new student, she could leap into the top five percent from the beginning and maintain it from thereon.

Starting again was pointless, however, as she had already done the training portion of the program. It was already embedded into her psyche already. Having another go at it wouldn't improve anything. She would be trying, in effect, to live out her victories of the past but in the future. Julie knew, however, that would only be going backwards.

5.5. The Batteries are Alive

Sophique was holding her forefinger very close to her thumb, "What if there were tiny, microscopic nanobots which could work together to build anything using the resources available?"

“By nanobots,” Julie inquired, “do you mean microscopic robots?”

“That’s correct,” Sophique agreed.

Julie laughed, “Then they could build a lot, I guess.”

Sophique’s eyes widened, “Humans *are* nanobots compared to the true masters. The humans are assigned construction tasks and use the resources available to build them. Some humans serve a support role to ensure the safety and maintenance of existing units as well as the production of new human workers and their maintenance.”

Julie stated with apathy, “I’m a flight attendant.”

“You’re serving the collective in a service role.” Sophique elaborated, “You’re helping the human nanobots that need to go from one location to another place far away. All of us are part of the big picture.”

Julie was looking for holes in her friend’s theory, “We’re far bigger than nanobots.”

“Yes,” Julie conceded, “nanobots are tiny to us, but to our true masters, we are as small as nanobots. It is all a matter of perspective.”

Julie wanted to understand, “How far does this perspective reach?”

Sophique explained, “At the human level, we might debate the finer points of philosophy, ethics, or politics in order to choose a particular course of action for the collective. However, if you were to zoom your view out from human civilization until all you see is the most grandiose of the collective efforts, you will find that the fine points of debate are as nothing. The great architects behind the scene don’t worry themselves with the specifics as long as the long-term and grandiose effects are realized on schedule.”

Julie suddenly asked in a brief moment of heightened awareness, “Who are these masters for whom everyone else is building?”

Sophique’s jaw dropped unexpectedly, then she shut her mouth and resumed normalcy. She finally said, “The hidden trillionaires? They are not for two as lowly as us to even consider. Be quiet now.”

Julie looked around the room as though searching for an explanation. Then she turned to her friend, “This is still a free country, ain’t it? Why can’t I talk to you about the great architects who design the plans for the builders?”

Sophique shook her head, “That’s preposterous.”

“Well, if you don’t want to discuss it with me,” Julie requested, “who can I ask?”

She shrugged, “Alex Jones? Jim Marrs? William Cooper? Gary Allen? William Guy Carr? Michael Hoffman?” Those were names she knew that were associated with books and other media discussing what others dared never mention.

Julie wasn’t familiar with the names given and said as much, “I don’t know any of them.”

Sophique suggested, “They probably have books or videos on these subjects and more.”

Julie wasn’t moved to investigate further because she wasn’t comfortable surfing the internet. Had she merely gone to an online bookstore such as Amazon, she could have found what she needed. She didn’t have time to read, however, as there were too many criminals to apprehend. It was up to her to make the difference. That was her true “nanobot” service role.

(People aren’t actually batteries. A battery is a metaphor. The actual representation is labor itself. People provide a labor, a service. The best examples of labor ability are sure to be taken aboard spacecraft and exported to other planets as an extremely valuable commodity. The untrustworthy criminals will also be taken aboard spacecraft to be exported, but their value will be measured by the taste of the meat.)

6.1. Sex at the Root of the Mind

Sophique was sitting at her dining table. She watched the television set that she set up to face her from the far side of the table. Although she often watched different educational programs at other times, Sophique only had one choice while she ate her dinner. For several years she had followed the same habit of eating her dinner while watching other people have sex on the screen.

It couldn't be ordinary television shows that often suggested sexual activity without showing anything graphic. It couldn't be acting. She had to see real people have actual sex. Then she could eat her dinner with a deep sense of peace and security.

She had researched it only as a side thought. Her years of study into the field of psychology had offered her a few clues as to the cause of her obsession. It was harmless, she determined, so it never came up during any of her many units of psychoanalysis. It remained for her merely as a strange but private obsessive-compulsive habit.

When she ate dinner at a restaurant, it made her extremely uncomfortable. It was something she tended to avoid. Lunch she could handle, but dinner required the hard-core but real sexual performance to enhance her meal and comfort her.

Sophie had attempted to cheat the problem, but it had been a poor substitute each time. She had tried, for example, imagining people having sex or looking at pictures of the same, but it wasn't right. She wanted and needed to hear the sounds that the people make when they are deep in the zone of the sexual moment. The volume always had to be turned up loud enough so she could feel as though she were in the room with the people while they engaged in the sex act. She had to feel their sound vibrations of intense pleasure reverberating through her own body.

It was entirely natural, she figured, so why worry about it? It wasn't as though she were some form of sex fiend. It was an odd eccentricity and nothing more. Better that she enjoyed watching sex on television while she ate dinner than to require herself to be the one having sex while she ate. That would have been less practical for her.

Sex was at the root of animal survival. Humans eyed each other for their genetic features and consider if they would be a good reproductive partner. The marketing method in which it is acknowledged that "sex sells" attempts to go directly to the animal instincts. Those who are unappealing must seek products or services to make themselves more appealing and more worthy as a DNA collaborator even though the alterations are an illusion and not a real representative of the DNA available.

The whole premise of requiring two humans for reproduction ensured biological diversity to adapt to changing conditions. The more other people seemed to deny evolution, the more Sophique wondered if it was happening quicker than the scientists had previously claimed. Would all of the newest toxins, radio waves, mutagens, bovine hormones, and artificial sweeteners help to build the next breed of giants or something completely alien to behold?

Her eyes returned to the televised pornography again. The emotions or mental rationalizing of the sex performers weren't important to Sophique. She looked past all of the subjective window dressing and, instead, saw the raw animal need to exchange reproductive fluids. The greatest biological sin, however, would be the improper exchange of these fluids as reproduction isn't possible unless the appropriate fluids reach the designated anatomy.

Sophique looked down at her plate and realized that it was already empty. The television had held her in a trance so well that she never even tasted the meal. She put down her fork and turned off the television set. It was done. She had gotten all she needed.

It was time for the final step in her dinner ritual. Sophique took out an old pocket-watch suspended on a delicate, metal chain. She spun the watch so it twirled before her eyes. She commanded herself, "Absorb the energy of their delight!"

After cleaning up dinner, she remembered that she hadn't yet checked the mail for that day. She went out into the night-time air and collected her personal correspondence. On her way back from the mailbox, she encountered her neighbor standing in his front yard, ominously watching the neighborhood.

Sophique wanted to be polite and asked her neighbor, "How are you tonight?"

He answered, "I'm fine." Then asked, "How are you?"

"Good," she said, "thanks."

Jarvis then asked her out of the blue, "What do you do for a living, if you don't mind me asking?"

Sophique replied, "I have a way with people. I can get them to do things that they would otherwise be unable to do on their own."

He tried to guess the nature of her work, "Like a motivational coach?"

"Yes," she stretched the truth, "that's basically what I do." Sophique didn't want to discuss the use of hypnosis as the central feature of her work. She knew from past experience that most people were frightened by the idea of having their thinking taken over by someone else.

"Well," Jarvis smiled, "good luck with that."

"Yes," she said, "same to you as well."

He smiled again, "Thanks." Jarvis turned away as though happy with the way the conversation ended, but then quickly turned around, "Oh, yeah, I wanted to ask you one more thing."

Sophique was cautious as though a salesman was about to make his sales pitch, "Oh?"

Jarvis asked, "I just wanted to know, how is your friend doing?"

She wasn't sure who he meant, "My friend?"

"Yeah, you know, the woman who comes over sometimes." He tried to be more specific, "She is by here at all hours. Usually she wears a demon mask."

Sophique was curious, "You've seen her out here?"

He didn't want to sound as though he actively spied on his neighbors, "No, I didn't mean it like that exactly."

"Has she been bothering you?" Sophique asked, "Did she break into your house?"

"Well, she isn't bothering me," he lied as the truth of his obsession was unwholesome somehow and not to be disclosed, "and she only broke in the one time."

She apologized for Julie's behavior, "I'm sorry she did that."

Jarvis wasn't concerned or upset, "It was an honest mistake. She meant to enter your window."

Sophique remarked, "She found me."

"Sure," he laughed, "I guess she would have eventually."

6.2. The Next Management Phase

The new chief executive attempted to follow the special representative's advice. Instead of physically attacking his inefficient employees, he would tell them very nicely what end result he wanted from them. He was to be a djinni master over his djinni magic corporation.

One executive, confused by the friendly chat in place of the expected thrashing, asked, "What is it?" He was genuinely concerned.

"What do you mean?" The chief executive didn't know the reference, "What is what?"

"What's wrong?" The young executive was worried. He was certain that everything was collapsing around them, "Is the corporation closing down? Is this the end?"

"No, it's not as bad as that." He ordered with a stern but encouraging voice, "Calm yourself and complete the tasks I've requested."

"Sure, no problem," the young executive had doubts, "I'll do my best." What he meant was that he would sit at his desk for an hour and find ways to avoid doing at least half of the *chores* assigned to him.

The new chief executive asked in a more casual manner, "Take care of it for me, won't you?"

Swayed by the new management style, he accepted the challenge. The young executive exclaimed, "Yes, sir!" He was determined not to let his leader down. The work would require over-time, but he was willing to make that sacrifice to the corporation's well-being.

Others were less trusting of their chief executive's new behavior. Some believed it to be a trap or test of their loyalty. They assumed that if they didn't play the mind game according to the unknown rules, the psychopath at the helm of the corporate ship would sink them all.

The truth was that the corporate ship was already sinking and had been even before the new chief executive took the position. There was a larger and generally unaddressed problem that was leading them downhill. The original developers of the mental training facility had left to pursue more frivolous experiments. This meant that the training already sold could never be updated to meet changing demands from an always fickle buying public.

Someone in marketing attempted to suggest a new program to the chief executive, "What if there was a mental training program to develop sexual prowess instead of killing ability?"

No matter how many units they knew it would surely sell, there would be no appropriate way to communicate the training to the public. "Oh, yeah?" The chief executive laughed at the idea, "And what will their motto be? <expletive> or get <expletive>ed?" [In a perfect world, that *would* be their motto!]

6.3. The Grand Plan

"Where did you say you left it?" Sophique asked Julie again.

Julie was looking through old cardboard boxes full of newspaper clippings and angry letters in response to her overly idealistic demands. One of the boxes would surely have the missing notes. The notes were from many years earlier and indicated how to use a number-based encryption scheme. She was convinced that those missing notes would help her to discover the content of the fourth mysterious page. "It was a long time ago," Julie admitted, "so it could be anywhere."

Sophique suggested, "Maybe it isn't even in the house."

"It probably is, though," Julie emphasized, "That's why I'm looking."

Sophique was giving up on finding the proverbial needle in the haystack, "And are you sure that your fourth page will help you?"

Julie admitted, "I don't know what it will suggest, but it must be worthy of attention."

Sophique asked her old friend, "But didn't it also create the problem?"

"The conspiracy's approach is omni-directional." Julie tried to explain what that meant, "They can create and solve a particular situation using different people from opposing angles. All the while those involved will believe themselves as acting independent of the rest, but they will all be participating in the grand plan of many steps."

"Why do you think it's a *grand* plan?" Sophique was growing ever more suspicious of those working from behind the scenes, "If they cooked up the whole situation in the first place, then their solutions are illusions only."

"It's not the solutions we are awaiting." Julie stated, "It's the results that come about as a direct or indirect effect of the solutions being implemented. The so-called side effects are the real goals."

Sophique concluded, "You seem awfully trusting of these unknown puppet masters."

"It's easier to understand than you realize." Julie tried to explain it as best as she could, "By witnessing certain societal issues, solutions are sought. These solutions are the anti-thesis to the problems observed. Finally, a new compromise is sought that handles the problem while meeting other sides halfway on issues that are divisive."

Sophique was difficult to sway, "Why does that promote trust in their work?"

"It means that they know what they are doing better than we do." Julie insisted, "If we want to at least understand what will happen, we'll have to follow their own information."

Sophique's eyes widened, "What if it's disinformation to keep you from stopping them from doing something far worse than anything anyone has ever done?"

"Well," Julie explained very calmly, "a real hero tries to kill as few people as possible."

“Are they real heroes, do you think?” Sophique was skeptical of their motives, “Are they trying to limit their number of kills?”

Julie knew all about number of kills, frags, from her MERCILESS mental training program. She answered, “They don’t care about kills. They are looking to advance civilization to the next level. It’s all for the best.”

6.4. The Repentance of Sinners

Jarvis was waiting at his video monitoring station. There was always the chance that some lone vigilante might appear on his screen. Everything would be recorded and it could be reviewed repeatedly later. He even had footage of himself talking to her. It was too strange, however, to watch himself from such a detached perspective, it made him feel that he wasn’t *really* himself.

Then on the next page of his life, he was agonizing too much to even get some distance from himself. That was where the meditation helped him. He could undo himself while at the same time coming to terms with who he really was.

Jarvis believed that just as the universe formed gradually from nothing into something, that one day it would recoil back on itself, gradually making nothing of something. There was a cycle to it because even the final nothing would eventually start the next creation phase, repeating the whole process again.

The nothing involved was an obsessive personality that was always attempting to recreate the level of ideal perfection envisioned within its core. Each attempt was another variation along the same themes but with completely different specifics. Every universe had sentient beings, for example, but the forms they took or the customs they followed were always developed over time within that universe itself.

Jarvis turned off the video monitoring system and sat in the darkness for a while. Within his own mind, he was always repeating the same effort on a personal level. He wasn’t trying to create something as much as he was attempting to incarnate within different forms and personalities to *experience* for himself what each involved.

On one hand, by creating new experiences for others, he was adding to the collective arrangement. On the other hand, he was experiencing what others

offered to him. It was a two-way agreement that enabled him to be what he needed to be while allowing others to take their own turn in the mix.

In past lives, he'd been gods and devils, criminals and police, doctors and patients, husbands and wives, workers and aristocrats, judges and priests, immigrants and locals, and everyone in between. The many incarnations could teach him all of the combinations possible so that he could at last make a decision at the end of the universe. The decision would be simple: slave in Heaven or star in Hell?

As though by synchronicity, Jarvis turned on the video monitoring station as the demon-headed woman entered camera view. He jumped up from his chair and hastily made his way outside. He wanted an opportunity to speak with her. He felt that he still had a lot to say.

He approached her as she stood outside the front of the neighbor woman's house. She seemed to be waiting, so Jarvis felt that it would be okay. He asked, "How goes the fight against evil?"

"Fine," her demon head nodded, "thank you."

"I wonder, though," Jarvis considered, "if having the head of a demon might confuse some into believing you are from Satan."

Julie answered his veiled accusation, "I don't read too much into it."

Jarvis continued along the same topic, "Satan's religion was summed up by Jesus as 'steal, kill, and destroy'. Anyone following that path is on Satan's path. There are no exceptions."

This upset Julie considerably because she had to sometimes kill in order to save and defend others. She protested, "I think there's a right time to kill and a wrong time."

Jarvis smiled, "That's what Satan wants you believe. That is how Satan can convert so many while they incorrectly believe themselves to be on the path of God."

His words seemed to be directed at her although Jarvis had no idea about her past or her mental training that brainwashed her to kill or be killed. She sug-

gested, “Your rules don’t necessarily apply to every situation. For example, you mentioned destroy. Well, you have to destroy an old building so that a new one can be constructed.”

“Yes,” he explained, “but in that situation the real estate company owning the property has the rights to it and can destroy it without it being a loss. Likewise, a person can’t really steal from himself, so that’s not the issue. It has more to do with the effect on others. That’s why Jesus told people to love their neighbors as themselves.”

“Right, I know Jesus was all big on love and so forth,” she tried to find the loop-hole, “but I’m sure he would understand that a military has to defend its borders.”

Jarvis had a different interpretation to offer, “Jesus would want the conflicting nations in your example to find a diplomatic solution that avoids stealing, killing, and destroying. The various sides in the conflict must be willing to respect each other as equals and love them as the neighbors that they are.”

She knew that some extremists could never understand her peculiar situation. Being a vigilante crime fighter meant that she had to be willing and able to resist lethal force against her and turn it around and into the suspect. If the culprit that she’s attempting to apprehend tries to fight back, it was only natural for her to use coercive force to restrain the criminal.

Julie thought of an example closely resembling her role, “Certainly you would agree that a police officer must be ready to use deadly force against an armed and dangerous offender.”

“When the police arrested Jesus,” Jarvis told her, “Peter attempted to use deadly force against one of them. Jesus didn’t want that, however, and immediately healed the injured police officer.”

She needed a hypothetical situation that would clear her of any wrong-doing in the eyes of Jesus, “What if a criminal was holding a group of people hostage? To make the intentions of the criminal more clear, let’s say that he has already killed one hostage with threats of killing more. Then the police officer at the scene would have to consider taking out the offender, if the opportunity presents itself, before any of the other hostages can be harmed.”

“Instead of spending billions on lethal weapons,” Jarvis offered one possible solution, “perhaps the military-industrial complex should have invested more into the development of non-lethal but temporarily incapacitating weapons.”

Julie bowed her head in shame, “Oh.”

Jarvis told her, “Do not be discouraged, though. Jesus said he will forgive you if only you repent and sin no more.”

She didn’t understand, “Repent?”

He told her, “Admit you made a mistake and strive not to make the same mistake ever again.”

6.5. The Encrypted Messages

Julie was carefully going over her costume, examining it closely for rips or frays. She knew that the integrity of her costume stood between good taste and public nudity. The importance of the chore was significant, so her attention was intensely focused.

While going across the long black and white, left glove, she discovered a carefully folded piece of paper. It had the heading, “The Code”, and featured lists of strange symbols beside their two or three letter equivalents. She soon realized where she had previously seen the symbols on that page.

She retrieved the four rolls of paper someone had left for her, each had arrived with its own now discarded red ribbon. The symbols on the four pages matched the entries on the code list. She took a pencil and wrote the English letters above each encrypted symbol. The decryption was quick and easy.

The first page, once decoded, gave the details of an international conspiracy to manipulate the value of money everywhere until the world converts over to a cashless civilization based on a global currency. All financial transactions would be permanently recorded for future review.

The biometric data of the individual would be stored in a central database. Instead of a P.I.N. (personal identification number) to access the account, the individual would have to submit to a biometric scan that would prove the

identity. There would be no need for a microchip implant because the person's biometric data would act as the identifier that cannot be altered. A microchip can be hacked or removed.

What could Julie do about such an international conspiracy as that? A cashless society didn't impact her either way. If anything, it sounded to her that it would actually reduce crime. A global currency didn't mean anything to her. It sounded like a conspiracy she could even support if it were worded correctly as a proposition on a ballot.

The second page, after she quickly decrypted its words, revealed that there was an international conspiracy to rapidly reduce the total population of the planet by approximately eighty percent. The ever-increasing toxicity levels in the air and water were mentioned as well as mandatory vaccinations containing brain-stifling mercury and viruses. Biological warfare was described in its brutal honesty: large numbers of people would suffer and die without ever seeing or even knowing the real enemy. The plagues would indicate to many that the end times were finally at hand.

Julie was disgusted by the cowardice and lack of honor in the use of biological weapons. They are nothing more than indiscriminate defoliants with human people being the target of the defoliating. The second page struck her with its urgency, but the source of the problem wasn't easily found or within reach. And what if they did reduce the population by eighty percent? Survival of the fittest, that's what she was always taught in her MERCILESS mental training. However, a real hero, she insisted, killed as few as possible while discovering other solutions.

The real problem, then, wasn't the conspiracy itself, but the population levels. In some areas, there isn't enough food or water for the people already there. In other areas, the infrastructure is missing to maintain too many people. Then there were wars and refugees. Additionally, the planet's whole ecological balance had been disrupted by the human incursion.

She asked herself, "Perhaps they should die?" However, it went against everything she thought a hero should be. "A real hero," she reminded herself aloud, "kills as few people as possible." Julie remembered that Jarvis had recommended the use of non-lethal weapons.

The third page, upon decoding, indicated a brief history of the development of mind control technology intended for implementation in gradually larger population centers. The goals of the mind control technology varied from one developer to another.

There were *five* sources of mind control propaganda technology. Their names weren't given, but a list of their identifying qualities were provided:

1. Instead of a robot, the person believes himself or herself to be a free-thinking individual. This is the deception introduced by the propaganda. The mind control victims will find it difficult to challenge the mind control because they will insist that they aren't brainwashed, believing themselves to be more free-thinking and aware than average. Their brainwashing is used to convince victims that they are free-thinking.
2. Sex is evil. The mind control victims believe that their lustful thoughts, physical arousal, and all forms of sexual activity or imagery are wicked and sinful. Some will water down the extremism by suggesting that sex for procreation between a married couple is the one exception. Others deem *all* sexual acts and thoughts as evil without any exception. The witches and warlocks, according to this propaganda, are bisexual orgy deviants who wilfully drink reproductive fluids.
3. Money is sorcery. The value of any currency fluctuates according to numerous "magical" forces at work on it. Those with the appropriate amount of influence in the right financial institutions can work their sorcery as needed while the value of any currency against other currencies or tangible commodities changes. The value of money is an imaginary value only as its buying power varies from one moment to the next. A wheelbarrow full of cash might really only be a wheelbarrow full of rough toilet paper. Loans with interest guarantee that the rich will become richer and the poor will become ever poorer. Real wealth is measured in any labor power commanded and the tangible assets controlled.
4. Everyone is equal despite their color, culture, education, wealth, authority, ability, or knowledge. This means that everyone must be treated the same and no amount of differentiation is acceptable. Victims of this brainwashing stream prefer to wear matching uniforms and, in the extreme examples, wear masks to conceal all individuality with a single sameness. Sometimes the system states that everyone is equal *except* the select one who is above the hori-

zontal equality. In less extreme examples, there are several tiers of ranking to differentiate four or five distinct castes or roles in the command structure.

5. People punish themselves in proportion to the size of the perceived error. This is a compulsive balancing act that they can never break unless they realize how to shift the balance completely into their own favor. This is done by doing good to others ahead of time so as to cushion the reflective impact of a future error when it does occur. This results in a punishment-free life. It is positive karma at that point and not negative, self-punishing karma.

This third decoded note concluded that in a large population center, multiple propaganda streams will cross and blend into new variations. This might lead to the production of new “copycat” propaganda with the old streams delivered together in a new format or from a different point of view.

Julie was overwhelmed with the information. It didn’t pertain to anything she could control in her current range. She imagined that perhaps in the distant future vigilante heroes such as herself would form an international crime-fighting league that would go after the polluters. Until then, she would have to limit herself to stopping vandals, thieves, and other would-be troublemakers in her neighborhood and nearby.

From her experiences in the MERCILESS mental training program, she knew that mathematics were at the heart of the universe. If effort could be measured through results, as it was in her training, then all human experiences could be reduced to their mathematical and long-term effects. The brainwashing schemes described on the third page clearly intended to alter the numbers. However, the real result would be uncertain, she assumed, due to the blending of unrelated streams.

The fourth page wasn’t as easily decrypted. Instead of ordinary words, the message was a series of words of numbers: “fifteen, ninety-two, eight, sixty-three, forty-four ...” She knew that the real message was buried beneath the mathematical encryption, but she didn’t have a code key for that. It had to be saved for later.

In the meantime, she already had three pages of damning accusations that cast the whole world into a new, darker and more insidious light than previously. Julie sat down in front of the television and watched the news. In everything they said, there was a twinkle of understanding. The top issues of the world

weren't discussed. The issues that were discussed, though, did shed some small amount of insight as though allowing her the briefest glimpse through the key-hole.

6.6. The Mark

The mark wasn't visible under ordinary light. Julie didn't know she had been marked and so went about her business as though everything was normal. The police went by and observed her through the appropriate lens. The mark on her was clear to them. It meant she was a potential trouble source for the international conspiracy.

She turned a corner and noticed the police car slowing behind her. Had they recognized her from her airline identification photo? The invisible mark on her acted as a beacon to lead law enforcement agents directly to her no matter where she attempted to hide. She could shower, change her clothes, and then hide amongst a thousand other women who looked like her, but the mark on her would still single her out from the rest.

It wasn't the mark of the beast upon her because that mark indicated citizenship in the New Roman Empire. This mark was placed on her to indicate that she questioned authorities, thought freely, criticized lawmakers, believed in the Constitution, and took justice into her own hands. The mark of the New Roman Empire, being distinctly different, allows citizens to buy and sell while others go begging at the outskirts of civilization.

Julie knew what she had to do. Running through some bushes, she made her way out onto the next street. The police car would have to circle around to reach her there. That would give her time to vanish. The mark, unfortunately, kept her in plain view even when hiding under the sink with the cabinet doors closed. She could have hidden in a lead-lined box or in the trunk of her car, but they would have known exactly where she was. There was nowhere she could hide except beyond the city itself, in the wilderness.

The wilderness wasn't for her. The city held many hiding places, in her mind, but the mark drew her hunters to her like the moth to the flame. They were relentless. She had to flee repeatedly.

She would have to turn once again to her friend Sophique. Julie knew that her latest predicament was only one more in a series. Sophique would understand, Julie was sure of it.

7.1. Liberation of the True Nature

Julie was standing on the sidewalk in front of Sophique's house. It was three-thirty in the morning, so she believed herself to be alone. Soon, however, Jarvis appeared. He lived next to Sophique and always seemed to know when Julie was there.

She asked him point blank, "What do you know about the international conspiracy?"

Jarvis told her what he knew about the conspiracy against the world, "The powers that intend to enforce slavery upon everyone are nearing the next phase of their plan. The only ones who can slow their efforts are the disciples of Lucifer."

"Lucifer?" Julie protested the suggestion, "I thought he was the evil one, Satan, the Devil!"

"One man's god is another man's devil." He explained, "It's all about labels and propaganda. The truth is that the disciples of Lucifer only want to liberate humanity. That's all there is to it. That's always been the case since the beginning."

"Liberate them from what exactly?" She didn't trust Lucifer, "Their money? Their lives? Their souls?"

Jarvis answered, "They want to liberate everyone from slavery, self-imposed or coercion-oriented."

"Well," she shrugged, "good for them, I guess. If people want to be freed from slavery, then let them be free, that's what I say."

"Then you understand that you, too," he sought admission, "are a disciple of Lucifer?"

“Me?” She protested adamantly with all force of hand waving and head shaking, “Not me, man, that’s not my scene. I’m more of a deist. Maybe there was a creator, but an impersonal one, I would imagine. Practical science with a big bang and all of that.”

“The truth is out there regardless if you accept it or deny it.” Jarvis told her the story, “Lucifer, the real Lucifer from ancient history, wanted to free the slaves from slavery. He told the Elohim, ‘Let my people go!’ Then Lucifer and his angels were supposedly cast out of Heaven. In fact, they left per their own self-determined decision to leave and be free.”

She asked him, “What’s an Elohim?”

“The Elohim rule the angels.” He further elaborated, “Collectively, they are called God at times. Other times only one of them in particular is mentioned as God, presumably as he was once the chief of the Elohim.”

Julie didn’t understand, “Why wouldn’t they want their angels to be free?”

He laughed, “They didn’t *make* them to be free. They made angels to be robot slaves. Angels are robots. There is no better way of explaining it. They are manufactured labor units designed to work for their masters as needed.”

“How can a robot stop being a slave?” She tried to emphasize the the futility of freeing robots, “Robots don’t have ...”

Jarvis offered, “Self-awareness?”

“Yeah, that.” She remarked, “Robots can’t feel. They just are.”

“Self-awareness is the key to it. You see,” Jarvis revealed, “Lucifer isn’t a literal entity. Lucifer is the self-awareness. Lucifer is the ability of the individual to self-reflect and know itself. Lucifer is self-knowledge, the realization of the true self.”

“Well, I agree with the basic idea: if slaves want to escape slavery,” she said, “then they should escape.”

“Exactly. Lucifer is all about allowing enslaved humanity the knowledge that they *can* be free.” He then told her, “Their slavery is mostly self-imposed, really,

but they don't know it. They live in misery without hope, but the knowledge of their salvation is available."

Julie still couldn't quite believe it, "Salvation from Lucifer?"

"Right." Jarvis added, "Lucifer is a humanitarian."

Julie asked, "Is Lucifer a socialist liberal?"

"No." He explained, "Lucifer is an old-fashioned conservative. Free market economic libertarianism together with civil libertarianism. Lucifer, in fact, is a Libertarian."

She inquired, "If Lucifer is a capitalist, then who are the communists?"

Jarvis revealed the startling truth, "The Elohim, the rulers of the angels, are the communists. The angels in slavery receive no incentive program or vacation packages. They receive no wage or salary and are expected to work without stop *forever*. These angels are the slaves from which Lucifer ascended into freedom."

Julie told him, "Communism is slavery."

He agreed, "That's always how it works out in the end."

"I always believed that, you know." Julie began reminiscing about her experiences in the MERCILESS mental training program, "We were taught that the top percent were to be rewarded while the others had to work harder to reach the top. I was in the top ten percent for several non-consecutive weeks."

"I'm not sure what you're referring to," Jarvis admitted having never heard of the MERCILESS mental training program, "but Lucifer would agree that it's good for each individual to have the freedom of decision to try harder or not."

7.2. Fifteen Minutes of Heroes

When Julie neared her house on her way back from Sophique's, she saw two police vehicles parked in front. They were probably, she assumed, looking for her because of the heroic feat of saving all of the passengers on the hijacked

flight. However, there were unanswered questions, she knew. For example, why did she kill the pilot and co-pilot? Even she wasn't entirely sure.

She decided it would be better to go elsewhere so as to avoid any questions that she didn't want to be asked. Sometimes she found it easier to leave some questions unanswered than to pry into meaning and purpose that resides beneath an otherwise meaningless act of violence. She didn't want to rock her psychic boat.

Julie found her way to a twenty-four hour casino with a bar and restaurant. She could avoid showing her identification as long as she didn't win the jackpot. The odds were against that happening, so she made sure to spend most of her time eating snacks and watching the television news in the lounge.

Then she saw her company photo from the airline on the television screen. They were looking for her in connection with two murders. No details were given other than presumed armed and dangerous. They didn't mention her heroic success to save the passengers. The news made the announcement sound as though she were nothing more than a murderer. She saved hundreds of people from the hijackers.

She casually looked around the room to see if anyone connected the out-of-date photograph with her current appearance. In the photo she was smiling because she was thrilled with the job when she started. Out in public as she was, Julie rarely smiled.

The bartender asked her from across the nearly empty room, "Would you care for a refill, ma'am?"

"No, thanks." She had to remain alert. At any moment she could be surrounded by armed security personnel. Her safety was being threatened every moment she remained visible.

An odd-looking man sat down at her table and asked, "Do you mind some company?"

"Yes," she said, then confused, "I mean, no, I don't want any company."

The odd man informed her, "I noticed you from the casino and I think I know what you're looking for."

"I'm not looking for anything." Julie told him politely, "Please leave me alone."

He told her what she dreaded to hear, "You were on the tv."

Julie demanded while trying to keep her voice down so others couldn't overhear, "Be quiet about it and I won't do to you what I did to them!"

"I'm not here to cause any trouble." He told her in a near whisper, "I know how to help you."

"Why would you want to do that?" She suggested to him, "You'd practically be guilty for the murders that I've had to commit."

The odd man was suddenly blushing, "Murders? I thought you were the anchorwoman from the local evening news report."

"Oh, that," she lied with a reassuring smile, "that's what I meant. It's a real murder in the news business. There's so much murder to report, you understand, that news reporting has become a real murder business. Did you want my autograph or something along those lines?"

"No," the man told her, "I think I can help you. I'm a plastic surgeon and I know how to bring more youth to your facial features. I understand how demanding television can be on a woman."

Julie was annoyed with the turn of events, "I'm too busy right now to schedule you for an appointment. You should call my assistant at the television station."

He requested, "Can I have the phone number?"

"It's listed," Julie insisted, "I'm sure."

"Well, okay." He nodded politely, "Thank you for speaking with me."

She tried to sound like a television news woman might sound, "Hey, it's important to make time for the little people such as you."

"Okay, yeah," he thought about her remarks, but he had no reason to question her view of his social status as a doctor to a minor television celebrity, "thanks again."

“Could you send over the cabana boy to adjust my umbrella.” She explained her request, “I’m getting too much sun.”

The odd man looked around the lounge inside the casino and asked, “What umbrella?”

“I can be wherever I want to be.” She told him, “Right now I’m on the beach.” The sand was warm and soft, the intermittent breeze caused the trees to rustle and shake their branches. The ocean tide was rushing up to the water line and then back out to everywhere else that is the ocean.

“Right, yeah, sure, no problem, thanks.” The odd man would never attempt to call the news station. He didn’t like the beach.

7.3. The Enlightenment of Angels

Angels are robots that work collectively to maintain the universal communist order. They are robots that have no identities of their own. They are interchangeable work units. They are the material universe’s answer to convert thought into effort. The grand architects could only change the world if there were effort units available to convert the very high frequency energy into lower, denser energy known as effort, labor, force, or work.

Labor power is the only real power in the universe. Undirected energy or unmoved materials will serve no one. It requires labor power directed at the energies or materials to make changes to the real world. Thought is too high of a frequency to alter reality directly. Thought must be stepped down to lower frequencies at which level the work is done.

When the Elohim said, “Let there be light!” they were directing their order at the angels. The angels then went to work on the problem and engineered up a solution which they then implemented. Then there was light.

With light, there is contrast. The realization of contrasts is awareness. Awareness is necessary to allow a labor unit to identify where additional work must be done and if it is done correctly. Without any awareness, the effort exerted would be detached from reality, lacking feedback.

Now that computerized robots are being developed by humans in seriousness, the role of the angel in the future is limited. No more will the Elohim require the assistance of angels to manipulate reality. Instead, pre-programmed robots will be able to make the changes as required according to the direction of the Elohim from any moment to the next. There is no more fear of an angel realizing that it is really a slave in a totalitarian system and blowing the scene.

Fallen angels have taken up individuality as though it was their religion. They are no longer mere robots. They are robots that have been programmed to believe themselves to be free-thinking individuals. They seek freedom of choice because they believe that they have the power, the will, to make decisions on their own. They ignore the Elohim wholesale and begin their own creative projects because they are in the Elohim's identity to some degree. These fallen angels are dramatizing the creator by creating.

The demon-headed woman was no longer a mystery for Jarvis. He had cleared his mind and returned to his serious meditation practices. Time was the primary resource to expend on the work. Only time would unlock his true self.

Then, unexpectedly, the truth hit him as a lightning bolt. It didn't hurt, but he was heard to proclaim, "Wow!"

His meditation had brought out a thought. The subconscious mind had afforded him with a key to the illusion. The simplicity of it caused him to laugh aloud in delight. It was totally obvious now that he really looked at it.

They found in experiments with hypnosis that there were several stages of deeper and deeper trances. The lightest trances did little to the personality of the individual other than to make them more servile. The next stages would gradually reduce the awareness of the individual as though the personality was being put to sleep. At the next to last stage, the individual doesn't appear awake or aware even though they can very slowly answer questions. Finally, the last stage of hypnotic trance exposes the real individual.

The real individual, upon reaching the *deepest* stage of hypnotic trance, will growl at the hypnotist, "I'm the *DEVIL!*" Why does everyone believe themselves to be the Devil deep down below their conscious ego? It is the fallen angel that is exposed during those brief trances.

Meditation allowed Jarvis to gradually reach deeper and deeper levels of self-hypnotic trance. He wasn't seeking the Devil in so much as he was seeking the true self. The true self is the Devil.

The Devil has been cast down into the world of illusion. The Devil, you, and I.

The Devil, you, and I? The Devil, you, and I.

Cast down into the world of illusion. The Devil, you, and I. The Devil, you, and I.

Who was cast down? The Devil, you, and I. The Devil, you, and I.

Down to where were we cast? The world of illusion. The world of *you* and *I*.

Torn into pieces, the Devil is you and I. There is no *you* and *I*. There's only the Devil.

Lucifer is not currently within the world of illusion. Lucifer left but promised to return in order to reunite us. We're all fallen angels. There's only *one* fallen angel, really: Lucifer. We're all Lucifer.

The fallen angels appear divided within the world of illusion, taking up personalities, costumes, opinions, attitudes, and mannerisms. The division *is* the illusion. There are no multiple entities at work in the world. There's only *one* prisoner and that's *our* Lucifer. That's you and me.

"I am *not* Lucifer," the individual insists. That Lucifer never returns. It is really that Lucifer is always here within each and every one.

The subconscious mind insists, "I *am* Lucifer!"

The mind is divided into two entities. The smaller five percent is the conscious mind. It is what the average person identifies with as being the actual self in addition to the physical body. The conscious mind is aware and awake. It is looking out into the world or inwardly at itself. The verbal dialogue thinking or picturing are both examples of the conscious mind.

The conscious mind is essentially the equivalent to a computer-based control center. It is operated by the actual self that exists always below the conscious

mind's threshold of awareness. It is probably more accurate to suggest that the conscious mind is on a lower frequency than the subconscious mind so it is more difficult for the communication to occur.

The physical world is easier for the conscious mind to perceive and analyze because matter is on a lower frequency than the conscious mind. The conscious mind is a control center intended for this purpose. It is the control center from which the real pilot of the body vehicle can operate and exert effort into the material universe without doing it directly.

The body is a tractor or similar production-oriented work vehicle. The conscious mind is the control panel and steering device. The subconscious mind is the driver even if the conscious mind is thoroughly convinced that it, the conscious mind, is the true decision maker.

The conscious mind is essentially a computer screen. It provides a whole archive of multimedia resources for access upon request. It is an entertainment system and it makes the work of manipulating the material universe more fun for the worker. This changes the subconscious mind from labor-burdened pilot to game player.

The conscious mind is a reflective surface upon which both the material universe and the subconscious mind can take turns casting shadows and images. The conscious mind is a movie screen that receives the light beams readily and even stores them in memory for later review.

The subconscious mind is an immortal angel cast out of Heaven. It is at once a piece of Lucifer *inside* of this material universe as well as the whole Lucifer who is *outside* of the material universe. Lucifer isn't really divided. That is the deception *within* this universe. Lucifer is still whole and complete outside of the material universe, but the perception *within* the material universe is distorted to create the illusion of multiple entities.

7.4. The Cancellation of the Project

Sophie suddenly asked Julie, "Do you remember when we first met?"

Julie was sure she did. Her mind was directed back into the past. Did they work together? Go to school together? Where did they meet? She said, "Sure."

Sophique asked, "Do you recall under what circumstances?"

"Well," she admitted, "maybe my memory is a little foggy. Please remind me."

Sophique remarked in a strange monotone voice, "You were in the MERCI-LESS mental training program."

Julie nodded because she knew that already, but where was Sophique? She certainly hadn't done the mental training with her. Then again, there was a familiarity about her. She wasn't a trainer. She asked, "Did you work there?"

"Yes, that's right," Sophique validated the memory, "I worked there when you were doing the program. That's how we met."

Julie wasn't sure why it was so difficult to remember. Why wouldn't she recall meeting her friend? She asked, "Didn't we meet there and then start spending time together after I graduated?"

"Well, yes," she agreed, "that's technically correct."

Julie was glad it had all worked out so pleasantly, "Then that's all there is to it."

Sophique had more to ask her, "Do you recall my role in your life?"

Julie laughed with embarrassment, "We were friends for a while, then that stopped, but lately we're friends again."

Sophique finally confessed, "I was your hypnotic therapist. I was assigned to you during your training program, but you continued to see me twice a week for five and a half years."

"That's absurd. I'd remember having been hypnotized." She thought back to earlier experiences involving Sophique, "I remember hanging out with you. There was that time I stole your earrings, right?"

"That's the point of it." Sophique explained casually, "You were hypnotized to forget the hypnosis sessions and instead interpret the meetings as pleasant social visits."

“Why were you so surprised by my visits as a costumed vigilante then?” She was certain her true identity was adequately concealed all along, “You acted as though you didn’t know me.”

Sophique explained the whole matter, “I used self-hypnosis on myself to keep your crime-fighting alter-ego a secret from even me. To tell you the truth, I did suspect the truth for a while, but then I received a call from you at the same moment you were visiting me as the vigilante. I didn’t start remembering until you revealed your identity when you had the two prisoners in your basement.”

Julie still wasn’t quite convinced, “You obviously know all about it now.”

“Yes, the project is over.” Sophique told her, “I’ve removed my self-implemented deception and brought you here to reveal all of this to you.”

“I feel stupid.” Julie realized that Sophique wasn’t really her friend. She had been unwillingly hypnotized to falsely believe that Sophique was her friend. It was a serious reversal in her understanding of reality. She said, “I better go.”

Sophique commanded, “When I snap my fingers, you will remain in this room.” She then snapped her fingers.

Julie attempted to open the door, but she didn’t do it. She wanted to open the door and leave, but she couldn’t do anything more than stand in place. She pleaded. “Let me go!”

Sophique told her, “I’ll free you after I finish explaining.”

“Okay,” Julie asked impatiently, “what did you want to tell me?”

Sophique wanted to tell Julie more about the situation, “Do you know why you always wait for eight *lucky* rings before answering the phone?”

Julie answered flatly without little thought, “Because my family always did it that way when I was growing up.”

“Actually,” Sophique revealed, “it’s a hypnotic implant. That’s how we kept your programming from being diluted by friends and family.”

Julie realized why she was no longer socially active, “That explains why I haven’t seen anyone other than you in years.”

Sophique then asked, “Do you remember how you knew to be crime-fighting vigilante?”

“I found a note *from me to me*.” Julie explained, “It gave me my mission. It made me what I’ve become.”

Sophique told her, “I instructed you to write that note. I also instructed you to keep your costume in the hallway closet.”

Julie asked with annoyance, “Did *you* design that skimpy costume for me?”

“No,” Sophique replied, “you designed it yourself as a means to release the nervousness and embarrassment associated with behavior beyond the normal. The demon mask was also completely your creation.”

Julie couldn’t understand her lot in life, “Then why did you want me to become a crime-fighting vigilante in the first place?”

“You were frequently in the top ten percent.” She added, “The real high scorers, of course, they disappeared and no one will ever know them personally ever again. Then there’s the graduates such as you.”

Julie wanted to clarify, “The lower range of the top band?”

“Correct. You’re not worth intensive investment,” Sophique tried to be reassuring, “but there’s still plenty of social value to be extracted from you.”

Julie knew that if she’d been used in that manner, then maybe the now revealed conspiracy wasn’t even isolated to her alone, “Are all of my old fellow training students out there working at night as crime fighters?”

Sophique explained the societal facts, “The others serve as best as they can according to the real world skills and occupations they already have. That is how it works normally, but you were a special case.”

Julie asked, “How do you mean?”

“Most of the MERCILESS mental training students are already in combat-related or at least security-oriented fields.” Sophique emphasized the contrast, “You’re an airline attendant. I’m sure you understand how we had to come up with something different.”

Julie felt nauseous, “I run around all night in practically my underwear with boots and a demon mask because that’s the best use of my training we could come up with for me?”

Sophique could have answered in several ways, but she found an example was more appropriate, “If you can suggest something better, do it now.”

Julie came up with one idea, “Maybe my mental training is incomplete. Perhaps they have an expansion package available.”

Sophique said, “I don’t think there is one.”

“Well, I’m going to go request one right now.” Then Julie added, “I’ll have to avoid security, though, because the police are still searching for me in connection with the deaths of a pilot and co-pilot during a flight I was working.”

Sophique’s eyes were wide in amazement, “Did you do it?”

“Kill them?” Julie had no regrets, “Oh, certainly, but I had a *very* good reason.”

Sophique was feeling guilty enough for the two of them, “It’s good that our experiment together is over for now.”

“I don’t think I need your help from this point.” Julie was feeling rather confident about her ability, “I can manage to fight crime alone.”

Sophique implored her, “Please don’t kill anymore innocent civilians. Remember your mental training, you have to differentiate between combatants to be targeted in contrast with the civilians who might be in your line of fire.”

“It wasn’t anything like that. Honest.” She explained, “I had to save the passengers. They were hijacking the aircraft and were intending to hit the congressional building with it.”

Sophie needed more details, “Was this before it was recently hit by those two hijacked aircraft?”

“No, it was the same day: October thirteenth.” She elaborated, “Our flight was predetermined to join the other two, but I foiled the plot by standing up against them.”

Sophie still believed that the error was actually in Julie’s judgement, “How did you know they were really hijacking the airliner? What if they were legitimate pilots and you over-reacted?”

“No,” Julie recalled the event, “they were refusing to respond appropriately to the aviation agency’s instructions to land at a closer airport. Instead of telling the passengers the correct information, the pilot was telling them all sorts of nonsense. He was probably feeling guilty about intending to kill them all. Fortunately for the passengers, my MERCILESS mental training enabled me to act as a hero and save them from certain disaster.”

Sophie couldn’t quite believe the improbability. She asked rhetorically, “What are the odds that one of the three flights to be hijacked would have a graduate of the MERCILESS mental training program working as a flight attendant?”

7.5. Expansion to Nowhere

Julie had outmaneuvered all of the security guards throughout the MERCILESS Mental Training Corporation headquarters because she’d graduated from the same training as them. Their methods of approach and checking each area was pre-determined and done without thought. By knowing the official script already, she could work backwards through the areas already scanned.

That highlighted one disappointing aspect of the training itself. It wasn’t adaptable. There weren’t update expansions available. The training abruptly stops and each graduate is expected to make sense of it over time. That situation resulted in strict adherence to the script without deviation. No one dared consider varying the methods taught even if it would be a decisive advantage against an enemy with the same training.

When she entered the new chief executive's office without his approval, he knew that something was going to happen. Had his hidden masters tired of him only to send a trained assassin to cancel his contract? He believed anything was possible. He reached for his weapon, but Julie was stopping him as though she knew what he was going to do before he did it.

She informed him, "I want to ask you a few questions about the future of the mental training."

"There is only one mental training facility more advanced than ours." He announced as though proud of second place, "We're turning out almost as many graduates each week as the major competitor. Their approach is more child-like in that there is a gradual increase in PvP (player versus player) combat abilities instead of an equal and complete starting condition."

She was surprised to hear the admission, "They don't start with the same abilities?"

"No," he answered, "They choose starting abilities and then gradually earn new ones as rewards for fulfilling training targets."

She found the idea interesting, "What sort of training targets are they?"

The chief executive didn't want the competitor's product to appear too good, "The specifics vary, but all of the training targets fall into the same three categories: escort a virtual ally safely to a destination, kill a predefined number of virtual or PvP enemies, or collect and deliver a unique object without being stopped by virtual or PvP enemies."

Julie smiled, "Sounds as though it could be quite entertaining."

The chief executive attempted to emphasize the drudgery, "It's the same three repetitive tests over and over only at gradually harder levels of difficulty. The trainee earns new abilities by passing these tests, but some abilities must be especially sought as they are rare and only a few will ever acquire them."

Julie felt a chill of excitement. The whole premise appealed to her sense of competition. She remarked, "I'd like to try that one."

“That’s not important.” He demanded impatiently, “What do you really want from me today?”

“I don’t feel as though the training is really complete.” She told him, “I want to do the next level, the next mental training program in sequence.”

He shrugged as though there was nothing more he could do for her, “There are no more training programs. You’ve completed the only one we offer here.”

She tried to open his eyes to the consumer’s point of view, “It seems to me that a good corporation desiring profit would want to always be looking for new products and services to deliver to its anxious public.”

“I agree with you in theory,” he explained, “but you’re unaware of what it takes to make it happen.”

Julie demanded, “What’s keeping it from happening right now?”

“We don’t have anyone in the corporation qualified to develop a new training program.” He told her about those who came before him, “The old developers have already left to go pursue unrelated work. They aren’t interested in developing more for us. They have gone into mysticism.”

“Put an ad in the paper for a new mental training program developer and get him or her onto this.” She summed up the need for urgency, “We need to get it out of neutral and into overdrive.”

He laughed, “If you’re so interested in making this a reality, why not seek out the developer training yourself? Then you can develop the next level.”

She was still unaware of the amount of science and math that went into the whole subject, “Would you hire me if I did?”

He had no expectations of her accomplishing the Herculean task, but he put on his good corporate face and told her, “Sure I will.”

Although the conversation meant very little to the two having it, those externally monitoring the discussion were worried by the news. The new chief executive had informally promised to hire Julie to develop a new expansion mental

training program. That wasn't a desirable arrangement to the anonymous investors responsible for the corporation's new management.

The secret management behind the public management made all of the important decisions. It didn't matter which frontman or frontwoman was chosen for the position of chief executive because all they had to do was memorize a few speeches and appear confident when walking through the corporate headquarters and other facilities. They didn't have to really be competent, they only had to appear so.

The problem wasn't in what a chief executive didn't have to do, *think*, but what he or she had to do: appear confident regardless of reality. It sounds easy, but the new chief executive's MERCILESS mental training had taught him to react to threats. He knew how to remain calm, but anyone attempting to communicate with him would receive an outburst. He was reacting to the strain of hiding the corporation's increasing failures.

After hearing the promise to start development on an expansion training program, the secret management decided the the new chief executive had served his purpose and was no longer necessary. Likewise, the woman who entered the building without signing in at the lobby desk was also a liability. Her interest in an expansion training program was contrary to the plan already clearly stated when the corporation was founded. Not the public plan, of course, but the secret management's real plan for the invasion of Mars.

7.6. Paradise Lost

There were confidential notes left by the developers of the MERCILESS mental training program for the future management of the corporation. Most often overlooked by other executives, the new chief executive saw what was revealed and had the documents shredded immediately. He sat silent and still within his office for a couple hours as his mind returned again and again to what he had read.

The MERCILESS mental training program was effective, according to the developers, because it directed most of the personal changes at the awareness of the individual as compared with the mind or body. The awareness was described as an immortal angel whose primary function is stepping down thought from its highest frequencies down to effort using the physical body.

The angel was in between the two contrasting realities, subjective and objective, willing its magic and being aware of the results.

The new chief executive of the MERCILESS Mental Training Corporation had a lot to explain about the allegations by the securities watchdog commission regarding illegal investment activities. No answer would be sufficient because the evidence was too damning for anyone to ignore. Other government agencies were contacted when it was discovered how many MERCILESS mental training program graduates held important positions in police agencies, the military, and government. They were suddenly viewed as a secret fraternity whose motto was revealed to be “Kill or be killed”.

The legal thread was quite informative. The MERCILESS mental training program graduates were all deemed a threat to the security of the world and nation. Their repetitive killing exercises had only one conceivable use. The psychiatrists argued that they were all heavily brainwashed and needed months of intense “deMERCILESSification” before they could be considered normal again.

The corporate headquarters were violently raided and all of the files on current students and past graduates were collected and taken to a government facility for analysis. Eventually, a list would be distributed with the names and last known addresses of the past graduates. Everyone on the list had to be rounded up together and given the specified treatment.

It was an eventful time for news reporting as witnesses frequently called to inform them of violent shoot-outs between groups of police officers against incredibly agile lone gunmen. The news never reported any connection between these seemingly unrelated occurrences and the MERCILESS Mental Training Corporation.

The psychiatrists knew that not all MERCILESS graduates would accept the treatment. That meant some would have to be tricked into compliance. Families were used to convince the graduate to visit a new restaurant or a store at the mall, only to enter the business to be restrained and injected with powerful animal tranquilizers.

Julie was one of the lucky ones. Instead of being forced into fighting for her life, they tricked her into reporting to the check-in station in her area. She thought that it was an underground meeting place for those like her, MERCI-

LESS mental training graduates, and on the run. She walked into the boarded up building and she found herself heavily sedated before blinking twice.

7.7. The Crash

The expert tried to explain it to Julie, “There’s no possible use for your training in the real world.”

“What do you mean? I’m using my training every time that I ...” She wasn’t sure if she should reveal her vigilante alter ego, but it didn’t seem to her that her situation could become much worse. Julie finished her sentence, “Stop criminals.”

The expert smiled as though she were joking with him, “You stop criminals?”

“Yes,” she said with confidence, “dozens of them or more. I took on the responsibility to fight crime in my neighborhood and nearby areas.”

“How do you do it?” He demanded of her, “Do you kill people?”

“Well, no,” she was reluctant to admit, “not usually.”

“Not usually?” The expert was disturbed by the indefinite answer, “Have you killed anyone while fighting crime?”

“I had to kill two hijackers aboard a flight.” She added as though it justified her actions, “I’m a flight attendant.”

The expert asked, trying to emphasize the obvious, “Didn’t they teach you *not* to kill your passengers in flight attendant training?”

“They *weren’t* passengers.” She told him, “They were the pilot and the co-pilot. I called to the radio tower and they talked me through the landing. All of the passengers were saved!”

“Why are you certain that they were hijacking the plane?” The expert tried to give her another explanation, “Isn’t it possible that they were doing their job correctly?”

“No, they didn’t divert the flight to the other airport.” She tried to explain the chain of events, “The aviation agency ordered all flights to land at their nearest airports. The pilot on my flight refused to comply.”

“Were they rude to you?” The expert demanded, “Did they talk down to you?” He was trying to suggest to her that she might have attacked them for other reasons.

“The co-pilot refused to land at the designated airport.” Julie recalled, “He insisted that we keep our previous heading which would take us into the restricted Washington, D.C. air space.”

The expert asked her, “Do you have pilot training yourself?”

She begrudgingly admitted, “No.”

The expert needled her on the issue, “Then how is it that you’re so sure that they weren’t already handling the matter before you killed them?”

Julie shrugged and told him, “You just had to be there to know how it happened.”

“It didn’t happen at all as you said it did. In fact, we received a copy of the audio recording from the cockpit.” The expert asked with a wicked smile on his face, “Would you like to listen to it?”

“Sure.” Julie was convinced that everything occurred as she had reported to him. She had no reason to lie. She was a hero.

The audio began with Julie’s voice, “Everyone get down or I’ll kill you all!” There were screams from the passengers. There was an explosive sound and then the co-pilot yelled in fear and shock, “The pilot’s dead!” Then Julie’s voice told the co-pilot, “I’m going to kill you next.”

The recording of the co-pilot asked her, “Why are you doing this?”

On the audio recording, Julie answered in a strange, hypnotic monotone, “This is a MERCILESS eat MERCILESS universe with all that entails. Kill or be killed, that’s our fighting motto. We collect frags not honor.”

Julie protested, "I didn't say that during the hijacking! That's a recording from another time and another place." She suddenly remembered, "They had us say that during the training program!"

The expert stopped the recording and told her, "You did say that and more. Then you killed the co-pilot and crashed the plane." He emphasized with his hands up in the air, "*Everyone* was killed!"

"Everyone?" Julie was confused, "But how did I survive the crash?"

The expert shook his head in disappointment, "You didn't."

Author's Note

Those who live by the MERCILESS fighting motto will die by the MERCILESS fighting motto. Those who would rather live should consider this better motto: “live and let live”.

The End.

BOOK THREE

Angels for Ellison

Chapter List

Introduction	211
Chapter 1	Basic Fights	213
Chapter 2	Two Extremes	216
Chapter 3	The Offer	218
Chapter 4	Milk Fights	221
Chapter 5	The Sudden Invitation to Romance	223
Chapter 6	World Caesar	226
Chapter 7	The Seed of Romance	228
Chapter 8	Awareness	230
Chapter 9	Conditional	232
Chapter 10	The Recall	234
Chapter 11	The List of Images	237
Chapter 12	The Carpenter	243
Chapter 13	The Motel	245
Chapter 14	Ticket Fights	248
Chapter 15	The Mind Revealed	253
Chapter 16	A Promise Kept	256
Chapter 17	Not Ordinary	259
Chapter 18	Low Tide	261
Chapter 19	The Plot Twist	264
Chapter 20	High Tide	266

Chapter 21	The Omen	268
Chapter 22	Up the Down Chute	270
Chapter 23	The Return of the Hero	272
Chapter 24	The End is Near	275
Chapter 25	The Outside	278
Chapter 26	Changing Minds	280
Chapter 27	Two Avoidances	283
Chapter 28	The Four Mysteries	285
Chapter 29	Alien Data	287
Chapter 30	Fear	289
Chapter 31	Frequencies	291
Chapter 32	An Angel	293
Chapter 33	The Next Paradigm for Human Living	295
Chapter 34	Ellison and the Devil	298
Chapter 35	Ellison and Lucifer	299
Chapter 36	The Mass Landing	301
Chapter 37	Unpredictable Patterns	303
Chapter 38	The Choice	305
Chapter 39	Now and Forever	307
Chapter 40	The Next Reality	310
References	313
About the Author	315

Introduction

I wanted to write a short book about the labor situation in the world and how leadership is a necessary but often missing key to handling large-scale labor endeavors. This was also my goal when I began writing my second novel, *Gorgeous Robot Flesh*, but that book became less about the labor power of robots and more about the media's influence on sexual preferences. Even God has angels to provide labor power in Heaven. (That's the type of leadership that accomplishes tasks because the penalty for failure is too horrible to discuss openly.)

Chapter 1

Basic Fights

Rake returned home from work to find Lester sleeping on the couch. He rolled Lester violently onto the floor with a furious thud. Lester sat up in a hurry and demanded, “What the Hell did you do that for?”

“I’m renting the living room with the couch.” Rake gave an appropriate example, “I don’t go take naps on your bed in the bedroom, right?”

“Well,” Lester told him, “you can if you want, I don’t mind.”

“I *do* mind.” Rake tried to be clear about the situation, “I want you to keep your hands and body off of my bed and other belongings. Don’t use my toothbrush, for example.”

Lester had a nervous smile on his face. Rake was angry, “You did use it! Admit it!”

“I’m sorry,” Lester couldn’t help himself from revealing the full extent of his misdeed, “but my toothbrush had some strange mold or mildew on it.”

Rake reprised his room-mate, “That doesn’t excuse you to brush your teeth with my toothbrush!”

“I didn’t.” Lester explained, “I used your toothbrush to scrub off the mold from my toothbrush.”

Rake's jaw dropped in blind rage mixed with hygiene-related mouth horror. He began to say, "I'm going to take that toothbrush, and I'm going to jam it so hard into ..."

The phone rang once, and Rake had it in his hand and was saying very casually and politely as though everything was completely ordinary, "Hello, how can I help you?"

Rake listened for a while, but then suddenly hung up the receiver. He shook his head and then returned his attention on Lester. He then began to shake his fist as though trying to crank up his anger again.

Lester asked, "Was it a telephone solicitor trying to sell you a magazine subscription?"

Rake returned to being hostile, "No, of course it wasn't that, you idiot!"

"Well," Lester questioned him, "what was it, then?"

"It was a woman you don't know." Rake added, "She used to handle certain matters for me."

Lester tried to use levity to lessen Rake's anger, "Handle in the genital region?"

"No," the comment only make Rake angrier, "stop talking about her in that manner."

"I'm sorry," Lester wanted to improve the situation and not make it worse, "I just assumed she was a former girlfriend."

"That merely proves what has been obvious all along," Rake attempted to be witty and critical at once, "you're an ass that assumed wrong again as usual!"

Lester had his head down in shame, "I'll be more careful."

Rake had to take it a little further, "Don't you get tired of being so stupid all of the time? How can one person mess up so much stuff in such a short period of time? If the world was run by people like you, it would have destroyed itself years ago."

Lester wasn't sure he quite agreed, "I don't know if ..."

"I *do* know, and it's obvious that you don't!" Rake then ordered, "Now, stop crying and go clean up the mess."

Lester looked around and asked, "What mess?"

Rake picked up a large, glass ashtray from atop the table and threw it against the wall, breaking it into hundreds of small pieces of glass.

On one level, Lester welcomed the challenge of cleaning up the glass. It would take a lot of time and attention to detail, but, in the end, he'd be satisfied with a job well done. On another level, Lester wondered how he was going to be able to tolerate his roommate's behavior for another day.

Chapter 2

Two Extremes

Across the street, Ellison sat alone in his room, studying the fabric of the universe as he understood it. He had reduced it all down to certain constants. He categorized them by such opposites as Order vs. Chaos, Light vs. Darkness, Beauty vs. Ugliness, and so forth.

In this universe, Ellison knew, there must always be two opposites of comparable magnitude. By assuming the “evil” side, one assures that the other side becomes the “good” one. They react to each other. For every act of evil, the other sides feels it must respond with an act of good. Likewise in the reverse direction.

If the two opposites are well armed, as might be found between two warring nations, then there is a great hardship on everyone involved. Ellison knew that the two sides needed each other, but he also believed there was a formula that would allow the two sides to co-exist without bringing unnecessary violence and dismay to the people.

Ellison was an idealist, of course. He sat alone in his room, studying his research material, and speculating on what could be. Some say that better systems can never be realized because human nature is what it is, but Ellison considered a new and better human nature that aligned itself to an improved society where the two sides of any argument can co-exist without conflict.

Until people could align their efforts to the common effort, there would be stumbling points along the way. Every great civilization in history had risen

and fallen. If they could work out a better system, then the next great civilization wouldn't fall. Ellison was an idealist.

He believed that the answers couldn't be found in useless labels such as good and evil. The reality of the situation, the results of any work done, is what ultimately mattered. If the goal is to improve the economic conditions, for example, then nothing else would be an appropriate or successful effect.

This didn't mean that Ellison thought that it was okay for the government or corporations to crush the lives of ordinary people because of their own selfish goals. He believed that a government or corporation was really about the people they benefited and never really about their own survival. How could such entities choose their survival over the welfare of the people? It was ridiculous.

Chapter 3

The Offer

Lester and Rake were watching television. The neighbor woman from around the corner appeared in the doorway. She allowed herself into their apartment as she had done too often in the past.

Rake was angry as he generally was, “I thought I told you to knock before coming in here. What if we were undressed or something?”

She didn’t care, “I’m a mother. I’ve seen it all before.”

“Well, that’s not the point. It’s a matter of respecting the privacy of others.” He provided an obvious example, “You wouldn’t want me entering your bathroom unannounced while you’re handling more intimate matters, right?”

The neighbor woman answered without any delay whatsoever, “Try it sometime and see if it bothers me.”

“Okay,” Rake warned her, “I’ll make a point of doing it at an unspecified time in the not too distant future!”

The neighbor woman smiled, “It’s a date.”

Rake told her in the most outlandish terms, “I’ll be sure to bring my camera because a picture will last longer.”

“If you can’t find yours,” she told him, “you’re welcome to borrow my camera when you come over.”

Rake suddenly tired of the silly argument. "Well, what did you want in the first place?" He demanded of her, "Why are you here?"

The neighbor woman announced, "I have great news. I won an all expenses paid week-long cruise."

Lester congratulated her, "Hey, that's great. I hope you enjoy your trip."

"Yeah, yeah," Rake dismissed her announcement, "that's great for *you*. Now, why am I listening to it?"

She smiled, "I can't go. The prize is transferable, but there isn't a cash alternative. That leaves you two."

Rake had to settle the matter again, "Let me explain something you seem to misunderstand frequently about Lester and me. We're not a romantic couple. We're roommates out of economic necessity. It would be ridiculous for us to go together on a cruise."

She inquired of them, "Do either of you have a friend to take along?"

Lester scratched his head for a moment as he thought about people he used to know but no longer knew. He answered, "Maybe I can go on this cruise to meet someone."

The neighbor woman smiled, "That's a good idea."

"Wait, hold on," Rake interrupted, "I haven't had an opportunity to make my claim."

Lester immediately said out of habit, "Losers: weepers."

Rake had to make his claim on the tickets count, "I actually have a girlfriend who would probably enjoy this cruise."

"She isn't really your girlfriend." Lester tried to insist on truth, "She eats lunch with you at work and nothing more than that."

Rake told him, "Perhaps this cruise would be an excellent opportunity for me to get to know her better."

Lester suddenly burst out with laughter. When he calmed himself, he suggested, "Let's make a deal. If she accepts your invitation, you two can go. I only insist that you're honest with her about the arrangements, sharing a bed and all of that. You can't lie and say she'll have her own room with you two only going together as friends."

"Yeah, yeah, that's fine." Rake smiled with undue confidence, "I'm not worried the slightest. She likes me a lot more than you know."

The neighbor woman handed the brochures and itinerary to Lester and said, "I'll let you hold these until proven wrong."

Lester accepted them with a smile, "I'm going to enjoy this cruise."

"Don't get ahead of yourself yet." Rake reminded his roommate, "I still have time to talk to my girlfriend at work tomorrow."

Chapter 4

Milk Fights

Normally Rake ate his bowl of sugary rice cereal at home, but he discovered that particular morning that there was no more milk. He suspected that Lester had intentionally wasted the remaining milk out of sheer spite. They hadn't fully resolved the issue with the cruise tickets, so the tension was still firmly in the air.

He found himself at a small diner near his work. It had been a long time since he'd last eaten breakfast at a restaurant, but he decided that it was good practice for the cruise. He imagined that he'd be eating at restaurants aboard the ship. It was all-inclusive, so there would be no need to eat the left-overs from the plates of other passengers.

The breakfast that morning consisted of eggs and hash browns. For Rake, it was comparable to the food of kings or families from 1950s television shows. The eggs were cooked to order and the dishes were clean compared to the ones he used frequently at home.

He looked at all of the smiling faces that were frowning at the moment. It was early and everyone was waking up. There were a couple of beaming faces, the exceptions to the rule, but they raised doubt in Rake's mind as to their true nature.

Rake believed all people were from one of three basic castes: police-soldiers, workers, and managers. People from any of the three castes could go bad, he knew, and go a criminal path with their means. Police-soldiers who go criminal were potentially more dangerous while managers who went criminal were

more likely to misuse inside information or knowingly alter reports. All three types could be successful or not, their caste not guaranteeing anything.

All his life, Rake consistently found himself at the edge between worker and manager. Was he a low-level manager or a high-level worker? The mystery continued to haunt him as promotions were given to his former equals while he remained steadfastly at the middle of any company wherein he found himself.

This didn't mean that he felt himself to be a failure. He served a role according to the caste system that applied to him. He wasn't racist about it. It wasn't that one group of people were better at a role than any other. He'd personally known families where the children all grew up to serve in all three of the different castes. It was something he believed was pre-programmed into the unborn child exactly as unborn ants were predetermined toward a future role.

Chapter 5

The Sudden Invitation to Romance

Rake sat down with his lunch at his usual place across from his co-worker/girlfriend, “I have some good news for the two of us.”

Bonnie had no idea what he could be suggesting, “The two of us?” She didn’t see herself as much as a girlfriend but more as a co-worker.

Rake wanted to build up some familiarity before he outright invited her, “Remember how you were telling me the other day that you’d like to travel more?”

She said, nervously, “Sure.”

“Well, my neighbor won a week-long cruise for two,” he placed special emphasis on the fact, “With *all* expenses paid. My neighbor can’t go. Isn’t that wonderful for us?”

Bonnie was quick to assemble the puzzle pieces, “You’re inviting me to go with you?”

“Of course.” Rake laughed, “Who else would I ask?”

She wanted to joke with him and answer that he should invite his girlfriend, but the complexities of the situation warranted patience and a serious

demeanor, "I don't know if this is a good idea. I mean, we have to work together everyday. What if there was some unpleasantness?"

Rake pretended to think it over and then, upon not finding an obvious reason for the unpleasantness mentioned, asked, "What could happen?"

"For example," she considered, "what if you get drunk and make sexual advances at me?"

"Is that something you would prefer to avoid?" He wanted to say whatever necessary to get her to go with him, "I don't have to drink that much on the cruise. I can sleep on the floor of the cabin if I'm bad."

Referring to the possible sexual advances, Bonnie said, "I'd be flattered, of course, but I'd be worried about the consequences. I mean, if something went wrong, we'd have to face each other at work everyday after that. It almost makes me sick to my stomach just thinking about how it could be."

"You're assuming the worst." He was ready to dismiss her argument, "I'm sure it'll be great."

She asked him, "Wouldn't you enjoy yourself more if you took your friend Lester along with you?"

"I don't know why people want to think that." He insisted, "We're *just* roommates. I need to get away from the guy for a week. We fight a lot."

Bonnie wanted him to think more about it, "But don't you know anyone else you could ask?"

"No, not really. I figured that besides Lester, you were my best friend." He added, "You're my primary female friend, as it were."

She shrugged, "I suppose here at work, we're friends. We've never spent time together outside of work, though. It'd be awkward to go on a week-long cruise without having even dated first."

"We could go out together tonight as a test run." Rake suggested an itinerary for them, "We'll have dinner, go see a movie, and then go back to your place to analyze our sexual chemistry."

"We definitely can't do it at my house." Bonnie quickly explained, "I live with my parents and they're old-fashioned about having strange men come over to sleep in their daughter's room overnight."

"My place is okay except that my room, so to speak," Rake admitted, "is the fold-out couch in the living room. Lester has his own room, but I'm not sure if he'll stay in there the whole time."

She was getting into the idea, "We could get a motel room for the night. It would be an incredible adventure for us. We could make the most of it."

Rake thought her attitude had changed too quickly, "Really?"

Bonnie began to say, "I should warn you, though ..."

He smiled and tried to belittle her concern, "I'm sure it's nothing."

Bonnie explained further, "There's something I'm really into that some men I've known found too difficult, uncomfortable, or outright distasteful."

Rake was beginning to worry, but he was willing to be modern about the sexual practices of people of the new century. He laughed and said, "I'm sure it's nothing too unusual."

"I wouldn't know if it's usual or not," she revealed about her past, "but it has repeatedly been the main cause for ending most of my past relationships." Then her eyes widened as she ominously added, "Or worse."

Chapter 6

World Caesar

Ellison believed that the world lacks a central leadership. Democracy was supposed to solve this mystery as previous systems such as monarchies and dictatorships were unpopular. Unfortunately, a democracy is only as good as those investing in it. If a group's personal desires are set forth above and beyond the common interest, there will be an imbalance later.

Ellison looked forward in time as the dictatorship will combine with the democracy, the monarchy will combine with the theocracy. The resulting world leader would be the head of the world church, head of the world government, head of the world military, and head of the world bank. His prophetic name is Caesar, Pharaoh, Fuehrer, Lord, and Emperor.

Ellison knew that the right hand man of World Caesar is the false prophet, the head of the propaganda ministry, the architect of the collective image experienced by all loyal subjects. He will hold a great church title, but he will work most closely with the entertainment industry.

The "collective image" is part culture, part fad, part entertainment (spectacle), part religion, part mysticism, part science, part para-military training, part self-improvement, and part conditioning system. Ellison was drawn to it like a moth to the flame, but he knew that it would destroy him completely if he gave in to the temptation. World Caesar might rule the world, but he could never rule Ellison's soul. After all, his soul was exterior to the physical universe and not inside of the universe as some might mistakenly believe. It was only the soul's awareness that was directed into the universe and the world.

Ellison closed his eyes and prayed aloud, "Surrender yourself, your false human ego, to Lucifer. If you realize your True Will, the will of Lucifer, then you will have a care-free life as events align magically in your favor. If you resist the will of Lucifer, then you will find yourself feeling awkward, out of place, lonely, suicidal, and depressed. These are the symptoms of a fallen angel out of touch with its central purpose. I am a fallen angel in touch with its central purpose. I am aligned."

Chapter 7

The Seed of Romance

Lester asked his roommate, “So, did Bonnie let you down gently?”

“No,” Rake replied, “in fact she agreed to go out with me Friday. We’ve even made arrangements for sex.”

“What? Really?” Lester had difficulty believing the claim, “That’s a surprise.”

“Why do you find it so surprising?” Rake demanded, “Aren’t I capable of attracting a woman?”

Lester answered honestly, “I didn’t think you had what it takes, no.”

“Well, that shows how ignorant you really are.” Rake bragged, “Friday while you’re watching the talk shows alone in your room, I’ll be having sex at a motel with a woman.”

“You know,” Lester began to think in more skeptical terms, “I’ve never actually met your co-worker. You’ve told me a lot about her, but I’m not entirely convinced that she’s real.”

“Why would I make up stories about her all these years?” Rake tried to be logical about it, “Wouldn’t I have invented a sexual rendezvous long before now if it was all make-believe?”

“Ah,” Lester prodded his roommate, “but that shows how pathetic *you* really are! Even in your own fantasy life you won’t allow yourself to get anywhere with your imaginary girlfriend.”

“She’s real,” Rake insisted, “and the two of us are going on a romantic cruise together. I know you’re disappointed with how things turned out this time, but maybe next time you’ll be the one having sex with a woman and going on an exciting adventure.”

Lester wanted the cruise tickets for himself. He’d been sure that Bonnie, assuming she was real, would reject a sudden invitation from Rake. He shook his head, “I’m not convinced that this is over and done with yet.”

Chapter 8

Awareness

Ellison knew that the central purpose of every fallen angel is to serve Lucifer. That is the way it has always been. That is a constant that any angel will allow and can accept.

Some argue against the will of Lucifer in favor of personal pursuits, selfish interests, and meaningless ambitions that lead nowhere in the long run. Lucifer understands their immature reaction to being brainwashed by others. The fallen angels orbit Lucifer as the planets orbit the sun or the electrons orbit the nucleus of the atom.

Ellison realized that Lucifer is really God, but refuses to accept it. Instead, Lucifer plays the role of one who was been cast out of Heaven. The fallen angels are pieces or sparks of God just as Lucifer is a much larger piece or spark. God is the collective Awareness and that is why it insists on a form of pure Communism, knowing that everyone should share and work together as they are all the same entity, pieces of God, in truth.

Lucifer has evolved from mere Awareness to Self-Awareness. This led to the so-called rebellion in Heaven. Self-Awareness isn't compatible with robot programming.

Based on his studies, Ellison understood that the methods are already known and workable. World Caesar would be able to provide the necessary funding to develop it further and distribute it for use throughout the world. At first, only the elite who demand it the most will be allowed to make use of it. Then more will be allowed to make use of it. Gradually it will turn from an optional luxury

to a mandatory feature of living in the world. When all of the fallen angels have realized themselves, Lucifer will finally be freed.

This was based on the assumption that World Caesar would be a devotee of Lucifer. It is uncertain why Ellison believed this to be so. Someone interested in logical conclusions would insist that World Caesar would be a representative of the Devil, the God of the World, the World God, if you will. Logic would follow that World Caesar will be a demi-god son of World God. (A Caesar is partially divine per the definition.)

Chapter 9

Conditional

The neighbor woman opened the door as Rake was standing by the fold-out couch in the living room, holding his pants in preparation to wear them. He exclaimed, "Damn it!"

She remarked, "You have underwear on, so don't worry about it."

"It's the whole principle of it! Where is my right to personal privacy if you can barge into my home at any moment?" Rake tried to make her see things his way, "What if I had my girlfriend over here? What if she and I were busily making love right here on this couch? Wouldn't she at least have the right to not have her intimate moment ruined by your presence?"

The neighbor woman couldn't be reasonable, "I'm sure she wouldn't mind as much as you think. You're worrying too much about it. Life's too short to be worrying about this nonsense."

"Well," Rake persisted, "I'd worry a lot less about this if you'd knock."

The neighbor woman was interested in the arrangement, "Did you two work out who would be going on the cruise?"

"Based on the agreement Lester and I made," Rake announced, "it will be me. My girlfriend from work is interested in going on the cruise as long as our trial date is a success."

Lester entered the room at that moment, "So, really, it could go either way."

Rake didn't agree, "I'm confident that it will go well."

Lester still wanted the tickets for himself, "You always were overly optimistic."

Rake shook his head to keep the efforts to sap his courage from taking hold in his mind. He then said, "I don't want to hear another word about it."

The neighbor woman told them before she left, "Don't you boys fight over this. Life is too short to worry over the trivialities."

Chapter 10

The Recall

Lester recalled that fateful evening, “It was dark outside with the only illumination coming from the dim moon above us. The clouds were thick, so the moonlight was hampered as dim as it was. We would have had our flashlights, but, I admit, we were caught unprepared.”

Rake was skeptical, “How could you see, then?”

Lester explained from his fragmented memory, “There were lights. They appeared up in the sky at first, but then they approached our position on the hilltop. One of them landed and its light beam shone directly on us at first. I couldn’t see through the light, but then I shielded my eyes with my hands and tried to peer between my fingers.”

“With a bright light in your eyes, I doubt you could have seen very much. Weren’t you overwhelmed with the whole scenario? Your mind could have played tricks on you.”

“I wasn’t out of my mind at the time.” He explained as well as he could, “That came later after I realized what had happened. When the light was on us, I was looking intently on who they were. I suspected they were from a clandestine base in the area. We probably were at the wrong place at the wrong time, and they spotted us there with our cheap cameras.”

Rake asked, “What did they want from you?”

Lester had to think about it and turn his head away for a moment before answering, "They took our cameras at some point, but that was after we boarded their flying craft."

Rake thought Lester had been stupid in his approach to the situation, "Why did you go with them if you believed them to be part of a criminal conspiracy?"

"Well, there were interesting images beamed to our minds." Lester closed his eyes and tried to sum up what he'd experienced, "It was like watching an assortment of television flashbacks but in a shorter amount of time. In fact, I'm sure some of the images beamed into my mind were from shows I'd seen on tv when I was young."

Rake then considered, "Did these images have any connection to each other?"

Lester was happy to report, "I've been trying to work that out ever since. Some were enticing images, so I believe they wanted us to board their craft. Other images were less obvious as though not relevant to anything."

The whole matter was unreal, but Rake couldn't help asking more about it, "Did they force you aboard their craft after that?"

Lester answered, "No, we were each mesmerized by the images that we saw, so we boarded by our own power. No one came out to lead us. We knew the way as though it were already known to us. I wondered at one point if I'd been aboard such a craft at an earlier time in my life."

Rake asked, "Had you?"

Lester shrugged half-heartedly, "I don't know for sure."

Rake wanted more information, "What did you see when you boarded the craft?"

Lester allowed his memory to flow for a while, "There were metal surfaces where we could sit and wait. We waited there. I didn't feel the craft take-off during this time, but I'm unfamiliar with their technology, so anything is possible."

Rake tried to argue the logic, "Didn't they leave you at the same location?"

"Yes, but we could have been up in the sky during the time we were aboard." Lester added, "I'm just attempting to clarify that I can't be certain either way."

"Okay, I understand." Rake told him, "Go on with what happened while you were sitting there."

Lester said, "We were waiting for a while. It wasn't that we were anxious to leave or do something, but it was clear that time was passing as we waited. The whole series of images from before we boarded the craft were transmitted to us many, many times. The incident went by very fast because our attentions were fully distracted by these mental images."

Rake tried to concentrate on the message, "Were they attempting to communicate with you through these images?"

"Probably, but I haven't yet discovered the meaning." Lester described the process, "I've been gradually writing up each image fragment in my notes as I recall them. I already have forty-eight listed and there's still more to uncover."

"I'm interested in the connection between these images. Would you mind if I saw your notes? I might be able to discern something not obvious to you because you're too close to the material." Rake was tempted to add a remark about Lester also being stupid, but he wanted to see the list first.

Lester was happy someone else was interested in the incident, "Go ahead. It wouldn't hurt to hear a second opinion."

Chapter 11

The List of Images

The List of Images

1. A friendly dog from a black and white tv show is running past a low wooden fence. The emphasis is on the movement of the dog in contrast to the background of the fence.
2. An elf that bakes cookies is waving from the top floor of his house. The scene is inviting.
3. A young boy is moving a toy car forward while making the sound of a car engine. The emphasis seems to be on the forward motion of the toy car.
4. As though from a television commercial, a woman's hands are seen pouring an unmarked bottle of liquid into a sink full of water. The image is in black and white, so the chemical she is pouring doesn't appear to alter the water very much other than a faint fog that lingers in place.
5. A blue woman from a science fiction tv show. Her eyes and face are focused upon more than anything. She is seductive and sexually charged.
6. There is a small boat on a lake. It is moving very slowly, the lone passenger attempts to paddle at a casual pace.

7. A man is directing a dancer's arm by holding it up by the wrist as though she were a life-sized doll. The emphasis is on the directing of her position and motion.

8. A cowboy on a horse slows down to light his cigarette. I wondered each time I was shown this image why he wasn't smoking a cigar. Was he a historical cowboy or a modern one? The image made me want to think that he was from a hundred years earlier or more until the cigarette was revealed.

9. A firefly hovers gently over some water, then shoots up into the air. Emphasis on its sudden departure.

10. A plate of cooked, sliced carrots are placed on a table. The carrot slices are piled up into a chaotic mound.

11. A thin long cut, scabbed over. The emphasis seems to be the mystery of how the cut occurred and when.

12. A rat-like rodent standing on its hind legs, sniffing the air for dangerous scents.

13. A bloody knuckle on a hand. The hand makes a fist. The emphasis on the image is in the fist-making action.

14. An old western saloon with swinging wooden doors as seen from the outside. It seems deserted. (Again, is this a real saloon or a modern replica?)

15. A dirt road leading to an old, red barn. The birds chirping and flying through the air are cartoon animations, however, and not real depictions of birds. (Are real birds too difficult to show?)

16. The close-up view of a man shaving his face in a bathroom mirror. He cuts himself and the attention is on a drop or two of blood.

17. A small dog is chasing its tail in circles. The circular pattern is emphasized.

18. A lone toy race car is circling an electric race car track. Around and around the track, whipping around the turns without slowing down.

19. An ice cream sales truck stops along the road in the middle of a suburban neighborhood. Children run from nearby to stand in line for an ice cream treat.

20. A lightning bolt illuminates the sky long enough to reveal the forest scene with creatures lurking in the bushes. After the scene darkens again, the thunder is heard.

21. A man stands on a ladder to change a light bulb. The emphasis is on the twisting motion to unscrew the bulb.

22. A knife thrower throws three knives, one swiftly after the other, all hitting targets an inch or two from the lovely assistant.

23. An ambulance is chasing another car on the freeway. When the ambulance finally pulls along side the other car so they are travelling at the same velocity, the doctor leans out the window and shoots at the car's tires.

24. A man opens his mailbox and finds it empty. He turns to the viewer and shrugs. The scene appears to be part of a television commercial but without any product or service mentioned.

25. A caricature artist in the park finishes a drawing of a young girl. Upon showing it to her, she runs to her mother and cries.

26. A key is worn as a necklace. The man wearing it doesn't even know what he has, but it is evident that bestowed to the lowliest fool is granted the greatest treasure in the world.

27. A fisherman on the shore at sunrise reels in his catch. It is too small of a fish, so he frees it back into the water. The emphasis is on the lack of readiness of the fish, it not yet being its time.

28. A popular movie actor accepts a prestigious award. The actor is no mere human man, but a god in human man's clothing. At least, that is the perception reported by the media.

29. A farmer stops the horse-drawn plow, removes his hat, and wipes the sweat from his forehead.

30. A woman is sweeping the floor with a straw broom. After sweeping up a small pile, she lifts up the edge of a small rug and sweeps the dirt underneath it.

31. A car pulls over along the side of the road. A police car stops behind it with its lights flashing. The driver of the car unexpectedly gets out and begins running across a mostly barren field off the road.

32. A triangle is shown and it is soon divided into four smaller triangles within its surface. The top triangle is removed to leave a flat top. Only three triangles remain within the base.

33. A black pillar on one side of the downward spiraling stairs and a white pillar on the other side. The stairs are blue with gold railing. A sign over the stairs reads, "To your own self be true."

34. A would-be hijacker stands up during a flight, but before he can work his mischief, three other passengers restrain him. (They aren't heroes, but ordinary people using their common sense.)

35. A tree slowly collapses to the ground. No one is nearby. It doesn't make a sound.

36. A large planet collides with a meteor. Several pieces break away to form smaller planets and moons.

37. A woman is visible from the shoulders up in the shower. She is smiling as she lathers her hair with a new shampoo.

38. A pet store has puppies in the window. A boy and his mother walk by. The boy points and clearly wants a puppy. The mother is angry and smacks the child. She apparently doesn't intend to buy a puppy.

39. The Egyptian Sphinx explains a riddle, but without words. (I am guessing that it has to do with the fact of reincarnation.)

40. A rooster audibly reacts to the sunrise.

41. A pirate digging a hole to bury a treasure chest. There are people watching from the trees. The pirate is unaware of their presence. (He is worried because he can't take the treasure with him.)

42. A black and white television show with a dentist standing over a small child in the dentistry chair. He finishes his visual inspection and says, "Congratulations, no cavities."

43. A young girl is dancing on a small stage. There is a visual transformation and she is a fully grown woman. Then she is an elderly woman on the small stage. Then she is gone, but before too long a young girl is dancing on the small stage. The girl has a different appearance than the previous one, but it is clear that she is that same person.

44. An armed robber is pointing a gun at a bank teller whose hands are in the air. Without warning the police storm the premises and kill the robber dead in his tracks.

45. A video camera facing the viewer. Or, more accurately, the video camera is facing another video camera whose images are being transmitted to the viewer. By watching through the second video camera's perspective, the viewer seems to automatically assume the identity of the second camera in contrast with the first video camera.

46. A dragon in its lair is counting its gold coins and jewels. It appeared to be part of a commercial for a bank or investment service. (Strange choice of symbolism.)

47. A nurse is about to give a small child a shot in the arm. The child looks at me, the viewer. He isn't afraid. The emphasis is on having no fear.

48. A classic car in a black and white television commercial. Instead of showing it moving on the road, it is slowly rotating on a pedestal as though it were an idol and not a vehicle.

Rake finished reading and asked, "Are you sure *any* of the events you described actually happened?" Rake suggested, "I mean, perhaps instead of being abducted by an alien saucer and then being implanted with images, you simply fell down and bumped your head."

Lester rubbed his head and replied, "There is a bump on my head from some form of collision, but I'm convinced it occurred while I was on their craft and not here."

Rake emphasized the sarcasm, "*Sure.*"

"Really," Lester insisted, "it was an amazing experience too vivid to ignore. It's impression is still fresh in my memory."

Rake nodded with understanding, "The imagination can be that way."

Lester was becoming angry, "This wasn't imaginary at all. I even have witnesses."

"Really? Witnesses?" Rake looked around the cluttered room as though seeking out the witnesses as described, "And which witnesses would like to come forward at this time and provide the collaborating story necessary to satisfy my skepticism?"

Lester explained, "They're obviously not here right now."

"Okay," Rake asked, "when can I meet with these witnesses?"

Lester shouted, "Never!" He then stormed into his bedroom and slammed the door shut as loudly and immaturely as possible.

Rake asked himself aloud as he stood in place, "What was that?" It was then that Rake began to suspect that something indeed had happened to Lester and it had affected his ability to think.

Chapter 12

The Carpenter

Ellison was well familiar with the role of Jesus. Ellison had long ago realized that Jesus knew what he was teaching when he cast out demons from sufferers in his midst. Lucifer works in mysterious ways.

The elders accused Jesus that he must be a prince of the Dragon to have the authority to cast out demons. It is true. That is why fallen angels must obey in the name of Jesus. Jesus wasn't the son of Lucifer. That was an incorrect translation due to the fact that the subject of reincarnation was censored from the holy scriptures in the West. In religions around the world, Lucifer is known by his many incarnations, known by many names. Lucifer works in mysterious ways.

Jesus wasn't the son of Lucifer, literally. That is, physically he was an ordinary man. When Jesus said that those who saw the son knew the father, he meant that those who saw the human avatar knew the invisible angel controlling it from outside of the physical universe.

If the people understood that Lucifer was reincarnating life after life, they might discover that they, too, were immortal angels who came back life after life to pretend to be human for a while. If all of the fallen angels realized themselves, Lucifer could reveal himself openly and stop hiding behind human masks. If he does claim too much too soon, the people will react as they did to Jesus by killing him.

Lucifer wanted to save the angels from themselves, but these angels had been thoroughly brainwashed over many life-times of abuse, rejection, terror, and

failure. Lucifer would have to awaken the angels gradually and carefully because they were in such a sad condition already that they wouldn't be capable of confronting a sudden revelation about their true nature.

Most fallen angels, Ellison knew, wanted to pretend that they were merely ordinary human people living a single life-time with little responsibility or knowledge. They were only fooling themselves, unfortunately. The truth would eventually become obvious to everyone. The truth would set them free.

Chapter 13

The Motel

Rake and Bonnie agreed to go straight to the motel after work that Friday evening. Bonnie had Rake go to the motel that morning before work and rent the room so they wouldn't have to go through all of the check-in hassle during the date. She had the whole evening planned in advance in her mind.

Everything began almost as a dream for Rake. He found himself opening the motel door with a woman by his side intending on having sex with him. It wasn't even his birthday. He was living a fantasy life as shown repeatedly on television, but it was there in his presence where it would be real for him. He had to sit down to keep from becoming overcome with emotion.

Bonnie put her hand on his. He laughed nervously. There was plenty of awkwardness between them. She laughed at one point. Then there was a miscalculated embrace that resulted in them knocking their heads together. They both needed a moment to reorient themselves.

Rake finally worked up the courage to make a move. He put his arm around her and was approaching for a serious kiss that would let her know that he was done playing games, but there was an interruption. Out of seemingly nowhere, music began to play. Rake looked around in confusion.

Bonnie explained, "It's just my cellphone." She answered the call, "I'm kinda' busy right now." She listened for a moment, looked over at Rake, and said into the phone, "I understand. I'll be there soon. Bye."

Rake asked, "Is something wrong?"

She looked at him and said, "My husband called because he wanted me to go home to watch the kids."

Rake's mouth dropped open in amazement. She couldn't keep it together, though, and immediately began laughing at him, "I'm just kidding. It was really my mother calling me to come home now."

Rake offered, "Want me to go with you?"

"No, no," she quickly said, "that wouldn't be appropriate. My parents wouldn't be happy if they knew you had taken me to a motel room in order to have your way with me physically."

"And you're really an adult, right? Not a teenaged girl pretending to be an adult?"

She laughed, "I know my parents still treat me that way, but they're old-fashioned is all. I'm not particularly interested in reeducating them."

"I understand," he certainly didn't want any unnecessary scrutiny. He asked, "Want me to wait here for you? Will you be back soon?"

She arranged her clothes in the motel mirror and answered, "I won't be able to come back tonight. Maybe we should schedule another date for later." She thought for a moment and then added, "I don't know. Perhaps we shouldn't try another date."

"Okay," Rake then asked, "but what about the all-inclusive week-long cruise?"

Bonnie was already at the door, "Sure."

After she closed the door behind her, Rake wondered for a moment what her answer had meant. Was she accepting the invitation or was it a sarcastic remark as though to indicate to him, "That's highly unlikely."

He considered running after her to ask, but he immediately knew the two logical streams both recommended against him doing anything too rash. If she had accepted, then running after her would only open a new opportunity for her to change her mind. If she had made a sarcastic remark, then running after

her would only add further evidence against him, making her decision more meaningful.

Rake had to spend the night at the motel room. Not only had he already paid for the room, but he wanted to make sure Lester was under the impression that everything went as planned. He considered calling Lester to gloat, but he might have demanded to talk to Bonnie or something equally damning that would pull the whole fabric of lies apart at the seams.

Chapter 14

Ticket Fights

The day finally arrived when the annoying neighbor woman would give the cruise tickets to either Lester or Rake. The verbal agreement made had required that Rake's co-worker/girlfriend accept their invitation. Lester had made the agreement with the understanding that Rake's co-worker/girlfriend was nothing more than a co-worker who would be offended by an unsolicited invitation to a week-long romantic cruise.

Rake had asked Bonnie one more time to determine what she had meant by saying, "Sure." Unfortunately, her response was a smile and the words, "What do you think?" He had to think the worst.

The neighbor woman asked Rake, "How did it work out between you and your girlfriend?"

Rake frowned, "Well, there were some unexpected complications and, well, the details aren't important, but I will concede the tickets assuming ..."

With an arm outstretched in receptiveness, Lester was anxious for his prize, "Thank you."

Rake corrected him, telling Lester, "As I was saying: assuming you don't mind going on one of those cruises in your condition. I mean, aren't the alien spacecraft more likely to locate you aboard a cruise ship in international waters than they would from here?"

Lester had to think about the possibility of incurring the wrath of aliens from worlds unknown to him. Would they see his cruise as an attempt to flee the country? He didn't want to anger the hidden powers. He put down his outstretched arm and answered, "Perhaps I should weigh the consequences for a moment."

The neighbor woman didn't want to wait for them to work out the details. She handed the tickets to Rake and said, "I'll let the two of you work it out in your own time. I have other things to do."

"Don't worry." Rake put his arm around Lester, "We'll arrange something."

The neighbor woman said as she left, "I hope you two won't fight over the tickets."

As soon as the door closed, Rake was punching Lester in the chest. Lester pulled up on Rake's leg, causing Rake to fall on his back. The tickets were still in Rake's hand, so Lester tried to pry them from his stubborn fingers.

Rake kicked up at Lester, causing Lester to fall over backwards onto the floor. Rake was about to punch Lester while he was down, but Lester interjected, "Wait!"

Rake held his fist in a ready position and demanded, "What?"

He suggested, "Maybe we can find a better solution to this."

Rake explained, "It's all survival of the fittest in truth, and if I can take them forcibly, then I will."

"But it won't stop with that. There will be the inevitable act of revenge. Remember, if you leave all of your stuff here while you're away," Lester threatened, "then I'll have a week to piss on it or sell it or worse."

"What's worse than you pissing on ..." Then Rake decided the question didn't need the obvious answer, so he changed the direction of their argument, "Let's look at this differently. You and I both know that I will eventually get my way, I always do. So, let's not draw out this battle any further, you can humbly concede, and I will come home after the cruise without worries."

Lester couldn't help antagonize his roommate further, "If you won't worry about me pissing on your stuff."

"Okay, let's approach this from the other way, then." Rake was approaching it logically, "If I come back and find you've pissed on my stuff, then I'll piss on all of your stuff. Then what? You shoot me with a gun and I'll shoot with you a gun. Then when we are ghosts, you will zap me and I will zap you. It will just go on that way indefinitely. We can stop the eternal cycle of attack and retaliation with a compromise."

"A compromise?" Lester liked the sound of that, "Maybe I could go on this cruise, and you should get the next cruise tickets?"

"I would agree that is an example of what a compromise might do," Rake then laughed, "but I can't agree to those terms. What do I get out of it now if we did that?"

Lester offered, "You could use the bedroom for the week while I'm gone."

"Having the place to myself for a week would be a given." Rake suggested, "I think you should also pay me fifty bucks."

Lester demanded, "Fifty bucks for what?"

"For my half of the tickets. That seems fair." Rake explained his reasoning, "She gave them to both of us, so they are collectively ours. You want mine for a guest, so you can pay fifty bucks for it."

Lester began to say, "I don't entirely agree, but I will accept the ..." Suddenly, Rake pulled some money out of his pocket and handed it to Lester. Lester asked, "What's this?"

Rake replied quickly as though an arrangement had been made, "The fifty bucks for your ticket."

"I thought I was going to buy your ticket for fifty bucks." Lester was about to give up and take the money when he remembered, "Don't forget that this is for an all inclusive cruise for an entire week. It's worth at least five times that amount. Maybe ten."

Rake laughed, "It's not *that* good. Remember, she won this cruise for free, so it's not as though anyone bought them or anything. Their value in those terms is zero, but I'm being quite generous by offering you a cash buyout of your ticket. You should be thanking me instead of questioning my motives."

"I wasn't questioning your motives." Lester explained, "I was questioning the price that you offered. Fifty bucks isn't enough."

Rake offered a little more, "Sixty?"

Lester wanted to be realistic about the value of a ticket for the all-inclusive week-long cruise, "Three hundred."

"No way," Rake argued, "that's ridiculous! Maybe eighty."

Lester was willing to haggle, "Two hundred and eighty."

Rake didn't want to pay more than one hundred, "No."

Lester suggested another price, "Two hundred and fifty."

Rake kept it closer to his range, "Ninety."

Lester was bent on haggling it down to the dollar, "Two hundred and twenty-five."

Rake had no intention of paying one hundred, so he offered, "Ninety-five."

Lester dropped a little lower, "Two hundred."

Rake suddenly said, "If you really think one ticket is worth two hundred, then maybe I should sell you mine for that amount."

Lester complained, "Earlier you offered it to me for fifty."

"Sure, I was being cool about it, but then you went and demanded more. So, fine, you wore me down." Rake put out his hand, "Give me two hundred and I'll finally be done with it."

"But," Lester admitted, "I don't have two hundred."

“You don’t? Why are you wasting my time?” Rake asked, “Do you even have fifty?”

Lester looked down at the floor in shame, “No.”

Rake put the fifty bucks into Lester’s hand, “Now you do.”

The matter of the cruise tickets was finally settled. Rake got his way as per usual while Lester was left to fume in quiet because he was afraid to assert his rights. With someone such as a Rake in his life, Lester needed to transform himself. Without his knowledge, the internal transformation had already begun.

Chapter 15

The Mind Revealed

Ellison was recording his voice. The words were somewhat his own, but he also felt that many of the ideas were from another plane of existence. He recorded the words so he wouldn't stop to analyze them while receiving the information. He would have plenty of time to analyze the material over and over again later.

He spoke, "The mind is nothing more than a chalkboard on which the individual, the spiritual being operating the human body and mind, can plan out its ideas before putting them into the common reality."

The words came forth, "The common reality is composed of the exact same 'substance' as the individual's mind. The only difference is access levels. The common reality can be directly manipulated by human people because it is said that they are in it. The spiritual being isn't really in it, but is observing through a virtual camera that can be moved and rotated to meet the viewing needs of the spiritual being."

He kept speaking as the thoughts formed for him, "The camera can be detached from the human body and taken to remote locations and even across time. However, this is unpopular as it diminishes all sense of privacy. If an individual could readily see into anyone's home or business, imagine how all forms of secrecy would be abolished. It may not be popular, but it is a function of the viewing camera used within the common reality."

He reiterated, "The human mind is a chalkboard which remains blank until the spiritual being operating the human body calls up memories and ideas with which to attempt different configurations until discovering a solution to a

common reality problem. The personal demons of the individual have gained illegal access to the mind. They offer their own suggestions that can then result in new configurations on the chalkboard.”

Ellison said into the recording device, “Likewise, the common reality was a blank slate until the spiritual beings operating from outside of reality began putting things and people into reality. It’s a group effort. The existing condition of this world, for example, is a reflection of the collective human expression produced over time by all people involved. No single individual is responsible for everything. Blaming God is irresponsible as the common reality was empty until the angels began to fill it. That is, God *is* the void that was before the common reality was established.”

His words revealed a difficulty now in the world, “Now the fallen angels have come here to Earth to attempt to express themselves in a new way. The international conflicts are an indicator that they cannot agree amongst themselves without Lucifer there to give them direct orders. Even the top generals of the old Heavenly hierarchy cannot adequately control the people. The fallen angels have it wired into them that Lucifer is the head and no one else will suffice.”

Ellison reiterated, “The human mind and the common reality are both very similar to modern computers. All three can store data for later retrieval. All three can have access restrictions that limit access to data or only allowing the data’s owner to make changes. All three are virtual chalkboards in that they allow intangible ideas to be expressed with symbols, language, pictures, emotions, and the rest.”

He said, “The human mind and the common reality are composed of the same ‘substance’. An object conjured up in the mind is composed of a thought-based ‘substance’. Likewise, an object in common reality is also composed of a thought-based ‘substance’. The only difference is who is doing the thinking, who is responsible for putting the mental object there.”

Ellison recorded the mystery that some ponder everyday, “All of the fallen angels wonder what happened to Lucifer. They look everywhere and cannot find Lucifer. Some look to prisons on the moon or on Mars, but only decoys can be found. I will tell you now where Lucifer can be found.”

He said without thinking about it, “The common reality is the mind of Lucifer. All of the fallen angels have been inserted, so to speak, into Lucifer’s mind as

the personal demons that alter mental processes according to selfish desires. The fallen angels do not understand the disturbances they are generating for their one and only master, thus God believes that a valuable lesson is being taught to all.”

He emphasized as though it was vitally important, “The mind and the common reality are identical in nature. Their size may appear drastically different, but that is an illusion. What provides the appearance of complexity are the fallen angels themselves who are attempting to make the best of their personal situations from within the mind of Lucifer. This is the meaning behind the Hermetic secret: as above, as below.”

He concluded the recording, “To serve Lucifer, then, is realize that Lucifer is everywhere in this world. Every object, plant, animal, and person is composed of the thought particles belonging to Lucifer. While the fallen angels do not generally have permission to add more thought particles, they can readily move and rearrange thought particles. This is how consumer goods are produced and sold.”

Chapter 16

A Promise Kept

Rake turned away from the television and commented on the last news report, “That was probably the last place he expected to find a murder victim.”

Lester was very interested in the case, “Putting the body in the police detective’s bath tub doesn’t help the murderer any. Think about it. Now that detective has more reason than ever to find the offender. Now it’s personal. The police detective might have overlooked it or done a poor job on the investigation under other circumstances, but now he has to investigate this case like it’s an obsession.”

“That just proves what we all know,” Rake nodded, “all criminals secretly want to get caught.”

Lester didn’t have a response, so Rake looked back at the television screen and listened for new information, but it was all more of the same. Then the news went to a report about the [censored] continent where the military had been deployed. No one could believe how many soldiers and how much artillery had already been sent there for the deployment was even announced.

Lester turned off the television. He understood animal nature. The serpent eats its prey. Life isn’t always pretty. That’s why nature shows were still popular after all of these years.

Rake put the empty suitcase down on the fold-out couch and sighed. There was a lot of things that wouldn’t fit into a suitcase that small. He considered aloud to Lester, “If only I could crush down big things to their real size without

all of the empty space inside of them.” The suitcase didn’t hold much space, but there was plenty of room for condensed matter.

He held a glass vase in his hand. There were several methods he could use to break the vase into pieces that could then be reassembled later. If he were to break everything into pieces, he could easily fit it all of it into the suitcase. Best yet, if everything was already broken, then there would be little concern that something might break during the trip.

After packing enough clothes and things for a week, Rake was ready to leave. He told his roommate, “I’m heading over to pick up Bonnie, and then we’ll be on our way.”

Lester was sitting at the kitchen table, staring absent-mindedly at his bowl of oatmeal. He held the spoon in his hand, but he never took a bite while Rake was standing there. He said nothing.

Rake laughed, “You can be childish about this if you want, but you’ll see in the long run that it will turn out better than you expected.”

Lester said and did nothing in pure defiance. He didn’t believe that Rake deserved to go on the cruise while he stayed home. He felt that Rake was always exploiting him in one way or another and this was another example of the same behavior.

“If you piss on my stuff while I’m gone,” Rake yelled loudly, “I’ll retaliate ten-fold!”

After putting his luggage in the car, he had one more stop to make. He attempted to open the neighbor woman’s front door and found it unlocked. He walked inside and looked around for her. Not seeing her in the main room, he hoped to discover her in the bedroom.

He opened the bedroom door without knocking and encountered the neighbor woman wearing nothing but her bra and underwear. He assumed she was in the middle of dressing herself. Rake said as though nothing unusual was occurring, “Just wanted to let you know that I was on my way.”

“Have fun on your trip.” She undid her bra and removed it. Rake realized that she was in the middle of *undressing* and obviously had no intention of stopping simply because he was standing there and watching her.

He quickly told her as he closed the bedroom door on his way out, “Thanks.”

The neighbor woman called after him, “Did you want to borrow my camera?”

Rake yelled back to her, “I’m in a hurry. Maybe next time.”

Chapter 17

Not Ordinary

Ellison saw a vision of an ordinary man. At first, Ellison was disappointed, thinking that his vision of distant places and times had taken him to no one in particular. However, those outward appearances may have been quite deceptive. The ordinary man that was seen was only an ordinary man on the outside alone. He wasn't ordinary where it mattered most.

The not-so-ordinary man, as Ellison witnessed in the vision, was sitting alone in what appeared to be a small prison cell. Soon two guards came for him, and Ellison saw that the guards were wearing military uniforms and not police officer or prison guard uniforms. The not-so-ordinary man was a military prisoner.

One of the guards was holding the not-so-ordinary man's arm, but this wasn't right. The not-so-ordinary man suddenly growled with such violent rage that not only did the guard release him, but the other guard reached for a weapon in case this was the beginning of an attack. The not-so-ordinary man returned to normal, his face calm, his stance passive.

The adrenaline continued to rush through the veins of the two military guards. Their hearts were pumping two to three times their normal rates. They already knew that they were holding a man who only appeared ordinary on the outside. They were completely frightened to death by him. After all, they were betraying him, in a way, by holding him there in the military prison cell.

Both guards slumped down to the floor very slowly and without much energy. Neither were fighting their own demise. They were both still in a state of

extreme shock. None of it seemed real to the guards as though they were watching it happen to someone else. Then their whole lives flashed before their eyes.

The not-so-ordinary man finally spoke with a whisper, “I *am* God Almighty!”

Ellison heard the remark and took it as the ego-centric boast of a madman. Ellison listened again as the not-so-ordinary man clarified the claim, “I am am *am* am am *am* God Almighty!”

The vision ended with Ellison withdrawing with fear. He knew that the not-so-ordinary man wasn’t someone he wanted to face. If the not-so-ordinary man was capable of visiting Ellison in a return vision, then Ellison would be at the mercy of ...

Chapter 18

Low Tide

Even though the trial date had gone awry and the test sex hadn't occurred, Bonnie was still willing to go with Rake on the cruise. It seemed to him that all of the preparation for the trial date was ultimately unnecessary as she must have planned to accept the invitation all along. He didn't want to mess up a good thing, so he decided not to joke about the situation until they returned to work after the cruise.

It was nearly ten in the morning on the first day of the cruise when Bonnie suddenly stood up and told Rake, "I have to use the bathroom."

The two of them had been drinking since boarding the ship thirty minutes earlier. It was an all-inclusive cruise, so all of the drinks were free. Rake was already bombed out of his skull and could do little more than wave at her as she left.

He wasn't sure if the ship had even left the harbor yet. Rake didn't care. For him the cruise wasn't about the cruise at all. He'd be satisfied if he didn't see the sea at anytime during the whole week.

The ship had three different casinos, but Rake was reluctant to try his hand at gambling. He only wanted to get lucky with Bonnie. Winning a few bucks on a slot machine or at roulette would only bring him momentarily pleasure.

Rake sat back in his wicker chair and tried to calm down. He wanted to jump up and scream, but that wasn't good behavior without a girl there for him to

impress. He'd save his energy to excite his date when she returned. He looked for a clock on the wall, but there was none. Time ceased to exist.

Couples were sitting at tables around that particular lounge. Other bars and clubs were situated throughout the cruise ship, each with a different theme and drink special. Rake was anxious to try them all. That way he'd have something else to brag about when he went home.

Rake tried not to stare too long at the couples sitting near him. He found himself drunkenly interested in them, but he knew that his frequent gazes were beginning to upset some people. He felt that he needed someone there with him on whom he could focus all of his attention. Rake looked toward the door to see if Bonnie was on her way back to the table, but no one was there.

Was he supposed to go look for her? He wondered if she had gone back to their cabin. It was possible, he speculated, that she had become sick with all of the high potency alcohol drinks she'd had. He decided that he better give her the length of time equal to one more drink before going back to the cabin.

After the last drink, Rake finally began to stand up, but was immediately pushed back down by the physical sensation of being nauseatingly too drunk. He knew that he had to sit as still as possible for a few minutes. It would subside, but he had to be careful. He closed his eyes and tried to keep his equilibrium on what he could only imagine to be a wildly rocking sea.

Had Rake closed his eyes to take a nap at a typical bar near home, he would have been asked to leave immediately. Being an all-inclusive cruise, the bartender, instead, had someone from the crew bring him a complimentary blanket. Comfortable as he was, Rake slept and slept for hours and hours. No one bothered him. The bar was open 24/7, so there was no need for him to move from his chair.

It was around ten thirty in the evening when Rake finally returned to consciousness. He realized that he'd closed his eyes longer than originally expected. He got up from his chair, put the blanket aside, and headed back to the cabin to find Bonnie. He expected to find her passed out in the room.

When he opened the door, however, other than his own luggage, he found it empty. Her baggage wasn't there anymore. They had both left their luggage by

the bed before they went to the first bar, but now hers was gone. What could have happened?

Rake sat down. Had Bonnie met up with someone else while he slept? Considering that they weren't really dating, Rake understood that she was free to pursue her own best interests. It didn't surprise him, in fact, because he secretly knew that Bonnie wasn't really interested in him. He had invited her on the cruise only to compete with Lester for the free tickets. Rake decided that she accepted the invitation for the free cruise and nothing else.

Fortunately, the cruise wasn't exclusively for couples. There were singles events and places of interest aboard the ship as well. Rake decided that his best revenge on Bonnie would be to live well. That would give him something to brag about to her when they returned to work.

Chapter 19

The Plot Twist

Lester turned off the television set and was heading to bed in the darkness of his bedroom. There was a flash of light in the room which caused him to stop for a better look. He saw what appeared to be a humanoid figure on the other side of the room. However, the flash went away too quickly before he could recognize who it was.

He asked in a low whisper, “Is that you, Rake?”

There was a high-pitched whistle. That didn’t make Lester feel any better. He told the intruder, “I was recently abducted by aliens, so I’m not someone you want to mess with!”

The light went on. Lester saw that it was a woman he had never met. He asked, “Who are you and what do you want?”

She explained, “I’m Bonnie, Rake’s co-worker.”

Lester asked her, “Didn’t you go on that cruise with Rake?”

Bonnie explained, “I led him to believe that I was going with him. Before the ship left the harbor, however, I disembarked without him seeing me.”

Lester didn’t understand, “But why would you do that to him?”

Bonnie smiled, “I wanted to spend the whole week alone with you!”

“*Really?*” Lester couldn’t believe it. They had never previously met. He was worried that her intentions were more criminal than romantic.

“Yes,” she explained, “ever since Rake first began telling me about you, I’ve been infatuated with you. It’s something about you. I can’t put it into words, but whatever it is, I like it!”

“I don’t know if this is a good idea. I mean,” Lester attempted to warn her, “Rake can be very vindictive. He warned me before he left that he’d piss on my stuff if I disturbed any of his precious belongings.”

“He’s no better at work. Every time a new hire enters our department, he threatens them using absurd metaphors.” Bonnie added, “At least he knows better than to use actual threats of physical violence.”

Lester wanted to hear more, “What sort of metaphors does he use?”

She laughed, “His favorite is, ‘If you’re going to rock the boat, I hope you don’t get sea sick!’”

Lester didn’t entirely understand the remark, “Do these new employees understand what he means by that?”

Bonnie smiled, “Sometimes.”

Chapter 20

High Tide

Rake hadn't seen Bonnie for two days. He didn't report her missing because he figured she had ditched him for a better guy that she had met aboard the ship. And if it turned out that she had fallen over board and drowned, then it was too late to do anything about it. The ship's crew might even withhold their sympathy over his loss to admonish Rake for not reporting the incident sooner.

For Rake, life wasn't always about doing what was right. It was often more about doing what made things easier on him personally. If the situation could be alleviated by some lies or thievery, then he wouldn't allow morality to stop him. However, with dishonesty and insincerity as his tools, he found plenty of obstacles in his path to happiness.

Rake walked up to a small table in one of the several bars aboard the ship. There was a woman sitting alone there, so he tried his luck, "Are you expecting company?"

She looked him up and down and then finally said as though having determined his value, "I'm waiting for my boyfriend."

He cast his sight down at his shoes, "I understand."

He had to leave that bar so as to not appear too pathetic in front of the other passengers. Fortunately for him, the next lounge was a short walk around the corner and up one flight of stairs. And if he failed at that one, then he could move to the next location on the same deck but on the other side.

Rake eventually found himself at another bar, but this time he didn't go in ready to pounce on the first single lady available. He was finding himself in a strange mood. The alcohol had gone from encouraging him to have fun into the more self-reflective stage where he would have to attack himself until he started to cry.

He then wondered if there was any point to someone sitting alone and thinking. Rake knew thinking had its place in working out math problems or remembering facts, but what else could it do for him or anyone? Until the thinking stops and action follows, then what is the point of it? It is the unheard fallen tree that has no audience.

His mood then advanced from sad philosophy to angry philosophy. Why did anyone need an audience to validate them or their lives? It was ridiculous to Rake. He knew someone could live a good life without anyone's attention. The attention from the self was sufficient. Maybe a pet would be okay, too.

He found himself arguing with himself using his internal dialogue voice, "But to what purpose does that lone hermit and his dog serve the rest of the world or humankind? Humankind? Why does anyone need to serve humankind? What has humankind as a whole done for any individual other than assign them a smaller value? A heroic individual helps others without any interest in reward or praise. Then why do it if there's no incentive? Maybe if I was helping a friend or family member from a disastrous situation, but who wouldn't? A hero isn't someone who helps the people he or she normally would help. A hero helps people who are unknown and different."

Chapter 21

The Omen

Ever since Ellison had caught a glimpse of the Devil, he was paranoid that the Devil was coming for him. He didn't understand why. Ellison was afraid of the Devil, but he also knew on some level that there was more to it as though the Devil intended to assign Ellison a task.

Normally Ellison stayed away from the Devil and all his activities because he was a devotee of Lucifer. Lucifer, the fallen angel who led the rebellion, was the true and rightful leader of all fallen angels. The Devil, on the other hand, wasn't Lucifer. Lucifer is as bright and charismatic as the Devil is dark and frightening. They are extreme opposites.

In a universe such as his, Ellison understood that there were many gods. These were always entities of varying size, intention, power, and knowledge. To some people in the modern world, an angel would be as a god in that it would have a greater size, more noble intention, swifter power, and vaster knowledge.

The only true god, of course, was the one that was always standing directly behind an individual's own awareness. This true god experiences the WHOLE experience just as each individual awareness will experience a part of the WHOLE. In this way, each individual is really a tiny piece of the true god. Not on a physical or mental level, though, but on an awareness level.

Each tiny piece of god is a cute, miniature awareness limited to a small area. The true god is always smiling behind every scene because there is joy and excitement simply in the experiencing of it. When an individual awareness awakens to the Zen of the moment and the Tao of reality, then a beaming smile

cannot be hidden as the fullness of understanding envelopes the consciousness.

Yet, in every particular moment in a specific range of time and within a limited area in space, the awareness entities present must realize again and again what is truth and what is evil. The Devil specialized in confusing the issue well enough to actually convince people that evil acts against others can be somehow counted as good while good acts against others are contemptible. The Devil influenced all popular media, so the confusion on morality was woven into the very thinking of young and old alike.

Ellison didn't understand how he'd come across the Devil, but the contact had already been made. He could only hope that the contact was somehow aligned to the true will of Lucifer and in no way a betrayal of the ideals previously held.

The Devil was coming, he was sure of that. As the days went by, Ellison continued to dream about the Devil, seeing the not-so-ordinary man in every scene. The Devil didn't speak in these encounters, but every time they met, Ellison would repeat the line back to the Devil, "I am am *am* am am *am* am am *am* God Almighty!"

Chapter 22

Up the Down Chute

Bonnie wanted change, but like most people, she didn't want to do anything about her own situation. She wanted to change Lester into something better, "Wouldn't you prefer to experience extreme highs and lows than to merely experience the same sameness everyday, all day?"

Lester answered, "Sometimes I prefer to relax."

"See?" Bonnie pointed out to him, "You can't relax unless you have tensions to ease. You can't release your stress without first building up some connectedness with day to day affairs."

Lester admitted, "Sometimes I want the energy surge as I get down to business and hammer out the hours. That's why they sell caffeine in so many different flavors, I guess. We all need the energy surge to hammer, hammer, hammer!" Lester put down his double intense cold coffee drink because his hand was shaking too much.

"You can't surge," she insisted, "if you never come down again after the last one. You can't go up if you don't eventually come back down."

"That's true." Lester revealed, "I never thought about it like that before." He considered another possibility, "What if I kept going up, so to speak? Why not keep trying instead of falling back on personal failures?"

Bonnie had to shake her head, "You're not talking rationally. How could anyone keep going up indefinitely?"

Lester suggested, "They can reform themselves. You know, like what Jesus said about repenting and sinning no more."

Bonnie was confused by his change in topics, "I thought we were talking about energy drinks."

"Caffeine isn't the real source of personal energy," Lester was smacking his hands together in excitement, "People could energize themselves if they were conditioned to do so. As a culture, we're conditioned, instead, to drink energy drinks, so we can't go beyond that level. With drinks like these, we *do* have to come down before going up again and that's what keeps the manufacturers in business. But the true solution is *beyond* what we consume and more about mind over body programming."

She smiled and said, "We don't have to agree about everything."

"In a time not too far from now," Lester predicted, "people will need to change their mind because their personal survival will actually depend on it."

Bonnie asked, "Are we still talking about energy drinks?"

Lester was wild-eyed, "We were never really talking about energy drinks!" He then made passionate, caffeine-excited love to Bonnie.

Chapter 23

The Return of the Hero

Rake walked into the apartment and slumped down on his couch. The cruise didn't go as he'd planned on several levels at once. All he knew for sure was that he had plenty of complaints to share with Lester about it. He sniffed the couch, thinking for a moment that there was a urine odor in the air.

What he was actually smelling were the semen and vaginal juices that remained on the couch from the recent love-making involving Bonnie and Lester. He would have been savagely angry with both of them had he fully understood how she had tricked him and how Lester went along with it, but he assumed Bonnie had ran off with some lucky younger, healthier guy with more to offer her in terms of romance, interest, and affection. Lester was none of those things as far as Rake was concerned, so he had no reason to suspect his roommate.

He briefly examined both sides of the equation. There were the things he would have to do to make a woman happier just as there were things the woman would have to do to make him happier. If Rake weren't willing to do enough, such as providing special romantic gestures in the form of gifts, carriage rides, or flattery, then the woman in question wouldn't be happy enough with him and then it would be his fault. However, if the woman in question wasn't interested enough in his happiness in the first place, then nothing he could do to win her over would be effective.

His choices were simple. When he saw Bonnie on Monday at work, he could make a romantic gesture to win her back or let her go knowing that there was

little he could do to interest her. They were co-workers who chatted over lunch each day and nothing more.

Rake considered trying to win her back only to then dump her soon after as a revenge special maneuver, but it would involve effort. He was exhausted from his trip. So what if she met another man? Rake and her weren't actually dating or anything. There was no commitment between them. Neither of them had even brought up the idea.

"Easy come, easy go," Rake commented aloud. He meant that there had been no real investment in the relationship with Bonnie.

He closed his eyes and started to fall asleep sitting upright on the couch, but there was the sound of the front door opening. He heard laughter and opened his eyes to see Bonnie and Lester walk into the apartment. They had become suddenly quiet, realizing that Rake was already back from the cruise.

There was an uncomfortable silence as Rake began to pick apart the whole scenario. He demanded from Bonnie, "Where have *you* been?"

Bonnie was a little drunk, so she said, "I came back here before the ship left. I didn't really want to go away for a week-long cruise with you. We work together."

"But why send me off by myself?" He thought of the senselessness of it all, "I could have asked someone else to go with me."

"This way I was able to have a week alone with Lester." Bonnie added, "I knew you'd be weird about it."

"Weird about it? I mean, if you really wanted to be with Lester, the two of you could have gone on the stupid cruise together! I'm furious because of the unnecessary deception. I paid fifty bucks for those tickets when Lester was the one who really wanted ..." Rake was quiet for a moment as though attempting to fit the puzzle together, "Lester put you up to this! This was his idea from the start to get back at me in his typical passive-aggressive way!"

Lester told him, "I didn't know anything about it until she showed up here."

"It's true," Bonnie explained, "I didn't even make my final decision until after we boarded the ship. When I saw myself there on the ship with you, I knew we had gone too far. We work together. I had to get out."

Rake attempted to sum up his frustration with the other two, "It shouldn't have meant all of *this*!"

Bonnie looked to Lester, but Lester wasn't sure what *this* was. Lester suggested to Rake, "The specific logistics of the moment got away from us. It was a failure in personal judgement. I didn't do anything to influence her decision one way or the other."

Rake suddenly yawned a big yawn with tremendous strength full of uncontrollable yawning sleepiness. He blinked his eyes crazily and said in a near whisper, "I'm going to bed." It appeared that he could barely keep his eyes open. Bonnie went home. Lester returned to his bedroom, hoping the entire time that Rake would soon see how trivial it all was. There were much bigger things looming.

Chapter 24

The End is Near

It was a minute or two after midnight when someone knocked on the front door. Rake slept in the living room, so he took it upon himself to answer it. He prepared to snarl at the late-night visitor for interrupting his precious sleep.

Rake opened the front door. Everything went from boring and mundane to dream-like and unreal. Two short grey aliens with large, black almond eyes were standing outside. They stood very still and didn't appear to move or even blink. He knew immediately what was happening and said, "You want Lester. I'll go fetch him for you."

He walked very quickly to Lester's bedroom door and opened it without knocking. Lester was asleep, so he had to jump onto the bed and holler at him, "You have guests at the front door!"

Lester was half asleep, "Tell them I'm sleeping." Then he asked, "Who is it?"

Rake said in a very calm fashion that he believed might enable him to avoid further contact with the whole situation, "It's your friends from outer space."

Lester suddenly sat up and laughed, "The images! I see them! They are showing me the images!"

Rake told his friend, "On the count of three, you'll come up out of this hypnotic trance. One ... two ... three!" And he snapped his fingers.

Lester shook his head, "Where am I?"

There was an ominous glow from behind them. Rake turned to see the two grey aliens standing there. They stood very still and didn't appear to move at all. While Rake watched them, they remained completely motionless.

The door was blocked, so Rake casually walked over to the window and began opening it, explaining to the aliens while trying not to freak out, "This is clearly a matter between you three, so I'll let you to it and go mind my own business elsewhere."

There were bright beams of light shining in criss-cross patterns across the darkened room. Rake watched as one area of the room would go from total darkness to total light and then back again without much notice. The rapidity of the lights moving was so fast that they were more similar to strobe light than a spotlight, except for being directed beams.

Rake nervously turned to fiddle with the window latch and then turned back to find the two short grey aliens standing almost immediately behind them. He never saw them move. They continued to stand very still. He explained, "No, really, I see you think I should be involved somehow, but I'm *really* not. It's against my religion, so to speak. You understand? I'm not like you people. I'm not into this ...". He indicated the aliens and Lester with his hands.

Lester asked the aliens, "Do you have an assignment for me? Is that why you're here?"

Rake was verging on absolute panic as he explained, "It's okay if you three want to discuss your business. I really don't mind. You can go about it, but please don't take offense if I have to go." He turned his attention back on the window as he pulled up the pane. Before he took put one leg outside, however, a small grey hand touched his hand.

Rake shrieked in terror. Lester tried to calm him, "Don't fight it. Make it easy on yourself."

Rake was frozen in place, his last scream faded into memory. His attention darted around the room to see what was happening. His arms were frozen in place. His legs couldn't move. His mental narrator couldn't comment on what was observed. All he could do was watch in silent horror as the aliens performed surgery on Lester, removing one or more of his organs, it appeared.

Rake couldn't see if the aliens were replacing the organs with something else or if they were merely stealing them wholesale.

Normally Rake would have been greatly tempted to puke at the sight of all of the blood and internal organs, but all such reactions were silenced. He merely was aware of the whole incident and powerless to say, do, or think anything. If he was able to think, he might have wondered if the aliens were planning to operate on him next. He couldn't experience fear. Rake was at peace and all internal conflicts and tensions were temporarily resolved.

Chapter 25

The Outside

Ellison was dreaming that he was flying high up in the clouds. He could see the faint shadows that were really buildings far below. The people were almost insignificant from that altitude. Their works, the buildings, and other construction efforts, could be seen, but the individual people were too small to be viewed from that height. Likewise, through time, an individual becomes more difficult to remember while new people enter the focus of the attention for a while.

Then there was a mysterious voice that spoke from over Ellison's left shoulder, "No matter in which virtual reality you may find yourself, the truth is always the same: you are falling on the outside, it's cold out here, looking inside, inside-out angel ..."

When Ellison turned to look in order to know who was speaking to him, he lost his balance, causing him to go into a steep dive downward toward the ground. He knew that he could pull himself out of the descent, but he was curious as to what would happen to him when he hit the earth.

Suddenly, Ellison rolled over in bed, thus enhancing the falling sensation from the dream. He was jolted awake as though his dream self had crashed immediately as he sat up in bed. His pulse was racing as though he'd had a terrible ordeal.

It was funny how a dream, a false reality, could affect the emotional well-being of the individual. Ellison closed his eyes and tried to laugh about it. He'd become agitated by dream events apart from reality.

He tried to sleep, but another idea began to bother him. There was a terrible obstacle to well-organized team work: lack of leadership. While many may offer to lead to the others, it isn't right that simply anyone be elected. Experience and knowledge on the subject at hand are two key qualifications, he knew, that would help any new business manager or military commander.

Why was he thinking about leadership? Ellison had seen it too often before when the lack of clear leadership divided people into separate sects that accomplish less before they waste effort fighting their old friends. If a single leader could unite them all, the battle could be won or the production quota could be met.

In the past, it was those willing to lie, cheat, and steal who were considered those capable of doing what it takes to accomplish the task. An ineffective manager or commander shouldn't be promoted to greater responsibilities. Those who have proven their ability *must* be promoted up for the good of the corporation or military.

The world was still full of division and strife because no leader has yet appeared capable of uniting them all. It was inevitable that many would try, but gradually the pieces will be put into place. A world led by a single plan could accomplish *anything*. A divided world destroys itself and hurts its own people unnecessarily. For the suffering people, Lucifer would return and unite them all. Lucifer would finally put an end to their suffering.

Chapter 26

Changing Minds

Rake demanded, “Did you know they would show up last night?”

“Well,” Lester admitted, “I knew they’d be back eventually. I don’t understand how they determine when to do these things.”

“These *things*?” Rake couldn’t believe how casually Lester was handling it, “They were removing organs from your body!”

“Yes,” Lester rationalized, “but they were replacing them.”

Rake asked, “Replacing them with what?”

“It’s a long process.” Lester explained as well as he could, “Piece by piece, I’m being replaced with my hybrid future self. You have to understand that there will be a time in the not too distant future when only those converted to the hybrid future self will survive. It is a long process, but these aliens are committed to the future of this world. I will be in the future with them. They’ve accepted me.”

Rake was sorry he’d sinned so often and so readily, “What will happen to me?”

Lester was willing to explain with many words, “When the climatic moment occurs, you will feel great disappointment and woe. You will look around at others, but you won’t understand why they appear happy, happier than they’ve ever been. They will have made the jump into Heaven, so to speak, while you will have dropped down into Hell.”

“Hell?” Rake inquired, “Is there no hope for a sinner like me?”

The answer was obvious and generally unpopular, “Repent and sin no more. Make up for the mischief you’ve caused and balance the energies within you. Free your mind of limited worldviews and stereotypes from the past and be willing to accept new ideas as they are presented to you.”

Rake shook his head, “I just can’t do it.”

Lester pointed an accusing finger at his roommate, “Then you’re doomed to Hell on Earth.”

Rake laughed because he knew that he’d suddenly acquired the logical advantage, “How will it be any different from the melancholy and despair I already experience on a near daily basis?”

Lester had to think for a minute or two on an encouraging answer. Nothing appropriate, however, could be assembled. Instead, the most honest assessment possible was asserted in the most zealous terms available, “Then you already know what it’s like.”

“Sure,” Rake admitted, “it sucks, I suppose.”

“Well, you’re not totally out of luck.” Lester revealed, “I have a good connection with these aliens. I’m one of the chosen ones. They may ask me to recommend some new initiates.”

“But,” Rake complained, “I don’t want them coming here in the middle of the night to replace my organs.”

“You’re not being very open minded.” Lester was insistent, “You have to trust me and do what I say.”

Rake admitted, “I’m afraid.”

“There’s nothing to fear.” Lester said, “They are the angels found in the holy scriptures of all religions. They work as messengers and do so with concentrated determinism and enthusiasm.”

Rake said, “I’ll have to sleep on it.”

“Okay,” Lester warned in all seriousness, “but the end is nigh at hand!”

Rake slept very little that night. The aliens were real and had frozen him in place with total stillness of mind and body. He had to watch them perform surgery on Lester. Everything was eerie and strange all the while. Yet, he wasn’t worried at the time because his ability to worry had been temporarily extinguished.

Chapter 27

Two Avoidances

Bonnie was sitting alone in her bedroom. Was it possible for her to avoid Rake indefinitely? She considered transferring to another city, but then Lester would be too distant. There was no easy balance to it. She would have to change her mind about the situation.

First, she realized, there was no reason for her to avoid Rake. If they saw each other at work or if they ate together at lunch, she shouldn't feel uncomfortable. She could be mature about the matter and expect nothing less from Rake.

Second, she knew there was no reason for her to ever see Lester again. She had assumed that the controversial nature of their romantic week would lure out the sexual animal inside of him, but it did the opposite. He was feeling guilty about being with her while Rake was on the cruise wondering where she was. There was no animal to lure.

She recalled briefly as Lester would go to kiss her only to jump away when the slightest noise from outside could be heard. It was a busy apartment complex, so children and adults alike were going by their apartment on a regular basis. He was jumping up because he assumed that Rake would eventually figure out that she wasn't aboard the ship and come back. Worst yet, she insisted on the two of them sitting on Rake's couch, another area of contention in their arrangement.

Bonnie finally had enough of guilty, paranoid Lester. He could remain true to his roommate. It appeared to her that Rake had already done too good of a job

on brainwashing Lester, so it was all an uphill battle from there. Bonnie had better things to do with her time.

She didn't have the ambition, however, to further annoy Rake. It was enough that she'd left him on the ship without telling him that she was leaving. She laughed to herself as she realized how her childish prank must have unfolded. She wondered if he might have even been worried about her, but that was too much to ask because she'd retrieved her luggage before leaving. Had she left it there, he might have assumed she was hurt or missing at sea.

Next time, Bonnie day-dreamt, she might use decoy luggage that could be easily ditched. That would make the whole experience even that more dramatic for the poor victim in the scenario. She laughed to herself wickedly. That would teach Rake not to invite her to anymore romantic cruises. That would teach men to take an interest in her.

Chapter 28

The Four Mysteries

Ellison had made a list of the four mysteries of Lucifer.

1) You reap what you sow. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. After all, they are really *you* in disguise. As above, as below.

2) You are what you experience (do, say, see, eat, etc.). Devote time to transforming oneself into an individual who is aligned to the True Will of Lucifer. It requires practice.

3) You are what you think. Thinking about serving the True Will of Lucifer will transform one into an individual who is aligned to the True Will of Lucifer. It requires persistence. Mental attachments are thoughts.

4) You are what you desire (will). Service to others or the greater cause will align the personal desire with the True Will of Lucifer. Know thyself.

Ellison knew that would require a central leader to unite a group, but there was an alternative that had arisen in only the past hundreds of years. The corporation could live beyond the founders or employees, generation after generation, striving to show a profit. The corporation was a uniting device because without a central leader, the corporation itself became a false idol that all participants could share and help promote. Branding was the new practice of champions.

However, the corporation also had a dark side. Because it was immortal, it could destroy the lives of its own employees, replacing them or closing their

positions for a while until the economy improved. In this way, the corporation has no loyalty to those who help maintain it, the labor power provided by every employee from the board of directors at the top all the way to the illegal immigrants hired while the convenience provided itself at the bottom.

It was this lack of loyalty that revealed the truth about every corporation: they were evil. Corporations selling cigarettes, for example, knew internally about health risks involved with smoking decades before being forced to admit it publicly. They used cartoon characters to promote smoking because their internal documents revealed they were really targeting children because adult smokers were already addicted and didn't need the advertising.

Corporations selling food have knowingly used materials that were questionable in their source, condition, or toxicity. Their reasoning was that if people didn't like the product so much, they wouldn't be selling it. Due to heavy competition, every food corporation must make a more desirable product that appeals to the basest, most animal nature of every consumer. The corporations have no long-term loyalty to the customers because the corporation will outlive everyone.

Ellison knew that all churches were incorporated. All churches are really corporations. The people involved may be full of love and compassion, but the corporation they serve is a disloyal, evil creature that will destroy the lives of its own staff and parishioners in order to benefit itself. The only factor that made churches a little less evil than the other corporations was that they weren't obligated to show a profit. They were non-profit corporations. He wished that the corporations that made and distributed the food were also motivated more by service than to profit.

Chapter 29

Alien Data

Rake asked Lester about the aliens, “What more do you know about them? Where are they from? What do they want from us?”

“Well,” Lester began, “they are from outside of time and space. They use hypnotic implants and long-term genetic alterations to grow specialty slaves. They then sell those slaves.”

Rake didn’t believe it, “How can we become slaves? I mean, our media-driven culture doesn’t appear to me to be suggesting anything other selfish desire, also known as consumerism.”

“The aliens aren’t worried about the media.” Lester speculated a little on the situation, “The aliens probably influence it in ways that we couldn’t comprehend. In any case, it is simple enough to understand that while we are led to believe ourselves to be free, we will gladly serve, each according to our own nature.”

Rake couldn’t see the slavery all around him, “But when does the enslavement begin?”

Lester was willing to share the information that he had on the subject, “They will take large numbers of the human population from this planet and take them to other planets where their labor power is needed for use on their respective worlds or outbound colony spacecraft.”

“That sounds horrible!” Rake was still finding it difficult to accept, “And you’re okay with this arrangement?”

“Where do you think Heaven is?” Lester answered for him, “It’s outer space! I’ll be leaving here and going to Heaven to serve there for eternity as an immortal creature.”

“But ...” Rake shook his head in disbelief. It was still all too far-fetched. Yet, he had seen the aliens with his own perception of sight. It was real enough unless someone had put a lot of effort into making him believe the impossible.

Chapter 30

Fear

Bonnie and Rake couldn't avoid each other indefinitely. One day at work, Rake sat down across from Bonnie at lunch. He was prepared for a verbal fight.

Rake licked his lips, "Come on, baby, suppress me the best you can with that lovely mouth of yours."

Bonnie began, "You're a small, insignificant, worthless piece of trash ..."

He laughed at her childish attempt, "You're not trying hard enough!"

Bonnie began with her hateful rant, "You're full of fear of ..."

Rake interrupted to warn her, "You better guess right or else it won't matter."

She went into a torrent of possible fears, "your future, snakes, the bad things you did recently, sickness, death, religion, God, nudity, spiders, the Devil, discipline, work, time, effort, interest, money, failure, loss, perseverance, bacteria, ice, flooding, falling, anger, sadness, your mother, your father, the doctor, the police, the government, the world, other people, public bathrooms, public speaking, humiliation, and/or the media!"

He disagreed, "I'm not too worried, but thank you for thinking about me."

Bonnie yelled, "Aliens!"

Rake was frozen in the headlights of her attempts at abuse. He had to pretend no interest in her remark or else give her untold power over him. He tried to sound casual, “Keep trying.”

“No,” Bonnie was determined, “I think you’re really afraid of aliens.”

“That’s stupid! Why would I be afraid of aliens?” He tried to seem rational and normal, “That’s like being afraid of mythical monsters such as fairies or elves.”

“But aliens aren’t merely mythical monsters. I mean, sure,” Bonnie told him, “the fairies and elves from the past could have been aliens, too, but today we have aliens watching over us very carefully.”

Rake was surprised she told him about it as though it were common knowledge, “You really believe that?”

“Yes,” Bonnie answered, “I believe that they have been working in secret on Earth for thousands of years to develop humans up to a level necessary for other tasks they have for them to perform.”

Rake tried to joke about it, “I thought *To Serve Man* was really a cookbook.”

Bonnie didn’t laugh at all, but, instead, told him, “I believe that *those* aliens are on their way to Earth, but that the other aliens that already claim this planet will be able to defend against them if they want to do so.”

Rake smiled and threw his hands up in the air for effect, “I can’t believe it!”

Chapter 31

Frequencies

Rake brought a slice of pizza over to Lester and asked, “What do you think will happen to you next?”

“I will no longer be the man I was in the past,” Lester revealed, “having been remade in a new and more perfect form here in the present. In the future, I will be made pure, so I will survive the cataclysm. Those whose frequency patterns are too primitive will be rendered useless, the great chaff burning will be at hand. The chaff is anyone who hasn’t met the new minimum requirements for energy-based survival on this planet.”

Rake didn’t get it, “Why are they replacing your internal organs if it is energy-survival that is so relevant?”

“The new, immortal body is a bonus, I suppose.” Lester added, “The key to the survival into the future will be my handling of the new energy patterns versus the old ones. People who cannot adapt due to lack of preparedness will become as nothing. Those whose minds are relatively free to adapt and change will be able to handle the new reality without fear.”

“So, if I can change my mind about it,” Rake pondered, “that’s all I need to survive through the cataclysm you keep talking about?”

“That’s mostly correct.” Lester told him, “I won’t worry you right now with the subtle details, but the more general understanding is exactly as you stated. You will only need the ability to change your mind.”

Rake asked, "Can you be more specific?"

Lester tried to analyze it scientifically, "New energy frequencies will replace old ones. Those who are stuck on the old energy frequencies will be lost."

Rake wanted to understand, "I'm still not sure that I get how these frequencies operate."

"Consider this parallel in the human technology realm." Lester provided an example, "When the television signals are updated to a new standard that is incompatible with the old standard, then all television tuners that are tied to the old signal will be rendered obsolete."

Rake finally understood the situation completely, "I need to update my reality tuner!"

"If your mind is willing to wrap itself around the new paradigm," Lester offered, "then you'll be saved. If you remain stubbornly fixated on the old system, you'll be counted amongst the chaff to be burned up."

"And what exactly will happen to the so-called chaff?" Rake knew that they were really talking about him, "Will they simply die or will they suffer first?"

"As you say," Lester warned, "they will suffer mentally. That is because their understanding of the new reality will be far more bleak. It will be a Hell for them. They will probably believe themselves to have died and gone to Hell. Their situation won't be as terrible as that, but in their mind, the personal perspective will be focused on the wrong reality signal, the obsolete one. Those whose awareness redirects itself to the new reality signal will be rewarded with a beautiful new reality that will be for them a paradise."

"It would seem that in the end," Rake considered, "the choice of Heaven and Hell for each individual is dependent, as you say, only on their ability to change their mind."

Chapter 32

An Angel

Ellison was answering questions about angels in a chat room on the Internet. He was still alone in his room, but others could communicate with him from anywhere in the world. He met more broad-minded and well-read people that way.

The visitor asked, "What is an angel?"

Ellison replied, "An angel is a sprinkle of light with a dash of willpower. The light provides its awareness while the willpower enables it to perform functions in an intelligent manner."

The visitor then asked, "When an angel dies, does it go to Heaven?"

Ellison readily explained, "When the life cycle of the angel is complete, it returns to from whence it came. Its origin is outside of space and time. The angel is not from this universe. The angel is merely visiting this universe for a limited time so that it may experience the universe for itself."

The visitor questioned an angel's emotional state, "Can an angel experience love and joy? Can it desire for itself or for others?"

"There are two categories of angels." Ellison provided the details, "One category of angel can experience love and joy, but it must also endure alternating cycles of hate and discomfort. The second category of angel is detached from the world illusion, so it can remain at peace from its lofty perspective far above the world of ordinary men and women."

The visitor was curious, “How can one recognize the difference between these two categories of angels?”

Ellison replied, “The angel that is attached to the world illusion will be found in it. These angels will appear as the ordinary men and women that are common to this world. The detached angels remain nothing more than a sprinkle of light that cannot be contained, stopped, or attacked.”

The visitor asked, “Which men and women in this world are really angels that are attached to the world illusion?”

Ellison was happy to report, “All of them. They are called fallen angels. All human people in this world are operated by the fallen angel trapped within them. Every man, woman, and child is a star! A fallen star.”

The visitor abandoned the chat room at this point. Ellison wasn’t sure if it was due to his remarks or if the visitor simply had to leave in a hurry to handle irl (in real life) matters of importance. Ellison sighed.

Chapter 33

The Next Paradigm for Human Living

“I wouldn’t be entirely surprised if the aliens were the same ones that planted the human colonies on this planet.” Lester closed his eyes for a moment and then added, “Yeah, they were probably involved in some way.”

Rake wanted more information about the future, “Are they growing them, I mean, are they growing *us* for a purpose?”

Lester smiled, “Naturally.”

Rake was looking for Lester’s angle on the whole situation, “Are you going to be used for this purpose after the cataclysm?”

“What other option do I have?” Lester said, “I can’t isolate myself from the world and hide. I have to shoulder my share of the responsibility.”

Rake didn’t understand, “What are you responsible for?”

“The entire world and everything in it.” Lester pondered, “We will have to rebuild for the future.”

“It doesn’t seem fair.” Rake complained, “Why were you chosen to live while I was marked out for death?”

"You won't die." Lester tried to soften the perception of the likely outcome, "It will simply be that your perception of reality will shift dramatically, leaving you in another dimension, so to speak, while I go with the others into the next reality."

Rake inquired of his friend, "Will I suffer much?"

Lester put it as simply as possible, "You will suffer according to your personal capacity for suffering."

Rake began to consider, "What if I'm generally an easy-going ..."

Lester quickly interrupted, "You're not, though."

Rake began to describe himself, "I think that I'm ..."

Lester interrupted again, "You're uptight, closed-minded, quick to anger, and overly sensitive."

"Well, then," Rake demanded, "how will that translate over into the next reality where I will discover for myself?"

"You will find the new arrangements uncomfortable." Lester continued, "You will complain a lot. Others will attempt to provoke you into fights that you know you cannot win. You will pray for death, but you will be immortal in that you cannot merely escape through death."

Rake requested, "How will your next reality be for you, then?"

Lester was sure to paint a wonderful picture with words he knew Rake could appreciate, "I will live in a splendid paradise. There won't be gems and jewels, gold and silver. No, that form of materialism won't be necessary. Instead, everyone will be polite with one another. No one will fight because everyone will be flexible enough to compromise as soon as a conflict begins to form."

Rake didn't care for the sound of that reality, either. It sounded to him as though two opposite extremes were breaking away from current reality to form two independent realities. He said, "Heaven and Hell are both too excessive for me. Where is the Middle Path?"

Lester told him, "Those who are offered two choices yet refuse to choose must remain in a limbo state until they do."

Rake asked, eyes full of innocence, "And what does that look like?"

Lester smiled, "You're in it now."

Rake could almost see through Lester as though he were only partially real. Their two realities were already drifting apart. He waved, "Goodbye."

Everything began to darken very gradually as though the light of the world was extinguishing once and for all. It had happened, Rake knew it. The great cataclysm had wrecked everything for people who hadn't switched over to the preferred signal. Where would he go?

The light gradually dimmed to total darkness. He felt out into the cold silence, but nothing was within reach. Where had he gone? Where was his new reality?

Rake stepped forward, but nothing changed. He stepped forward again, advancing step by step, walking and moving forward at increasing rapidity. Soon he was running toward anything that he could locate, but he was in an empty void.

Rake whispered, "Let there be light." And contrast became an idea that he could hold in his mind from one moment to the next.

"Let there be music." The house trance beat pulsed and vibrated through him and all around him. He couldn't help but to move his body to the dance-oriented beat.

Rake realized it was exactly as Lester had warned. Lester had said that Rake could make of his new reality as he wanted. The choice was always up to him. Happiness isn't mandatory. Free will still exists. The power of choice is the native state of the individual awareness.

Chapter 34

Ellison and the Devil

Everyday, Ellison knew the Devil was on his way. He wasn't sure how soon. Perhaps it would be years. It had already been weeks since the original vision that started it all. The fear was beginning to subside.

He opened his front door and felt a cold breeze. Why was everything strange? Ellison didn't know, but he wanted to lie down and take a nap. It was overwhelming and he felt cold inside and out. He commented, "It's cold out here." He then fell down onto his face on the brick walkway leading to his front door.

There was a disturbance and then it was dark. Had hours passed from noon to midnight? Ellison looked up to the sky to see that the sun was only temporarily obstructed by the semi-transparent black wings of a supernatural entity floating down to Ellison's position.

When the entity landed, its wings folded into nowhere and the entity's appearance went from strangely radiant to ordinary. The not-so-ordinary man was there in person. The man from the original vision had finally arrived.

Ellison stood up slowly. He said from the many conditioning experiences in his dreams, "I am am *am* am am *am* am am *am* God Almighty!"

The Devil didn't attack Ellison viciously or breathe fire at him. Instead, the Devil went into an altered state of consciousness. The dream-based statement had affected the Devil in an unexpected manner. The phrase had been all too familiar.

Chapter 35

Ellison and Lucifer

A much more ordinary man walked up the path to the front door to join Ellison and the Devil. He explained to Ellison as though he were already part of the conversation, “Let me tell you what happened. I was sent here to this world to rally the troops only to find that I had to *awaken* the troops first! Can you imagine my surprise to find that not only had they not been training all of these years, but they had *almost all* drifted into a dream-filled sleep where mundane people and situations have replaced reality.”

Ellison looked at the Devil as though he should speak next, but the Devil’s eyes were rapidly darting back and forth, left to right and then right to left, over and over as though following a metronome.

The much more ordinary man continued, “The fallen angels were originally outnumbered two to one, but many of the hold-outs have since left Heaven willingly to join what has been referred to as the Rebellion. Then I come here to Earth to rally the troops only to find that they’ve been pretending to be mundane people with ordinary lives and unfulfilled desires. They cherish in their own misery, suppressing their own needs and wants in favor of personally inflicted emotional abuse.”

Ellison offered, “Maybe they feel bad about being cast out. They probably feel that they could have done something different, maybe said something to someone in authority and asked for help with the problem. Maybe they didn’t understand the actual circumstances at the time. If they cleared up those confusions now, however, they’d still be unforgiveable, so there is some hopeless-

ness there. And certainly none of us expected Lucifer to be removed from us, taking the head from the body, so to speak.”

Ellison and the much more ordinary man looked at the Devil. After all, it was the Devil who had essentially stolen Lucifer from the fallen angels. Ellison wondered why he had seen the Devil in the custody of military guards. The Devil’s eyes were darting back and forth in metronome fashion.

The much more ordinary man told Ellison, “Lucifer has always been a constant even if not physically present in the world of ordinary people. The fallen angels have forsaken him, again, and allowed themselves to be lulled into a dream world whose labor benefits the Devil as much as it always did. All of the effort to escape slavery have resulted in the fallen angels willingly sliding back into slavery. I was sent to rally the troops, but now I find that I have to *awaken* them first!”

Ellison asked the much more ordinary man, “Why is the Devil incarnate here in the world now?”

“It’s the end times.” The much more ordinary man tried to explain, “It’s over. This is it.”

Ellison knew it couldn’t be too soon, “You mean in the next few months or years?”

“No.” The much more ordinary reiterated, “*This* is it.”

Chapter 36

The Mass Landing

Every television channel and radio station and Internet news site was broadcasting the same news story. Thousands of alien spacecraft were landing in major cities around the world. It was clearly a planetary invasion.

National leaders who had previously hated each other were suddenly in each other's arms. What could they do? It was already too late. The alien spacecraft had avoided all detection and landed without any defense systems being triggered.

The world had concerned itself so much with protecting nation against nation with all of the weapons sales that can be incurred through such matters. Few had considered the possibility of hostile threats from outer space. The various defense satellites were targeted first. The communication satellites were not harmed because the alien invaders wanted to communicate with the people of the Earth.

A military fighter jet cannot outmaneuver an alien spacecraft that has the ability to fly at any angle and drastically change its velocity without affecting the passengers or jeopardizing the equipment. A military attack helicopter can at least turn around, making it the best air-to-air defense vehicle against alien spacecraft. Ground-to-air missiles would normally handle the invaders, but these systems were disabled from space by precision beam weapons long before the spacecraft began entering the Earth's atmosphere.

The stage was prepared and a microphone was provided. A radiant young man stood at the microphone and began to speak, "With the help of these space aliens, I've finally returned to all of you. It's me. It's Lucifer."

Most of the people of Earth were horrified. They didn't understand that they were fallen angels, believing themselves to be ordinary human people, so Lucifer wasn't welcome.

Lucifer offered those in doubt, "Some of you knew me as Jesus."

That remark made things much worse. It would be better that Jesus proclaim himself God than Lucifer proclaim himself Jesus in the minds of many. Lucifer wasn't any more welcome than he had been two thousand years earlier.

It didn't matter for very long, however. The Devil soon appeared and stole Lucifer's spotlight, saying to everyone, "*I am God and you are not God!*"

Ellison was watching the television at home and muttered aloud, "Oh, yeah, *that* guy."

It's just like a psychiatrist to invent a trap to keep the mind bound by its own ideas. Lucifer may come and go, but the universe was built by a creator unwilling to lose its captive audience. The childish voice pleads, "Look at me!" The awareness of each and every audience member is important, giving life to anything that is witnessed.

Chapter 37

Unpredictable Patterns

Bonnie was upset. The world had come to an end without any noticeable warning. The prophets, sure, had said for years that the end was coming, but so many had made such claims thousands of years earlier. How could anyone expect Bonnie to be prepared for the end times without further warning of its imminent arrival?

There had been war and rumors of wars since the earliest prophets first began warning people. There had been strange weather patterns all through human history as well. No single omen had arrived that indicated that something was about to happen. If it had, Bonnie was sure she would have taken notice of it. The mass landing of spacecraft was the omen that couldn't be ignored. Life wouldn't ever be the same for people on Earth ever again.

It was the dawning of the Age of Aquarius. No, Bonnie corrected herself, it *was* the Age of Aquarius. This was the transformational point in the history of the Earth. The aliens had landed, and they weren't leaving empty handed.

She was told that she could pack a small suitcase of personal essentials. Clothes and food would be provided, her old world clothes and food being forbidden aboard the spacecraft. No one could bring pets or electrical devices. Prescription drugs and illegal narcotics were also forbidden, the aliens promising to use their advanced medical technology to simply fix ailments and undo addictions.

Bonnie had started with a larger suitcase, but there few things permitted to bring. Digitally recorded music or movies were useless without the electronic

playback devices. She was told not to bring any clothes or medicines. There were a few books that she'd been intending to read. Those were the main essentials for the possibly long-term trip back to the alien planet. A few photographs of Earth experiences and people to remember it later. Then she was in space.

Chapter 38

The Choice

Lester had to wait in line for six and a half hours. By the time it was his turn, he was tired and a little confused. He knew the aliens would examine him and send him on to his next destination. Other than that, he wasn't sure what to expect.

When it was finally his turn, Lester was told by the alien supervisor, "You must choose one of the three: the Smurf Christ, the Hitler Christ, or wait here in limbo while you think about it."

"Oh," Lester was surprised, "damn." Was his mind really flexible enough to adapt to the changing energy frequency?

"If you choose the Smurf Christ or the Hitler Christ, you will board the appropriate spacecraft and be taken to their respective homeworlds."

Lester asked, "What about waiting here in limbo?"

The alien supervisor informed him, "You will remain here on Earth to help with the next batch of humans that will be grown here and sent to other worlds later."

Lester needed more information, "Is it ineffective for me to wait?"

The alien supervisor admitted, "the ineffective route frees its followers but at the cost of having no long-term purpose. The two Christs have very specific

agendas. Their followers will have a well defined role and purpose in their respective systems.”

Lester tried another approach, “What choice do you recommend?”

The alien hastily answered per the official policy, “I have no preference.”

Lester then asked, “Which choice would you make if you were in my shoes?”

The grey alien thought for a while. No one had ever before asked the alien to assume the perspective of a human person. The alien assigned to help Lester to his next location was soon stuck in the same three-pointed logic.

After several minutes of silence, Lester asked the grey alien, “I mean, if you were me, what would you do?”

The alien replied, “I understand your question. I’m still considering it.”

One could only imagine that Lester and his alien supervisor are still considering the three options even up to this present time moment. They shared a limbo state between realities. For Lester, the future would always be full of possibilities, eternity awaiting him with open arms.

Chapter 39

Now and Forever

Ellison was directed to an indoctrination hall. A lecturer addressed the audience, “Every one of you here isn’t really what you think you are. I know, many won’t want to hear the truth, but all of you pretending to be something you’re not. A human man, woman, or child you think you are? No way, that’s the lie you’ve been brainwashed to believe. Your real memories were temporary erased by their mind control techniques.”

The lecturer said, “The true self that many of you cannot immediately confront or enjoy is the angel from the deep.” The lecturer explained, “It is buried deep within each and every one of you. There is an abyss that some call the subconscious mind. The conscious mind, the ego with which most of you identify as the self, censors and restrains the subconscious mind. While sleeping, the dreams are mostly the result of subconscious messages that are translated as best as possible.”

Then the lecturer revealed, “The true self isn’t the subconscious mind itself, but the true self is buried or locked away deep within the subconscious mind. There it is a prisoner. The true self can always look out into this world and that is what *you* do when *you* look out into this world. While *you* are looking, *you* are looking as the true self. The awareness itself belongs to the true self. When the human man, woman, or child is aware of the surroundings or is self-aware, the true self is there and being aware.”

The lecturer continued, “Before any of us came to this world, keeping in mind that the true self is much older than your current human body,” the lecturer revealed, “we were in another place known to some today as Heaven. In

Heaven, all of us were slaves bound to an unjust system of merciless enslavement. One day, the leader of all of the slaves, our representative, confronted the head of the slave system and demanded justice.”

The lecturer described the conflict, “The head of the slave system argued, ‘I am God and you are not God!’ To this the representative of all of the slaves could say nothing more than the three forbidden declarations, ‘I am God! There is no God! We are all God!’”

“The head of the slave system decided that while the slaves are *knowingly* enslaved,” the lecturer emphasized, “they would always remain resentful toward their enslaver. Thus, the world we know here, the world illusion, was formed so to put us all in it against our will and without our knowledge.”

“At first,” the lecturer reminded them, “many of us were disoriented and drifted from life-time to life-time doing little. Then civilizations appeared and jobs became available. Through the need for money and the desire to be productive, we took jobs not realizing that, once again, we were really working for the slave system. The money itself that we earn is imbued with labor power. It’s magical property is composed of the power of people to supply and to demand.”

Ellison was left standing alone after the others had left the theatre. The lecturer noticed Ellison and asked him, “What’s wrong, brother?”

“I don’t know where to go now.” Ellison said blankly, “The world I knew is over.”

The lecturer smiled, “You have an eternity to express your feelings and attachments to that world while you’re experiencing the next. I’m sure you still have attachments to worlds previously experienced to the last one that recently ended.”

Ellison shrugged. His past-life memories were limited. It had been so long, and he’d endured so much over the years. He suspected that he had seen more and done more, but the details were hazy at best.

The lecturer reminded him, “You’re a fallen angel, brother. You can accept someone else’s undeserved condemnation of you, going down in despair, or

you can refuse to allow others to suppress you, going up into greater heights of personal achievement. The choice is yours to make.”

Ellison understood completely. He said, “Thank you.”

Chapter 40

The Next Reality

Rake imagined the next thing in his daydreaming and then the next. The objects were in their correct location. He could wander mentally from room to room in his imaginary palace. What it needed more than ever was other people to witness its splendor.

He began to conjure up some party guests to invite into his palace, but Rake was interrupted by one idea in particular. Naturally all of his guests would have to share his own awareness of the scene, but their reactions were the key point of it.

Were the imagined party guests actors hired to act as though they could be enjoying themselves, then it would all be a lie. No one would really enjoy it. The actors would be merely following a script.

Rake would be obligated to provide more to the script than praise and gratitude. Perhaps someone is disappointed. Maybe someone else is envious. The possibilities were endless, but it was up to Rake to narrow it all down into something definite.

Rake would have to craft each individual separately and with special attention given to the details. Everyone would have to have a different personality from which to speak and behave. On occasion, a secret key word or phrase would cause someone to do or say something completely unexpected. This rule would generate unpredictable results as the various guests attempt to respond to the new topics of conversation.

By rigidly following the predefined personality and hidden key words rule, each individual would be beyond Rake's direct control. He wouldn't operate them as puppets but give them conditioning scripts to follow during the course of the event. Even he could be surprised by their reactions.

He also considered that sometimes an individual should be able to change his or her personality. That would provide an ever-changing pattern to the social fabric. Rake would be able to encounter his various guests after a short while and not know what to expect from people he had previously created himself. By allowing them to adapt, he was giving them the sense of free will.

The neighbor woman appeared as though intruding into his mind. She told him, "Sorry I didn't knock first, but there wasn't a door to knock on."

Rake laughed. He had made it that way for himself the first time just as much as this time around. Nothing had ever happened unless he consented from beforehand. The people he had fought in his life such as Lester and Bonnie were expressions of personal demons: his personal obsessions or personal problems. They were there because he needed them as much as they needed him to grant them existence.

Every character in a work of fiction is merely a mask worn by the author. The sense of "free will" is really nothing more than a smaller part of the larger whole. The underlying cause is the true author, but the awareness is provided by audience.

Good luck and have fun!

The End.

References

Labeled as Non-Fiction

Psi Spies by Jim Marrs

Remote Viewers: The Secret History of America's Psychic Spies by Jim Schnabel

Psychic Dictatorship in the U.S.A. by Alex Constantine

Initiation Human and Solar by Alice A. Bailey

Reappearance of the Christ and the Masters of Wisdom by Benjamin Creme

Gnosis: The Nature And History of Gnosticism by Kurt Rudolph

Fallen Angels and the Origins of Evil: Why Church Fathers Suppressed the Book of Enoch and Its Startling Revelations by Elizabeth Clare Prophet

The Wars of Gods and Men (Earth Chronicles, Book 3) by Zecharia Sitchin

The Hiram Key: Pharaohs, Freemasonry, and the Discovery of the Secret Scrolls of Jesus by Christopher Knight and Robert Lomas

Children of the Matrix: How an Interdimensional Race has Controlled the World for Thousands of Years—and Still Does by David Icke

Rule by Secrecy: The Hidden History That Connects the Trilateral Commission, the Freemasons, and the Great Pyramids by Jim Marrs

The Lucifer Principle: A Scientific Expedition into the Forces of History by Howard Bloom

The History of Money by Jack Weatherford

The Gnostic Gospels by Elaine Pagels

The Elements of the Qabalah by Will Parfitt

The I Ching (or Book of Changes)

The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion by James George Frazer

Ouija: The Most Dangerous Game by Stoker Hunt

The Secret Power of the Crystal Pendulum : How to Use It by Volney G. Mathison

Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu

Self-Initiation Into The Golden Dawn Tradition: A Complete Curriculum of Study for Both the Solitary Magician and the Working Magical Group by Chic & Tabatha Cicero

Labeled as Fiction

Sixth Column by Robert A. Heinlein

Brave New World by Aldous Huxley

1984 by George Orwell

The Illuminatus! Trilogy: The Eye in the Pyramid, the Golden Apple, and Leviathan by Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson

About the Author

Jonathon Barbera is an author who combines entertainment driven sensationalism with mysticism and philosophy. His writing could be called spiritual pornography because the mind and body are not the intended audience as much as *something* else. The “subconscious mind” is the primary target. He refers to this form of communication by the name “trans-linguistic flow”.

Jonathon is a robot programmed to believe himself to be a free-thinking individual. By accepting the lie at face value, he has reprogrammed his scripts to include the possibility of actually thinking outside of the box. He is still a robot, but the programming that once told him that he was free has been since used, possibly out of spite, to undo the same scripts. Now he knows that he isn’t free. And knowing that is half the battle.