

THE
ÜBERMENSCHEN

A Billy Taylor Book

by James F. Whitehead

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These works are produced at the request of B.T. as a record of events, from the first, the Eve Sharif affair, I have been at pains to point out my unsuitability for the task. My English is not good, in grammar especially. The detailed explanations are necessary, and I try to simplify as much as possible, but B.T.'s work is complex and at times arcane (if that is the right word).

Moreover, I have not the facilities for professional proof reading and editing. All this I have pointed out to B.T., but of no avail, he insists on sending me material. So here it is, I hope the reader can understand and my poor abilities not prevent these stories from being read. Thank you in anticipation for your understanding.

JFW.

www.jliat.com

It's time to reevaluate time, as in sequences... which have
caused this mayhem, where, here!

(Many coincidental computer crashes in writing this.)

(Some material based loosely on Wikipedia & "Myths & Legends"
Dorling Kingsbury)

PART ONE THE UNTERMANN

CHAPTER ONE: THE SKULL

Not many people in Lloyd House remember the Eve Sharif affair. Lloyd House is the headquarters of The West Midlands Police, those that do remember one summer when a missing girl scare turned into a false alarm. A few others, some still in the force, remember differently and included in these few are Chief Constable White, DI Benjamin Washington, now promoted, and DS Kate Moore. Outside of the force others who know something of the actual events of the Eve Sharif affair included Billy Taylor, a renowned expert in comparative religion and occultism, known for his radical approach to the subject via practice and engagement rather than academic study.

The others who remember these events include the renowned physicist Dr Nigel Summers, three times Nobel Laureate. Who laid the foundations for “synthetic” physics, strangely now forgotten, for the best of reasons, its consequences. Also, Sarah Cooper, who was once a commander in the metropolitan police force, who now works in the Home Office and was once involved in rescuing the kidnapped children of the US president, in which pursuit she was killed by terrorists.

The apparent contradictions in these circumstances only scratch a surface that for most it would be wise to remain ignorant. The Chief Constable was not however ignorant of such things and had issued a standing order.

So it was that there was an order for a regular foot patrol underneath Spaghetti junction. Or to use its correct term, The Gravelly Hill Interchange, of the M6, The Aston Expressway and the A38, underneath which runs the Fazeley canal. It was

therefore not a member of the public but two constables who found the skull.

Here they failed somehow, for some reason, to follow fully the Chief Constable's directive.

'And if you see something which looks odd from a distance, in no circumstances approach it, order a confinement procedure as laid down in the file, SJcon.docx.'

Maybe so routine, this patrol which discovered nothing particularly interesting for years, the directive was in this case ignored.

The context of SJcon.docx detailed SOCO officers (scene of crime officers) strict instructions to make a screen around the object without direct close examination, and to contact the names of senior figures, the chief or their deputy, Sarah Cooper or her deputy.

Why the object was identified as a skull from the initial discovery was because this order was ignored. One officer approached the object and recognised it, and in turning, and raising a hand, spoke to the other,

'It's a human skull... don't look, don't look...' which were her last words. By this time the blood in her mouth was visible, as was the blood from her nose, and slowly blood was running even from her eyes, she fell to the floor dead.

Fortunately, her companion remembered some rumour, and did not look, but called in the incident. And now it was flagged up to the Chief. The directive was followed to the letter. The SOCO officers screened the object, the next step was to



contact Billy Taylor, which was unusual in the extreme, but Chief Constable White was now directing proceedings.

Instructions were that the body of the female constable be removed to a lab in The University of Birmingham's advanced pathology unit and no report of the death be made, even to the next of kin. Only an order from the Chief Constable could overrule such protocol. Further that the scene be cordoned off and await the arrival of designated officers, who were DI Benjamin Washington, and DS Kate Moore. They arrived within minutes, but they were as much in the dark as the uniformed officers at the scene, which was until one sergeant said,

'We are waiting for a Billy Taylor.'

At which there was a strange expression on the faces of the CID detectives.

And within 10 minutes a black Range Rover with flashing blue lights arrived and out stepped Billy Taylor. A fairly innocuous figure, maybe mid late 50s, slightly overweight, average except for any connoisseur of men's attire. He was wearing an Anderson & Sheppard pinstriped suit, John Lobb shoes, black brogues, and a Turnbull and Asser shirt.

He nodded to the other officers and then shook hands with Ben Washington and Kate Moore, who then to the surprise of the other officers both gave Billy a hug.

'I was staying in Nigel's house in Edgbaston, I was expecting something.' he said.

He had a bag beside him and a holdall. He dropped both to the floor, and in front of baffled police stripped to his

underwear and taking from the holdall took out a Jubbah, a type of robe, and carefully placed it over his head. He then picked up the bag and entered the enclosure around the object. Seconds later he re-appeared with the bag, unrobed and put back on his clothes. His Anderson & Sheppard pinstripe.

‘We need to go to The University of Birmingham’s path lab, I guess you two will want to be in this from the start, so follow.’ he said.

When they arrived at The University of Birmingham’s advanced pathology unit, they were greeted in the reception area by a worried looking Doctor Arshdeep Singh and a young technician, Jay Chandana.

‘We need to see the body now.’ Billy said.

Doctor Singh hesitated. At that moment Nigel Summers appeared accompanied by a woman in her mid 50s, smartly dressed.

‘Emily?’ the Doctor spoke,

‘I know I resigned from head of the unit two months ago, but I’m still the director...’ she replied.

‘You are welcome of course, we, I mean I, was told to facilitate whatever a Billy Taylor required we have a...’ he said.

‘Yes, a body of a young woman PC, and orders from who knows on high, and no I do not know the story, and this is Dr Nigel Summers who I do know, and I have been speaking to a Professor Catherine Mulberry who I have had a brief acquaintance of, and yes let Mr Taylor do as he wishes.’

‘The boss hasn’t changed.’ thought Jay Chandana.

‘It’s Billy.’ said Nigel anticipating Billy’s correction.

Billy spoke.

‘I have to do this alone, and must not be interrupted, but it’s fairly safe for you to watch. But no interruption,’ then less audible, almost talking to himself, ‘Not that anyone could interrupt when it begins, and the skull is relatively benign.... now,’ then louder, ‘but some of you will find this very difficult.’

‘Where is the body?’ asked Dr Emily Clarke.

‘Lab 1.’ said Jay Chandana pointing to a door.

‘I have to change,’ said Billy, ‘but not embarrassingly.’

He began to put back on the robe.

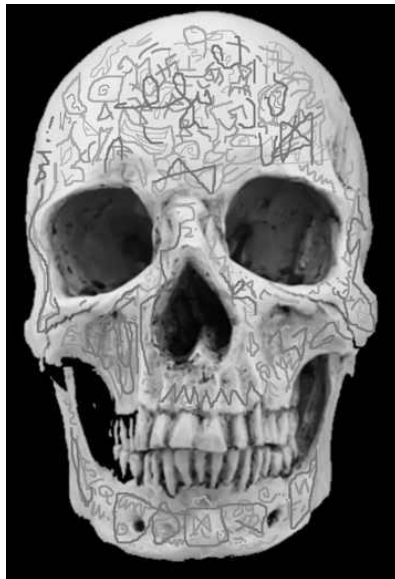
‘We can go to the viewing room.’ said Doctor Singh.

All six now left Billy, who picked up his bag and entered Lab 1. A clean large brightly lit room with a figure lying on a table covered in a white cloth. Around the room were various high-tech devices, tables with equipment, computers and chairs. One side of the room had a large glass window, though due to the lighting of the lab the six sitting watching in the room could not be seen.

Billy pulled back the sheet to reveal the face and head of the young woman police constable. Her skin was now white, cleaned from the blood, an automatic response by the technician, ready for identification by relatives, her blonde hair neatly tied back.

Billy looked up at the unseen figures, ‘No interruption.’ he said.

He then took out from his bag the object which the young PC, Christine Dawnay had seen. As she had said, with what were her last words, it was a skull, as the six could now see. Three of which were surprised but not shocked, the three being Nigel, Ben and Kate. Jay Chandana, Dr Emily Clarke, and Dr Arshdeep Singh were stunned. They had seen plenty of skulls, but not one like this.



‘Oh, those marks?’



Dr Emily Clarke was the only one to speak, the others were now transfixed. Billy was moving what appeared to be a small piece of brown parchment over the top of the skull, he might have been whispering something.

‘I can’t believe this...’ Emily Clarke continued, and though two others could not, three could, the head of a snake now appeared out of the right eye socket of the skull. Slowly it disappeared, only to appear again in the left. Billy gently held out his right hand, and the snake, only around nine inches long crawled onto it. Again, the next event was beyond belief for the doctors and technician. Billy moved his hand down towards the PC’s mouth, and the snake entered through the parting lips and was gone.

‘I’ll get some water.’ Kate said, and did so, giving it to Emily Clarke and Jay.

Meanwhile Billy was talking to the unseen observers,

‘Could someone get something for her to wear?’ As he did Christine Dawnay, the young, and who was presumed dead constable’s eyes were opening.

Jay Chandana was the first to respond, she rose and left the observation room moments later to knock then enter Lab 1.

‘This is the best we have,’ she said, ‘lab scrubs, over boots, trousers and top.’

‘And help her dress?’ Billy said, as Christine Dawnay began to move, ‘and maybe help her to where we can sit?’

The Chief Constable was kept in the loop. So, the response team who had pronounced Christine Dawnay as dead at the scene were told this was not the case, it seems some

unknown toxin she had come into contact with had created a state which would appear so. She having no close family helped this cover story.

In practical terms as she recovered, she had very little memory which also helped. After spending some initial time at the unit, she went with Billy, Nigel and the two detectives to Nigel's house. A Victorian mansion in Edgbaston where Billy had been staying.

The normal procedure for hospitalization was not carried out for the very reason that none of the medical staff seeing what they had seen were in a position to do 'normal'.

Billy explained that the recovery process would take some time. Kate Moore would stay to help; she was first sent to get clothes for Christine.

Billy had left a message at the lab to not make any intrusive tests on the skull, then went to the hospital where Christine Dawnay's colleague was, he was in a trancelike state and had been so just after calling in the incident. Billy produced again a brown piece of parchment which in fact was the skin of a puff adder. Wiping it over the face of the constable was sufficient for a remarkable recovery, except for several hours of complete memory loss. In the meantime, Sarah Cooper was on her way from London.

During the next two days Christine recovered well but with no recollection of the events.



CHAPTER TWO: LINES

The following morning in The University of Birmingham's advanced pathology unit Dr Emily Clarke was looking at the skull through some specialist optical device, she was talking, not to Jay the technician or anyone in particular.

'It's dam not right, bone can't do this, can't grow these things...' she was saying.

Billy had entered the lab in the same protective gear as the doctor and her technician.

'They are not things, they are sigils.' Billy replied.

'Sigils?' said Dr Clarke, 'what are they, oh I see you are in the same business as Catherine Mulberry.'

'Sigil is a term used for a sign found in magic, the occult, alchemy, astrology, and various religions and cults. And I'm Billy Taylor.'

'I know of you, Catherine has mentioned you.' she replied, then again to no one,

'I need a micro cross section to look at the DNA structure at the, er, sigil.'

The skull was covered in these.

'Here.' she pointed to a sigil.

'Not advisable.' said Billy.

'Why on earth not?' was Emily's reply.

‘Well, I know that sigil, and many of the others, they make no sense here altogether, as they are from different sources, but if you cut that one in two there could be consequences.’

‘Such as?’ Dr Clarke asked.

‘Well, you might lose an eye or gain another.’ was Billy’s reply.

‘Oh!’ was the reply, given the previous day and what Emily had witnessed firsthand, and though she was now thinking in terms of mass hallucination as a more preferable explanation, the dilemma of wanting to make the experiment and see was for the time being shelved.

‘Here would be fine, at the end of that sigil, it’s just a trailing mark.’ Billy said.

At this moment a middle-aged man in a white coat entered and stood watching.

‘So, who do I need to get permission to get a micro cross section?’ Emily said to no one.

‘You can ask yourself for permission, I’m now the head of the unit, but you are still the director.’ said Doctor Arshdeep Singh, now with a warm smile, ‘Good to see you back at work.’ he continued. He looked at Jay, ‘Jay, can you arrange for this, and ready for the morning?’

‘Sure boss.’ came the reply.

‘Now let’s talk.’ Dr Arshdeep Singh said, so the two doctors and Billy retired to the doctor’s office. Emily again introduced Billy, who she now remembered she knew something vaguely about him from her dealings with Catherine Mulberry over her house sale. Emily had bought Catherine Mulberry’s house in



Carla Drive in Edgbaston, close to the University. She knew Catherine Mulberry was a professor of comparative religion at the university but had no time for such work, if work it was.

Dr Arshdeep Singh explained they were now holding the skull on a direct request from the West Midlands Police, and that a Billy Taylor was allowed access. There was an exchange of pleasantries, and outside the building Billy asked if Emily would like to join Nigel, who she knew well, and others for an evening meal at Nigel's house, she accepted.

Emily agreed partly as she was curious to see this house, which it was said held a fine collection of works by the Birmingham artist, Burne-Jones, but also a large aquaria of tropical marine fish, a 24-inch reflecting telescope in the garden and an extensive N gauge model railway. Though she was not at all curious as to the latter her background in biology included a passing interest in exotic fish.

Nigel had arranged a catering firm to provide the meal. He could now cook well but wanted time to mediate between the professional scientist and Billy Taylor, who was an expert in comparative religions and cults, but was not of the academic pedigree as of Professor Catherine Mulberry. They were actually very good and close friends, and sparring partners. To the extent of sharing a large house, garden which had a small lake, in the Suffolk town of Woodbridge. So, their relationship was friendly, but Platonic. Billy Taylor had once been a member of the West Midlands Police long ago but had left to study comparative religions at the university of Lancaster, where Dr Ninian Smart taught, who was responsible and renowned for creating the subject of comparative religions. But Billy in effect 'dropped out' in



favour of first-hand experience. He had first met Nigel Summers in the Eve Sharif affair, and in similar other adventures, they had become good friends.

All this and more were covered in the conversations over the four courses of the meal held in the Victorian dining room. Except for the obvious one regarding the snake and the skull. Ben had gone home, Kate joined them in the meal, but PC Christine Dawney was asleep in one of the many bedrooms.

In passing Billy had expressed an interest in being at the lab in the morning, and also in passing asked if Nigel could attend, and could he bring his scanning device. Something he had perfected in the Eve Sharif affair; a device that can detect invisible markings on a surface. Emily Clarke was still very suspicious of Billy Taylor but saw no reason why not, and anyway for some strange reason he seemed to have permission to do so from non-other than the Chief Constable or possibly higher.

Nigel and Billy arrived at the lab at about ten o'clock in Nigel's Range Rover SE. Nigel owned the car but couldn't drive, so Billy did the driving, Nigel bringing his 'scanner'. Now very much smaller than the original, it consisted of an I pad, linked to a small box from which was a wand attached by a cable. As they entered the lab Jay gave them two lanyards with IDs, saying,

'If you are now regulars, you'll need these, and Dr Clarke was in when I arrived at eight, she's in room 6a.'

They entered room 6a, it contained a desk with a large device on it, looking into an eyepiece was Dr Emily Clarke, again she was talking to no one,



‘It makes no sense, bone can’t grow like this, where is the junk DNA, it’s perfect, no defects, anywhere...’

‘That’s just it,’ said Billy, ‘It’s perfect, I’d bet it’s too perfect, and I’d double this and bet on there being no junk DNA, RNA or anything else.’

The doctor looked up, then turned back to the eyepiece, she, as turning various dials and muttering.

Finally, she looked up at Billy and said ‘Well!’

Billy smiled and said, ‘Let’s take another look at the skull, only with Nigel’s gizmo.’ he walked from the room followed by Nigel with his scanning device, and Dr Clarke. Soon they were in white coats, masks, and gloves in the lab with the skull. Dr Clarke, Nigel, Billy and Jay the technician.

Nigel switched on his gizmo and started waving the wand over the surface of the skull, a few inches away. Slowly the image of the skull appeared on the I Pad’s screen, only in many colours, and much more detail, and then lines appeared, lots of lines. He stopped and looked at Billy, grinning, Billy gave a smile, Nigel a frown as if asking, and Billy said, ‘It’s saying Hi wait and see.’

Jay’s jaw dropped, then uttered a ‘Wow!’

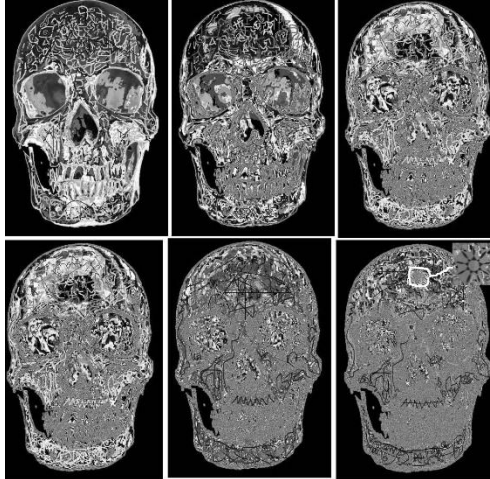
Dr Clarke remained silent.

Nigel looked at Billy and said, ‘Next level?’

Billy raised his brows in a ‘yes why not,’ then said,

‘I like the colours, really helps.’

The image changed again revealing yet more detail, and the whole thing repeated four more times, at the last image Billy said ‘Stop!’ and pointing to the skull most of which was now unrecognisable, he was pointing to the top, ‘That should not be there! we need hard copies.’



Finally, Dr Clarke spoke, ‘Can someone please explain?’ her voice now soft, almost childlike.

‘Let’s get hard copies and maybe coffee at the café Nero on the campus, Jay, want to tag along too?’ Billy said.

Over coffee and still water for Billy he explained that the scans showed ever fainter drawings which, like the too obvious sigils were confusing, chaotic, except for the last image which contained a drawing based on a Nonagon, a nine-sided shape. When asked what this meant, he said he knew what this was, not knowing the rest was a problem. Jay pressed the point,



‘It’s the coming of aeons and the restoration of a metaphysical hierarchy, but someone is saying otherwise.’ Billy said.

‘Who?’ asked Jay.

‘The boy.’ said Billy.

‘What boy?’ asked Jay.

Billy was silent, Nigel now had a strange expression. Then he said,

‘Some kind of answer.’

‘More a promise of action I think,’ said Billy, continuing,

‘it was sent here, it’s very important, it’s a personal message.’

‘How do you know?’ asked Jay.

‘We have had dealings with things underneath Spaghetti junction before,’ said Nigel, ‘hence the scanner.’

‘And?’ said a passive Dr Clarke.

‘We wait and see.’ said Billy.



CHAPTER THREE: IN THE HALL OF THE MOUNTAIN KING

Billy Taylor sat facing Mr Smith across a large circular table. It had 7 empty chairs. The room was familiar to both. The room was large, a great hall, with heavy Rococo gold decoration, elaborate furniture, and a massive candelabra. There were bookcases, beautiful wood panelling and mirrors on the walls. It could have been from a Russian palace or something from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Windows looked onto formal gardens with a fountain. A log fire burnt in a large fireplace, it was dusk, the room illuminated by candles and the candelabra.

‘I see you’ve chosen my room again.’ Billy said.

‘It’s become a favourite of mine.’ said Smith.

‘Your suit is as always immaculate, but you seem to have been in the wars, as the saying goes.’ Billy said.

Smith, a representative of another reality, one that was once superior to this reality, was dressed in his usual Victorian apparel, frock coat, wide black trousers, shirt with a kerchief, but his face showed traces of cuts and bruises.

‘You are probably not aware of the consequences of ours and others engagement with your Dr Summers.’ he said.

‘I can imagine,’ said Billy Taylor, ‘you expected logic, and you received, well what? A whirlwind of pure nihilism. But your approach was for a reason.’

‘Well yes.’ said Smith.

‘That you were already having very deep problems with your attempts at progress.’ Billy said.



‘Precisely,’ said Smith, ‘and now this chaos is about to consume this.’ he gestured to the air, ‘well not this room but soon now all of our worlds.’ Smith continued, ‘But how I escaped from my own world and am here I must admit I’m at a loss. Perhaps you might avail me of a reason?’

‘I couldn’t say,’ said Billy, ‘perhaps you will have some purpose.’

‘And my purpose here now is what?’ said Smith.

‘To be introduced to the seven.’ said Billy.

‘Oh,’ said Smith, ‘right.’

There was a noise outside, voices, then clearly Nigel’s was heard,

‘I know where we are, if you like it’s only a dream, but we should go into the hall.’

At this the doors to the hall opened and in walked Nigel, followed by Sarah Cooper, Emily Clarke, Jay Chandana, DS Kate Moore, and DI Benjamin Washington. Finally, PC Christine Dawnay.

‘Please be seated,’ said Smith, they sat at the table,

‘Let me introduce myself to those who do not know me, and it is of no matter, my name is Smith, it seems I am here to help you, first you need to take in and assimilate the next few hours and days. That is all for now I think.’

He looked at Billy, received a nod, and smiled.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE MEETING

The meeting held the following midday was in Lloyd House, the afternoon of 26th May. Present was Chief Constable White, Dr Paul Wybew-Bond from the Home Office, Sarah Cooper ex Met commander and now located in some undisclosed government department.

In the two days at Nigel's house Christine Dawnay had recovered well, she had no memory of the previous few days, the incident or what followed but was aware that she was a police constable and was now it seems involved in some very important work. So, she had accompanied Billy to Lloyd House.

Billy had met Emily Clarke outside of the building, she looked confused.

'Hi,' she said on seeing Billy, 'do you know what this is all about?'

'I do, it's to do with the skull.' he was saying as they entered the building. In the lift to the top floor Dr Clarke found herself trying to make conversation, which was very unusual for her, 'I had a really strange dream last night...' before she could continue Billy gave a laugh and said,

'You will soon need to redefine strange.'

Christine Dawnay was about to say, 'A dream, me too.'

The doors opened and they entered the suite in which White, Cooper and Wybew-Bond were waiting.



‘Please take a seat, we are expecting two officers.’ said White, as the door opened and in walked DS Kate Moore, and DI Benjamin Washington.

‘All here, introductions, DI Benjamin Washington and DS Kate Moore I hope will represent the force, Billy you all know, Dr Emily Clarke I hope will lead the pathology team.’

‘And PC Christine Dawnay.’ added Billy.

White continued,

‘Dr Wybew-Bond is from the Home Office as is Sarah Cooper who will be representing the stake holders and wider implications. She will make a brief presentation, then we will give you time to consider if you wish to voluntarily join her team, Sarah please...’

Sarah Cooper stood, and the flat LCD screen came to life from displaying the WMP logo, and now showed pictures of the skull.

‘From our initial investigations into the skull, its location and the biological anomalies, plus other data, people thought it best to establish a working party or team to progress any future developments, developments which we now expect. However, because of changes in the administration in the USA we will be acting alone as a UK agency. For those who were aware, The Facility no longer exists, and so our partners in the USA also no longer exist, in an official capacity.’

“The Facility” was a special agency made from the military, scientists and other government agencies located in a site deep underneath The Pentagon.

She stressed ‘official capacity.’ And continued,

‘The Secretary of State is now Gary Edwards, not Lois Griffin.’

‘We have confirmed from unofficial sources that Billy’s notion of Übermenschen is likely. Those who are unaware of Übermenschen forgive me, I’m sure you soon will be. The skull was local, this we believe is very significant, so we need local people, for the analyses we have the best, Dr Clarke, and local experienced officers, and of course Billy. So, this is the rationale for the team. We have an innocuous name, Operation Wells, from the book by H. G., “War of the Worlds” might be more accurate but is a tad more contentious.’

She said this last remark clearly addressed at something that may have originated from Billy.

She continued, ‘Billy seems to think that we might need others on the team, we will task these if and when, and we have a facility here in the basement to act as a base. Can we grab a coffee and meet back here in 15 minutes and see who is in or out.’

She and the other seniors left, DI Benjamin Washington and DS Kate Moore were both saying to each other, ‘In, definitely in.’

Billy looked at Dr Clarke, she said, ‘Yes, of course, how could I refuse this! Catherine warned me about you, and that dream last night, it wasn’t a dream, was it?’

There was no reply.

They all met back, all agreed, but then Billy spoke. ‘OK, one change, our base will be Dr Nigel Summers’ Victorian House.’

The seniors looked at each other, and then Sarah Cooper said, ‘Of course’.



Billy spoke to Ben, 'Ben, could you drive Emily home and collect her tomorrow morning around eleven and then get yourselves and Kate to Nigel's house, we will be there. Nigel is in the loop, and expecting us, we will use his garden room as a base for the meantime. As they began to leave Chief Constable White approached DI Benjamin Washington handing him a set of car keys, it's the DCS' Range Rover, yours for the duration, no checking in here, report to Sarah, OK?'

'OK.' the stunned DI said, taking the keys.



CHAPTER FIVE: PARK STREET

Early morning, Sarah Cooper's phone rang, she answered a short call, then telephoned Billy then Dr Clarke, her conversation with Dr Clarke ended thus...

'We've liaised with Dr Arshdeep Singh, three of the bodies have been transferred to the special unit at the University, we are in the process of getting portable cold store for the others next to the unit, there is a car park space we can use, so you can have close access to the material and your equipment. They appear to be human or humanoid, wrapped in bandages but then covered in what looks like clingfilm. There is writing all over the wrappings...'

Over breakfast in Nigel's Victorian Mansion Billy was talking,

'Nigel can you also scan the bodies as before, I need to see the sigils and lines, now apart from some background on the Park Street burial site there is not much police work yet, but I'll let DI Benjamin Washington and DS Kate Moore know.'

Sarah Cooper then telephoned. 'Can we cancel our planned meeting and now meet at Nigel's on Saturday at ten? Unless anything else crops up I'll be in London on this number.'

Billy replied, 'Sarah I don't need to underline this, but you must, and I mean must, make the Park Street site absolutely secure. By which I mean...'

Sarah interrupted, 'Billy I know what you mean by absolutely, and transparent?'

'Invisible.' said Billy.



She's in London no doubt running checks on this Nonagon star, thought Billy.

Then Billy telephoned Dr Emily Clarke, first on her landline, then on her mobile,

'Emily, a few words. Emily, you will try to unwrap these bodies no doubt, and you will ignore this warning I'm giving you, but you shouldn't, or should you try to take tissue samples, if you want to take samples, use nails or hair. And when you hit the problem, please I understand, speak to me.'

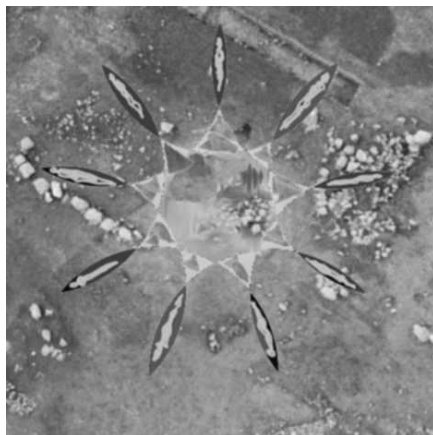


PARK STREET BIRMINGHAM CITY CENTRE

The HS2 site in Park Street. 27/05 19:48



The HS2 site in Park Street. 28/05 08:40



CHAPTER SIX: THE FOOLISHNESS OF EMILY CLARKE

Back in the special unit, the experimental pathology lab, Emily Clarke, Jay Chandana and Nigel Summers were in full medical scrubs, masks and biological protection. The lab, LAB 1, was also bio safe, it's access via an air lock. Inside the air pressure lower than the outside, any leak would be air in, not possibly contaminated air out. The room was covered by CCTV at all angles, and from a viewing window Dr Arshdeep Singh was watching. On a table was one of the nine bodies, still wrapped in what looked like cling film. Underneath the body it could be seen to be wrapped in fine bandage and had sigils written all over. The nose and mouth exposed as were the fingers. Jay Chandana began to remove the cling film, when all was removed that was visible, she took a series of photographs.

Nigel scanned the body, looked at his I pad, then left the room. As he could not drive, and felt like some air, it was a pleasant May morning, he decided to walk the short distance back to his house.

Jay the technician now had detailed photographs of the sigils. Emily Clarke took a scalpel and tweezers; her intention was to remove some bandage to expose what was underneath. As she used the tweezers to lift the bandage, she felt a slight tingle in her hand but thought nothing of it, she brought the blade held in the other hand carefully nearer the bandage, did it touch or not, no one ever knew. There was a brilliant white flash which filled the room and a deafening explosive sound. Equipment was flung everywhere, smashing, and breaking.

As Dr Arshdeep Singh slowly recovered from being blinded by the light, he could see the body still on the table, Jay Chandana the technician remarkably was standing,

expressionless, and then the Doctor saw the collapsed body of Dr Emily Clarke on the floor. He pressed the alarm button, but the alarm was already sounding, as were others in the vicinity. The sound had echoed like a sonic boom across the University Campus. Nigel heard it as he walked, and from the Garden room in his house Billy heard the dull distant boom. He put on his jacket and left the house, taking Nigel's Range Rover, and headed to the University. Along Edgbaston Park Road he noticed Nigel, so stopped and beckoned him into the car. All he said was,

'The special unit.'

Which was enough for Nigel.

When they arrived and were allowed into the unit, only after the intervention of Dr Arshdeep Singh, LAB 1 was sealed, an unconscious Emily Clarke was in a bio isolation ward and Jay Chandana was sitting up in another room being checked by a doctor.

After some argument and signing a waiver Billy was allowed into the isolation room where the unconscious Emily Clarke lay. He took out his wallet, and in it what looked like a small piece of yellow parchment. Nigel and Dr Arshdeep Singh watching through a window onto the room. The parchment was the dried skin that had been shed by an African puff adder. Actually, 'Atemyath' to be precise, a totem animal of a sect of the Dinka who are animists. Dinka is a traditional religion of the people of South Sudan and Billy Taylor amongst other things is an initiate of this religion.

Billy placed the skin on Dr Clarke's forehead. A few seconds passed, and as Nigel expected but didn't know, and as Dr



Arshdeep Singh had no clue, Dr Clarke's eyes opened. Billy returned the skin to his wallet.

Billy talked to the watchers,

'You need to move her into a better room to recover, physically it won't take long. Now I need to see Jay.'

Jay Chandana was now sitting in an armchair in Dr Arshdeep Singh's office, she had refused to stay in bed and wanted to get to her home. Billy joined her and sat.

'I'll take you home, and I suppose you want to know why,' he began, 'well for now it would be best to let things pan out, I'm not fully in the picture, but I guess in a day or two you and Dr Clarke will be back at work, I'll sit in on the first morning.'

Strangely though no actual answers were given Billy's talking had put Jay at ease.

'I'll check on Dr Clarke and then come back to take you home.'

Billy found a protesting Dr Clarke in the room previously occupied by Jay, the only room with a bed in the facility. Dr Arshdeep Singh was trying to get her to rest.

'I'm driving Jay home, so while I'm doing this, I can take you, Carla Drive isn't it, Catherine Mulberry's old house?'

This broke the stalemate, Dr Singh relented, Dr Clarke saw it as the best outcome. Billy drove Jay home first to her flat in Harborne, driving back to Edgbaston he was silent.

Dr Clarke spoke, 'You said I shouldn't, or try to take tissue samples, you said if you can use nails or hair, I ignored you.'

There was a long pause, she said as if to prompt a reply,

‘I ignored you!’

There was another pause, ‘When you go back into the room, I suspect tomorrow, I’ll stay with you and Jay for the first session.’ Billy said, ‘You won’t wait a whole day, and Jay has to be there.’ he continued. Emily thought ‘why has to?’

‘I’ll pick you up at 10.30, a late start but you will sleep well, oh here we are.’

At that the car pulled to a stop outside Emily Clarke’s house, there was a pause. The house previously owned by Dr Catherine Mulberry, it was an example of the work of Birmingham architect, John Maddin. Nothing was said, Emily Clarke opened the car door and walked towards the house, she was very confused. She would phone Catherine Mulberry later that night. Billy drove away, back to the lab to pick Nigel up and take him home.

The following morning at around ten o’clock after a large breakfast Billy set off with Nigel, first to Harborne where Jay Chandana was waiting, then to Carla Drive where also waiting was Dr Emily Clarke.

‘I’ll stay for the first session, but I’d like Nigel to scan the other eight as you take samples. It shouldn’t take long. One thing, can you take as little material as possible, especially towards the last three. A fingernail scraping? And can you hold in your mind the words, “forgive this impertinence” OK?’

He paused, then said quietly to Dr Emily Clarke ‘And don’t be surprised by anything you find or especially anything you do not find and keep it a secret.’



Jay thought this a strange request, Dr Emily Clarke thought it would now be impossible not to.

‘So, when you have the 9 samples store the aeons, better term than bodies, and leave them. And the samples, treat them with respect, you will see why later I hope.’

The four kitted up and returned to LAB 1 which had remained untouched since the previous day. The argument Dr Clarke had with Dr Arshdeep Singh over who should work on these bodies had been short, Dr Emily Clarke had said as director she was directing.

This time Dr Emily Clarke took the slightest of scrapings from an exposed fingernail without incident. The body or ‘aeon’, somehow this word stuck in the minds of Emily Clarke and Jay Chandana, was returned to the store, and another ‘aeon’ carried in. At this Billy left, he offered to pick up Nigel later, but he said he would walk. Billy’s final words to Emily Clarke and Jay Chandana was,

‘See you Saturday. Keep it a secret.’ And looking at Dr Clarke raised a finger to his lips and winked.

Dr Arshdeep Singh drove them home after they had finished taking samples from the last ‘aeon’.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE DREAMS OF CHRISTINE DAWNAY,
NUMBER ONE; PANPSYCHISM

Christine Dawnay had dreams, strange dreams. In the first she found herself in a large lecture hall, though quite alone. The lecturer arrived, but it looked like herself, she realised that it was actually herself. This “self” opened a large book and began to speak.

‘A common idea is that the base universe of dead matter gives rise to consciousness and intelligences. With intelligence and consciousness, the seeming random violent and chaotic forces of the universe are able to be controlled, in simple terms intelligences can manipulate matter to their will, desire or their rationalities. And if there are other intelligences within a universe or outside of it this will also occur. That is consciousness and intelligence are emergent properties of unintelligent matter.

Panpsychism is the idea that there is not an emergent property of unintelligent matter, this is not the case, is impossible, you can’t get something from nothing. So, all matter contains elements of consciousness and in some cases intelligence and other “human” attributes. This is similar to the religious notion of matter being “animated”. Mind or a mind-like aspect is a fundamental and ubiquitous feature of reality, a fundamental feature of the world which exists throughout the universe, one of the oldest philosophical theories. Ascribed to Thales, Plato, Spinoza, Leibniz, William James, Alfred North Whitehead, Bertrand Russell, Galen Strawson, et.al.

In Spinoza’s monism, the one single infinite and eternal substance is God, or Nature, which has the aspects of this

substance. In Leibniz's view it is that there are infinitely many absolutely simple mental substances called monads.

In the 19th century, panpsychism was the default philosophy of mind in Western thought, declining in the mid-20th century with the rise of scientism and rationalism. However recent interest in the hard problem of consciousness and developments in the fields of neuroscience, psychology, and quantum mechanics have revived interest in panpsychism.

The rise of determinism in the 21st century is very sympathetic to panpsychism as it maintains that the effect can never be greater than its causes. And so, intelligence, consciousness, and even free will, are innate in all matter, so a human brain cell or neuron has these innate properties, nothing new in human brains occurs, it's just that we have 86 billion neurons, Gorillas 33 billion, mice 71 million, and honeybees have around 960 thousand neurons.

This idea has similarities with primitive religions and magics which see all nature as imbued with an animate "spirit" or "mana". With the enlightenment, intelligence was seen as a human only attribute. These forgotten ideas of the animate universe now only existing in religion, superstition, folk law and the occult. Forgotten memories of magic and the supernatural.

One feature of a Panpsychist universe is the possibility of all matter and energy working together in a conscious harmony. In such realities in which this is the case the inhabitants often assume this is a higher state of existence than the mere arbitrary products of random chance. These realities are those typified by "Smiths". A name given to higher intelligences in other universes.

And so, in a universe where everything had a form of consciousness from the very elements of its constitution it could resist both the collapse into arbitrary randomness and chaos and resist external and internal threats, natural and unnatural decay.

If Panpsychism was not the case, then it would be out of necessity for these attributes, a conscious harmony, for it to be created. A singular feature was the materials were aware of themselves and the forms and methods into which they were and were made. A mass-produced object was now fundamentally different to an object which was hand crafted.

Human attributes of reason and understanding, but also those of sympathy, love, violence, jealousy, hate, anger and friendship, all exist in various forms, qualities and strength in all aspects of a creation according to panpsychism, from the superintelligent ONE through to the elements of the periodic table and below.'

The lecturer closed the book and left the rostrum. After a minute or so they reappeared, or someone identical to herself and the previous lecturer, because she noticed that she was now not the only person in the audience, a second version of her, perhaps the first lecturer, was sat across from her. The new lecturer opened a large book and began to read. This was the second dream of Christine Dawnay.

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE DREAMS OF CHRISTINE DAWNAY,
NUMBER TWO; MWI

‘Around 13.5 billion years ago this universe took an Everett split which was not accidental. The nature of such a split was popularized by Bryce DeWitt in the 1970s, who named it the “Many-Worlds Theory”. The theory solves paradoxes in quantum physics such as the indeterminacy of an event until it is observed. The famous thought experiment of Schrödinger’s cat highlights this paradox. The imaginary cat in a sealed box is exposed to a quantum event such as the random probability of radioactive decay. If this occurs a poison gas is released. At this point the quantum probability of the gas being released or not exists. A probability. This remains a probability until the box is opened, only then does this probability collapse into a definite state. Only on opening the box and observing does the cat become dead or alive. Up to the point of the observation the cat is in an indeterminate state, neither dead or alive. This is the generally accepted Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics, and not one of “common sense”. For common sense a cat cannot be both alive and dead, or in neither state, yet this is the current theory, known as the Copenhagen interpretation from the meetings of physicists in that city in the 1920s.

In the many-worlds interpretation (MWI), outlined by the physicist Hugh Everett, who first proposed it in 1957, this alive / dead paradox is avoided by the “world”, the universe, splitting in two at the event prior to observation, an alive cat in one world, a dead one in another. The solution thus creates another world at any quantum event, and the paradox is avoided.

In the case of Schrödinger's cat, there is one world in which the cat is alive, and another in which it is dead. And this occurs when any quantum event occurs, which is many times a second. Hence there are many worlds, not just this one we happen to be in.

This being the case a civilization with a sufficiently advanced technology could manipulate such splits in its universe to develop "better" universes into which such a civilization could migrate at the split. Leaving the lesser world devoid of the intelligent beings.

So, the Everett split which took place in this universe, our universe, which took place around 13 billion years ago produced two universes, a "better" one inhabited by intelligent life forms, and one that was not. Unfortunately, this took place before our world, our solar system was created at around 4 billion years ago. And we therefore were not in the "better" universe. This is why we see no intelligent life in our universe, even looking deep into space, which is like looking into the past. This in part explains the Fermi paradox. Why is it that our universe seems devoid of intelligent life when statistically one would think with all the trillions of stars and planets it should not be.

Our universe is one in which previous intelligent civilizations from its creation have, once they achieved the technology, have left our universe. We remain in a poorer universe. Until that is, if we can develop the same technological abilities.

This in fact has occurred, and those now present are the remains of such a split, in which they for certain reasons did not migrate to the better universe.

One last point, what would be the attitude of those in these better universes to this one? Would it be the case of letting us alone? And what of attempts at a better universe where this failed. Might there be in those cases failed, and so worse universes. And what would those in higher universes seem like to those in lower universes, if they were to meet?’

With this the lecturer joined the audience, now of three Christine Dawnays. Another appeared at the rostrum, opened a large book and began to read what was the third dream.

CHAPTER NINE: THE DREAMS OF CHRISTINE DAWNAY,
NUMBER THREE; TEEGARDEN B

'The planet Teegarden b and its star an M-type red dwarf in the constellation of Aries is 12 light years away from the earth. Teegarden b is an exoplanet which orbits its sun at a distance which like that of the earth makes life possible. The goldilocks position from The Three Bears story, "just right". Though the star is now a red dwarf, around 4 billion years ago it was like our sun. Life had developed on Teegarden b. billions of years before it did on earth. And on the planet, like on the earth, began in the seas.

Life on Teegarden b had evolved from simple plants to numerous species, originating in the seas, seas now gone, evolution occurred like on earth, but remaining plant based. There were differences, a major one was that whilst plant life evolved, no animal life did. Plant life evolved and became sentient and intelligent.

These Teegardens, a highly intelligent plant form, still retained recognisable features. Their form was of seaweed with vesicles, now adapted as sense organs, what we might think of as eyes, ears, a mouth. Each about seven feet high, rising from what was once the holdfast, but now legs, four or five, then a central stem fanning out into numerous branches with vesicles. These branches moved, touched, manipulated and sensed. The Teegardens developed civilizations, vast cities, science and technology until they understood the Everett split, and saw a potential if they could manipulate this to their advantage.

If an Everett split was to be engineered, what would it seek to achieve.

A universe like our own which is predicated on randomness, in effect ensures times of chaos, and decline, as well as at times the reverse, but given both the underlying randomness and the slow degradation due to entropy it was far from perfect for intelligent life.

A simple deterministic universe though seemingly well engineered would be static, self-replicating and unchanging, not good for life.

The Teegardens proposed to engineer a split in which their universe was none of these.

An alternative, which all other civilizations resorted to, as a deterministic universe would be dead, was a dialectic. This in simple terms ensures progressive evolution where each successive event spawns its opposite and out of the conflict with this a higher form is created. There is change, but always progressive. One learns from experience; one anticipates the opposite of the given state and creates from this a synthesis which is better than the two. This new better state will then anticipate its opposite and so generate a new and even better state, and so on.

As a consequence, any external phenomena are treated as an antithesis and dealt with via incorporation.

This process is called The Dialectic.

Teegardens in their “higher” universe soon achieved what is known as The Singularity. A state of super intelligence and near infinite technological abilities. Here the dialectic became those Teegardens who uploaded themselves into technology,

and those that did not, and remained as plants. A similar scenario occurs in the movie *The Matrix*. There are intelligent machines and humans. The dialectic ensures this situation is never static, never resolves to a final state, because a final state is in effect unchanging and dead.

In the case of the Teegardens we had two states, we will call plants, and machines.

The first dialectic, we will call the first war of the plants, was a technological victory. The machines were far more powerful than the plants, they built strong killing machines more advanced than those of the plant forms whose weapons had been made by the machines. The first wave of machines wiped out all the plant Teegarden's defences. The Plant Teegarden's weak bodies were simply cut to shreds by the machines. Millions were slaughtered, and all would have been annihilated if it wasn't for the usefulness of the plants. Part of the progressive dialectic process. Crops were grown to become worker slaves, helping in the manufacturing and repair of the machines, their masters. These were genetically engineered to have lower intelligences and so not question their role as slaves. They were used for mining and processing raw materials, even being used as a source of biofuel to provide energy for the machines. Plants were easy to cultivate, needing only water and sunlight, and when through labour deteriorated could be used as biofuel to generate electrical power for the machines, with no waste.

This Master Slave dialectic had been explored in our universe by the German philosopher Hegel. And he pointed out a very interesting consequence.

The machines became more and more dependent on their plant slaves. The machines now superior still had to control the relatively simple and zombie like slave-worker plant Teegardens. This was tiresome for intelligent machines, so a breed of more intelligent plants to act as supervisors was produced. That a machine of any kind should work, engage in physical labour became abhorrent to the machines. The whole process of cultivation, processing, control and “recycling”, a euphemism for burning plants for power creation, was therefore delegated to the plant slaves. The machines became unaware and not interested in the system of slavery which supported them. Rather like aristocracies which do not concern themselves with any knowledge or contact with the populations which support them.

And so it was with this intelligence that the plants could build new machines, ones which they could control. The result was obvious. The second war of the plants. The great plant uprising, using weapons the plants had made they soon took control over their machine masters, who had become so complacent they had no weapons of their own. And so, the first cycle was completed. The plants became masters but were careful not to become likewise complacent. But again, those plants delegated to supervise became averse also to work and responsibility, and in time the machine slaves became autonomous. And the third plant war took place.

And so, the cycle of the dialectic occurred and was repeated. And in all higher universes the random chaos is replaced by endless dialectics.

A life form based in water, splits into one based on land. Splits occur in size, intelligence, power. But always the same

outcomes. A final determinist fate of the continual and never-ending dialects of struggle, of master and slave.’

At this the third dream lecture ended and Christine Dawnay woke. She lay awake for a while remembering the three dreams in detail. Did this process continue, what if life evolved ever higher forms until it ceased to be material. This was a strange thought, but somehow not alien.

It was not alien because of who she was. It was also the process of matter becoming energy or spirit, AKS an Übermensch.



CHAPTER TEN: THE VICTORIAN MANSION OF NIGEL SUMMERS

Nigel Summers was always fairly wealthy, with the proceeds of his first two Nobel prizes, but became extremely wealthy from a gift from one of the world's richest billionaires, for services rendered in the Tablets of Truth affair. It was there that he also developed a deep love of the land. His mansion was one of the few remaining in Birmingham from its zenith in the industrial revolution where it boasted the first gas lit factory, Matthew Boulton's private zoo, and grand neo gothic architecture. His mansion in Edgbaston, near to the University, the Red Brick University, if it was an exception was because it was one of the finest. Large and rambling, with tall chimneys, and towers, a large gatehouse, where his gardener lived, extensive grounds in which was his 24-inch telescope, and buildings now holding his tropical saltwater aquaria.

He had developed several passions, physics obviously, and railways from when he was a child. His interest in tropical marine fish he acquired from another officer of The West Midlands Police, Ray Wood, now working in the USA.

He also acquired an interest in food, and on buying his Victorian mansion the art of the period, though not Impressionism, The Pre Raphaelites, especially Burne Jones. A passion he shared with Jimmy Page of Led Zeplin fame. They had actually become friends from competitive bidding for Victorian Art at auctions. Page had a large Victorian mansion in London.

Sarah Cooper had arrived and entered the hallway, crossed into the central hall with its gallery and fine tapestries.



‘We are in the Garden Room.’ Billy said, who had answered the door, crossing the hall, and walking down a corridor into a large room with views of the garden.

Nigel was sitting, and rose as they entered smiling, as did Christine Dawnay. She had spent much time sleeping and dreaming! but was now wide awake.

At this Christine said, ‘I’ll get tea and coffee.’ and left the room.

‘Let’s sit and wait for the others.’ Billy said, so they sat. Christine returned with the drinks, and after a short while the doorbell rang.

‘The others,’ she said, ‘I’ll let them in’, and left the room to return shortly with Dr Clarke, Jay Chandana, DI Benjamin Washington and DS Kate Moore.

She showed them into the garden room and then went to fetch more tea and coffee.

Dr Clarke asked Billy very quietly.

‘How is she?’

To which he replied, ‘Fine, but...’ and left this hanging.



CHAPTER ELEVEN: BILLY DOESN'T EXPLAIN THE SKULL

The eight, Sarah Cooper, DI Benjamin Washington, DS Kate Moore, Billy, Nigel, Dr Emily Clarke, Jay Chandana, Christine Dawnay, were in the garden room of Nigel Summer's Victorian Mansion.

Billy spoke,

'Thanks for coming, why you are all here, and what for I can only begin to explain, for truth is I'm not fully aware of this myself, yet.'

He paused on the 'yet'.

'Some of you are fairly up to speed on things, some have an inclination, but I suspect for Christine, Jay and Emily this whole thing is new and strange.

Our meeting in The Hall with the strange Mr. Smith, we have a skull with very strange markings on it, we have nine bodies of what appear to be human like forms, and we have had some events which require explanation. So, I'd like Nigel to fill in some of the physics, and science around this. And then I'll try to fill in some of what I will call the other.'

He smiled.

'Nigel.'

Billy sat, and Nigel rose, he began,

'Obviously you all know this is not the only planet in this universe, and the sun is not the only star. Well, this is not the only universe, there are others. And in some of those others there are life forms, and of these some are of higher

intelligences, higher, much higher than our own. And Mr Smith is from such a universe, which is why we call these other universes Smith universes. In passing we in this universe are in a kind of transitory state, from being a normal universe to one which is higher. And what typifies a higher universe is one where intelligent beings begin to take control of the processes which once seemed random.'

He paused and looked at his audience.

'Like already we are aware of our detrimental effect on climate, and maybe we need to try to control this. But there is a far more radical state where the universe can be altered quite fundamentally by its intelligent beings.'

Billy noticed that Christine seemed unperturbed compared to others to which this was all new.

Nigel continued,

'And by higher, I mean the intelligent life forms in such universes have much more control over their universe than in lower universes where the life forms, if any, do not. We have met Mr Smith, and he is an avatar of many beings in many higher realities of universes. So, his, Smith's, other universe was once higher than this one, as others were, and some maybe still higher.

These higher universes exist by virtue of a process which it seems has caused a problem. They have a problem which I'll also explain. And then we have the Übermenschen and the nine Aeons, maybe produced by similar processes, the detail of which I will leave for Billy.



So higher universes; at base a universe can be treated at level zero, which equates to random chaos. This universe was once like this, but like Mr Smith's managed to rise up a level. There are levels, higher and lower...'

Sarah noticed Billy had been watching the expressions on people's faces, she was a trained 'watcher', and especially how he watched Christine, and she guessed how Billy spotted something in her responses, expressions and body language...

Here Billy interrupted and spoke,

'You get the idea in many Eastern Religions, a multitude of heavens, getting higher, and a multitude of Hells getting lower, obviously.'

Nigel continued,

'So how does a universe get higher, a rhetorical question. Well one way is to affect the chaos and do this at base. Rather than the elementary particles behaving randomly, give them some sentience and hopefully benevolence. This can be achieved by panpsychism. Skipping the details, and the idea of the reverse of benevolence, malevolence,'

'Hells.' said Billy.

'This can be done by engineering a split where things change. Engineering by intelligent beings, and a split which in this universe is called the Everitt interpretation.'

Billy interrupted again, 'The split in our case was, to put it simply, a Force majeure'.

Some look puzzled.

‘The alternative was the destruction of the planet.’ said Billy.

This seemed to satisfy the puzzled, except Dr Emily Clarke, who after a long conversation on the telephone that night with Catherine Mulberry gave a reluctant approval.

Nigel then continued and outlined the Everitt interpretation. Those that were not aware found no difficulty, only how it was achieved.

‘OK so when things change, and did do randomly, with intelligence we can fix the odds?’ asked Kate Moore.

‘Yes, and be creative.’ replied Nigel.

‘Well, coffee and biscuits?’ asked Christine.

‘And the skull?’ asked Emily Clarke.

‘After coffee.’ said Billy.

So, after a long coffee break Nigel went on to explain the downside of a higher universe, that of the Master Slave dialectic.

Then the alternatives, that of either falling back into chaos and eventual self-destruction or becoming completely determined and static, ossified so effectively dead. Perhaps then the seemingly better course of action is the Master Slave dialectic.

Billy added that this was not the only possible outcome, some included moving to yet higher universes, another might be the creation of a single super-being, an Übermensch.

‘Now the skull.’ Nigel said.

‘Time for lunch.’ Billy said, ‘And I think you need some time to let these ideas sink in. As for the skull, it has messages, warnings, and it seems some must be false, and for reasons I can’t explain, but you need some time off, so after lunch stay around if you wish, tomorrow is Sunday, could we meet on Monday morning, and maybe let people know you might be away for a few days, and so bring a change of clothes.’

There was a silence, but all were thinking what this being away might entail.

Nigel had his caterers prepare a buffet in the garden. He and Emily spent an hour or so looking at the aquaria then she walked home. It was agreed that Kate would continue staying at the house as would Christine. Nigel let Kate use his car to fetch clothes.

Over the afternoon and Sunday Ben spent time with his family, Sarah with friends in London. Jay spent time on the internet looking up ‘Panpsychism’, ‘Hugh Everett’, ‘Many Worlds Interpretation’, ‘Schrodinger’s cat’, ‘The Copenhagen interpretation’, ‘Master Slave Dialectics’, and ‘Übermensch’, the last as she had heard it mentioned. Dr Emily Clarke after telephoning Catherine Mulberry and being invited, took the train to Euston, then to Ipswich and from there to Woodbridge to stay with her over the weekend.

‘It’s best if you come and stay, travel back early Monday. Things to say, it would be better if you were here, and things to show.’ Catherine Mulberry had said.



CHAPTER TWELVE: BILLY EXPLAINS THE SKULL

People arrived at Nigel's house from around nine on Monday morning, he had a buffet in the garden room, coffee, tea, juices, yoghurts, pastries and croissants.

Ben was first to arrive, then Jay, Sarah arrived with Emily, they had both travelled on the early Euston train, met in the buffet car and shared a taxi to Edgbaston.

Around 10.30 all were gathered in the Garden room. Billy began,

'The Skull seems to have many messages on several layers, and what is noise, or as far as I can see meaningless signs. The layers are significant, well everything is, and I suspect more.

One layer of sigils refers to the other hostile realities, of the superior beings, that of the Smiths. Once they were above the random chaos of raw nature. Living in the realm of intelligent power though within this they existed in the dialectic of the Master Servant.

I should explain, they, their superior worlds, all look like a process of continual improvement. And they are, logically it must be so, continual improvement. The alternative is a hedonistic stagnation, which is a perfect world that therefore cannot improve, or get less, so cannot change. This is physical nihilism, which amounts to, and becomes, non-existence. Or if you like the molar in Deleuze.'

'Molar?' Ben asked,

'Dead.' Billy said with a smile, and continued,

‘So, they must change, and that requires a purpose, a disharmony, or an antagonism, or to put it more bluntly, conflict.

This is the dialectic of the Master and Servant that Nigel talked about.’

Both he and Sarah noticed an almost imperceptible knowing smile on Christine’s lips...

‘So, you may all be familiar with this but humour me and I’ll then relate it to the Smith universes and the need for constant change and change for the better. As I said we need a disturbance to promote change, and it boils down to conflict in these universes.

The dialectic of the Master and Servant comes from Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit, but no matter. The dialectic means things have their opposites, and when they conflict, they produce something new, and in Hegel’s and the Smith’s case, better.

It’s important to us, so again to underline this...

One of Hegel’s examples of a dialectic, though maybe not producing anything better, is a Master who owns a slave, maybe from conflict, capture. What happens is that though at first the slave is totally at the mercy of the master, over time the Master becomes more and more dependent on the slave, until the Master is totally dependent. In effect the Master has become the Slave. At which point the Slave can become the Master. In the case of Smith Universes this is what occurs, each time the process producing a higher state of being, thus avoiding stagnation.



Some in these Smith worlds are not now engaged in dialectic conflict, but in total conflict, chaos. As a last desperate effort to save themselves they approached Nigel. Nigel and I have had dealings with Smith before. So, they approached him in their hope of overcoming this chaos they had fallen into. Why fallen, I don't know, but perpetual improvement seems impossible. The reverse of the molar, total fluidity, what Deleuze calls Fascism.'

'They approached me.' Nigel was speaking now, 'Well I didn't want them to, they, the Smiths. I guess for an insight into the human psyche, why me, I guess they assumed I would be reasonable, rational, and I suppose I was. Anyway, they found me at a bad time, my mind was in total chaos, meltdown, and they caught this. It's almost like a virus...'

'And our problem is,' Billy was now speaking, 'it was a virus, that these Smiths, are now in chaos, are a danger to everything. Add to that they would find human intervention especially unwelcome as they see our irrationality as the source of their nightmares. They think we gave them this disease! Now when not trying to destroy one another they would first kill, or try to, anyone or thing other than themselves which came from outside of their world, especially any human.'

Nigel interrupted, 'They certainly would like to destroy the human race, and all of our universe, but would never now try because of the prospect of being attacked by an infinity of swords.'

Some looked puzzled, Christine, Jay, Ben and Kate noticeably.

Before anyone else could explain Dr Emily Clarke spoke,

‘These swords are prime examples of Panpsychism, perfectly made and so in perfect harmony with their material substance. 46 Hattori Hanzō swords, and before you ask, yes, they are real, and Hattori Hanzō is very real. And now there is the possibility of an infinite number of swords because of a very interesting phenomenon, a supertask.’

There were more confused looks, Emily explained.

‘OK, a supertask is an infinite number of operations, like someone makes an infinite number of shoes, right, so it can’t be done, but not just practically, logically it can’t be completed in a finite amount of time. Just go with the logic to start with, I did. Like how long would it take to count to infinity?’

‘Forever.’ Kate said after a fairly long pause.

‘Right,’ said Emily, ‘so seemingly impossible unless?’

She waited,

‘You have an infinity of time.’ Kate replied, looking pleased with herself. Some of the others still not sure.

‘OK,’ said Emily, ‘try to follow with the swords as an example. Say in a time period of 2 minutes, in the first one minute another 46 swords are cloned. And then a similar 46, but this time in a half a minute, and then another 46 in a quarter of a minute and so on, each time the interval halves. However, the interval never gets to two minutes. And so, it halves to infinity.’

There were some faces of agreement.

‘So, by two minutes there must be an infinity of Hattori Hanzō swords.’

More faces of agreement, then Ben spoke,

‘But this, anyone would say, in the real world would be impossible.’ And then he began to laugh, and shake his head,

‘Impossible.’ he repeated, the laugh being totally ironic.

And he thought to himself about his own ‘impossible’ experiences in the Eve Sharif affair. The Vodun and the Benin Mask that was now in his home.

Billy gave Emily a look. She responded,

‘Yes, I spent the weekend in Woodbridge, Catherine explained and showed me many things, this in particular from your dealings with the Trojan Horse and The Mekon.’

Jay was searching on her smartphone, first ‘supertask’ then ‘The Mekon’.

‘I’ll talk to you later.’ Emily said looking at her.

Some of the others looked suitably satisfied for the present, others would no doubt be searching on the internet for answers.

‘So,’ said Sarah, ‘why is this now a problem, our problem given we have protection from the Smiths?’

‘Well, they may not destroy humanity because of the swords but they might reduce all universes to ones of infinite conflict.’ replied Billy.

‘Our problem?’ asked Sarah.

'It isolates us.' said Billy.

'Our problem?' asked Sarah.

'We may already fall into the same trap that The Smiths are in and can't escape. If we work out how to stop their self-destruction, we needn't fear it happening here.' said Billy.

'Our problem then.' said Sarah.

'And we have The Nine, but what of other beings, forces. The countless gods and demigods. And the Aeons of Gnosticism, you think they are not real, not so.'

'Our problem then.' said Sarah.

Billy continued,

'And the problem of The Übermensch, I think they are involved. This is our second problem, the second problem of The Übermensch...'

'Would this relate to Catherine's idea about the Rude Man of Cerne Abbas?' interrupted Emily.

'Yes, please go on.' said Billy.

Emily spoke again, 'The idea is an alternative in a way to Panpsychism, one in which physical beings in which matter and energy interact, manage to become pure raw energy, the euphemism being that they become an Übermensch, a super being, a transcendent being of pure energy. And as they depart this physical realm, they leave signs, such as the Rude Man of Cerne Abbas or the Nazca Lines in Peru or The Face on Mars in the Cydonia region.'

She paused then said,

‘But I don’t see the problem?’

Billy answered,

‘The signs might not be signs of their leaving, but signs of their return, a return to pure physicality. Like The Rude Man or something like what Jane Smith encountered.’

‘Jane!’ Sarah was speaking, ‘and her thing with that mountain, Cader Idris!’

‘Yes,’ said Billy, ‘So Ben can you and Christine investigate. Any details, Nigel and Hope Murkowski are the go-to people, Sarah can give you Hope’s contact details.’

‘We need to find out if these sleeping Übermenschen are safe or not, why they are back here, and how they relate to the other matters.’

The others were lost for words now,

‘And Sarah, could you and Jay look at the Smith problem?’

He got a very questioning look from Sarah Cooper.

‘And so that leaves you two, Emily and Kate and the nine bodies or Aeons stored in the lab, or in portable containers outside. And here Nigel can help you, and maybe use my library.’

Nigel looked confused, while Dr Emily Clarke telephoned the lab.

‘I have a very relevant library that you, Emily and Christine might find useful. Not in the hall...’ Billy was talking to Nigel who interrupted,



‘The palace you created?’

‘Well yes I suppose it is.’ replied Billy.

Emily Clarke’s phone rang, she answered then hung up.

‘It’s the lab, the containers have been moved to a secure location.’



CHAPTER THIRTEEN: THE TOWER OF BABEL

So, Sarah and Jay decided their first task would be to meet with Mr Smith to find out the finer details of the situation. Which was a problem as they did not know how.

When asked by a rather surly Sarah, who knew Billy from old he showed them a door in the hallway of Nigel's house.

'This will do,' he said.

'Could we use any door?' asked Sarah, Jay looking puzzled.

'With the right intention, sure.' was the reply.

So, they opened the door and entered another hallway, this was no longer Victorian Gothic but heavy Baroque. They opened the heavy gilded door at the hallway's end to find themselves in the familiar room of what they thought was a dream.

Smith, the 'Original' Mr Smith, was sitting comfortably in a large armchair and what looked like just finishing a meal served on silver service dishes and plates. He now looked more like his dapper self, though a little surprised at his visitors. He put down his cutlery, wiped his mouth with a napkin and spoke,

'I'm using the hall as temporary accommodation; your Mr Taylor was kind enough to allow me to do so because of the inconvenience.'

'Inconvenience?' asked Sarah.

'The, well what can I say, it is much more than inconvenience, I've nowhere else to go.' Smith replied.

‘Not your world?’ said Sarah.

‘It doesn't exist as a world as such, none do now.’ he replied, continuing, ‘So here I am, I could have of course created my own environment and not had the pleasure of Mr Taylors but...’

Here he hesitated.

‘But what?’ said Sarah.

‘But any world I create might become visited by others of the higher worlds.’

‘And?’ asked Sarah.

‘And that could be unpleasant to say the least.’

‘Can you explain the situation in a tad more detail.’ Sarah said.

‘Well, as you might know from an act of impertinence and foolishness, not of my doing, we found chaos, you might say became infected with chaos. Well, I managed to escape here, as you saw earlier not without some harm. So, the situation is that of chaos, mayhem, whatever words you wish, and extreme violence. But now my question, what has it to do with you and your world?’

Sarah replied, ‘We are not unsympathetic despite your deeds and attitude, but more importantly allowing chaos to spread throughout all existence, an existence in which we find our world, of a never ending and futile war is something we would like to avoid. And in pursuit of this require your help, which would if we succeeded be very beneficial to you and your kind. In short, we want to overcome this chaos.’

There was a long pause, Smith sipped some wine, no doubt for effect, and said,

‘Indeed, had you anything in mind.’

‘Could we see what is happening?’ asked Jay.

‘Impossible,’ said Smith, ‘these worlds are infinite, and now in total chaos, you would see nothing, or rather chaos, if you lived long enough.’

‘Why not?’ asked Jay.

‘As I said, it’s chaos, no structures, no safe haven to view the mayhem.’ Smith replied.

‘What if we could make one?’ replied Jay.

‘It would need to be an infinite structure to contain the infinite chaos.’ said Smith.

There was another long pause, Jay looked around the room, at the garden outside and the fountain, the fire and decorated walls, mirrors and bookcases.

‘What about a library,’ she said, ‘an infinite library like in the Borges short story, an infinite library, a tower of hexagonal rooms holding all possible books of 25 characters, maybe infinite. If we could make an infinite tower, we could house those fighting in the chaos in the rooms and use a room ourselves to safely observe. Billy made this hall, could he make an infinite tower such as this?’

‘Brilliant!’ said Sarah.

There was another pause, unknown to Jay and Sarah, Smith was searching his massive mind for the Borges story, found it and read it to himself.

‘Yes, good, very good, a good story, it should work. But no need to bother Mr Taylor, I could do this.’ said Smith.

‘How?’ asked Sarah.

‘Folding.’ replied Smith, ‘how we higher beings move around such vast spaces, how we create places like this.’ He gestured at the room.

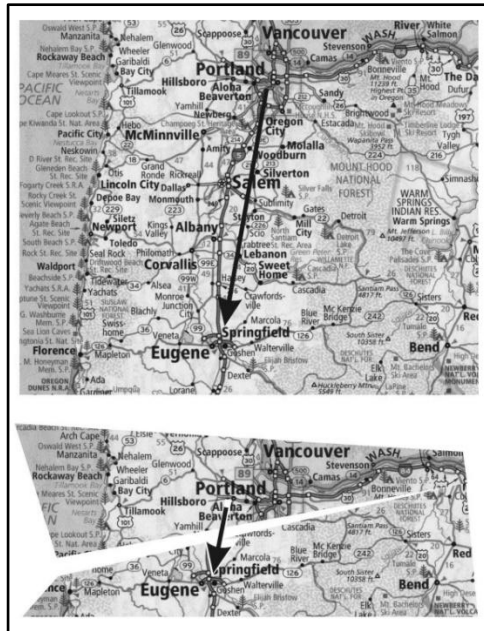
‘How?’ repeated Sarah. Smith began his lecture...

‘Traveling through the vastness of any universe is a problem, even at light speed it can take thousands if not millions of years. An Einstein–Rosen bridge is one proposed method, sometimes called a wormhole where it is possible to travel vast distances across a universe in no time at all. There are, you humans call these, Schwarzschild wormholes, you also call them black holes, an Einstein–Rosen bridge in effect is just using “white” holes as opposed to black holes.’

‘is just using “white” holes as opposed to black holes, as in just! Like just popping out to the corner shop!’ thought Jay. Smith was continuing,

‘A far more preferable method is “folding”, where an individual can “fold” space. Rather like traversing a map, if the map is folded in two, with two folds distances can be reduced.





A further refinement was the creation of small “worlds” using this same method. A blank space could be “folded” and attached to another space. This allows those who are proficient to create their own worlds attached to this world or any other. An example of this is “The Hall of the Mountain King”, not created by myself but by Mr Taylor, this rather splendid hall, now sometimes used by my good self. I think splendid, though he has reservations about the design.



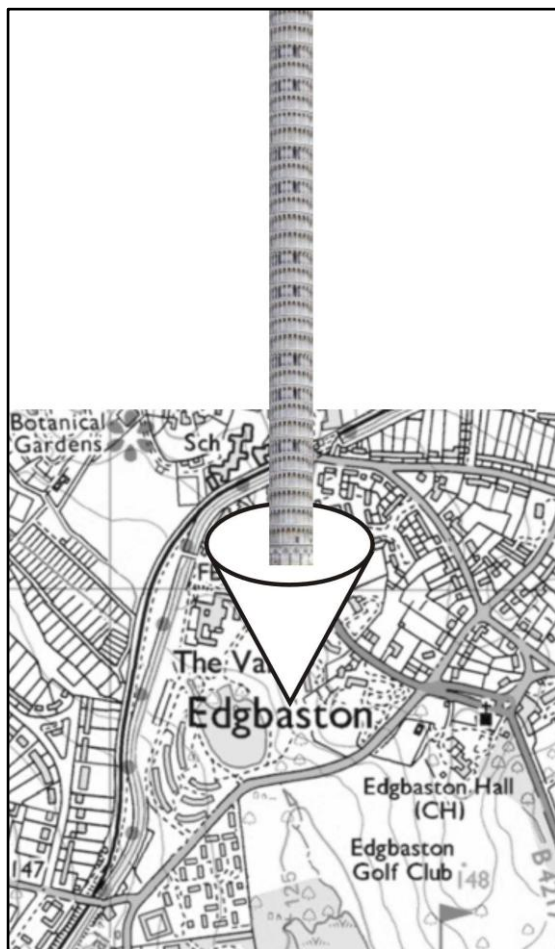


The access to a fabricated world could be from anywhere in another world, it could be moved, attached or unattached and available to the maker or whomever they chose.’

So, the plan was to create a world in which to meet the “Smiths” from the various higher worlds. They decided on a structure based on the Library of Babel in the Borges short story; only given the possible infinity of ‘Smith’ universes this would consist of an infinite octagonal tower with galleries on all eight sides (not hexagonal). From which each gallery the occupants would have the appearance of being addressed by the three, Smith, Sarah and Jay.



The Tower idea in discussion...



This was created and they entered, Mr Smith, Jay and Sarah now found themselves in a room in the infinite tower. To their surprise all the galleries were empty.

‘We must wait,’ said Smith, ‘they are ravaging all of time and space, they will soon find us.’

‘Will we be safe?’ asked Jay.

‘As humans yes, the infinite swords are a deterrent, myself not so, but perhaps in the same room as you?’

There began a noise, at first a slow rumble, then higher pitched cries, the rooms around them began to fill with figures.

They were no longer alone but faced a sight of horror. As far as they could see up and down the tower every room was occupied with fighting figures, tearing, gouging hitting maiming each other. Sometimes a group would pick on an individual, literally ripping them apart and flinging body parts into the hollow centre of the tower to fall infinitely downwards. Looking up they could see limbs, bodies, dead and dying, and blood descending through the tower.

The din was terrible, shouts and screams, the centre void cascading with body parts, blood and still writhing individuals. Smith tried to speak but could not be heard. Sarah and Jay also tried to talk but the noise was deafening.

Suddenly they were back in the Hall, there was silence and a calmness in the room. The gentle candlelight, a silence in which the three waited for minutes taking in their experience. Before Smith could speak Sarah did,

‘We must remove the tower.’

It was done, what happened to its inhabitants was unknown to them. Now Smith could speak,

‘They occupy any space they can, they are from the higher worlds, they have mutated the Master Slave dialectic with the infinite chaos, this results in the type of things you’ve witnessed, and worse. And still worse, the dead do not remain dead, the chaos in them gives them new life, but only to destroy.’

Both had noticed in the falling limbs, blood and bodies there were mutilated creatures crawling up the walls, entering rooms and joining in the mayhem.

‘They are occupying the higher levels; I have escaped to here.’

Smith added, ‘Now the tower is gone they are flung back into the other worlds. Not only can they not die, but they consume matter and energy wherever they find it. They will enter the lower worlds, those above they cannot, and the one from which you now came, that of the human beings, they also cannot enter. The reason for this we know. Not only those swords, but those creatures that you call the overmen. Monsters of pure energy, one of your philosophers called it the Übermensch, perhaps a good word, a bon mot. But your world holds these all powerful Übermensch creatures, so these other creatures of chaos, what was my kin, will not enter. And...’ Smith paused then continued, ‘and something other.’ He sensed the nine.

The mass of creatures in the worlds of Smith, many now being dead or maimed but still able to kill with terrifying strength was spreading through all the higher-level realms, but not any higher than their own. As anticipated these realms, of the

Smith's were infinite, and so eventually would be this slaughter. However, in time they would also descend into the lower realms of randomness and chaos, the origin of all universes, a universe like the origins of our own, and also descend below to lesser worlds. Here they would destroy all matter and living creatures. Those in these worlds, worlds like our own once were, those that could fight would find it useless. Cut limbs would continue to fight, heads to bite. Explosives would cause masses of animated flesh to attack the defenders, use of nuclear weapons would just make these radioactive. Biological weapons would make horrific mutants that spread disease.

But how low into the lesser worlds could this chaos descend? Smith pondered.

'What would this chaos of death and destruction find in the lower worlds,' Jay was thinking aloud, 'We can only speculate, only speculate if they even exist, but doesn't Billy have access to these worlds in all the myths. Like religious myths? You know, well I've had a small interest in this.'

'How so?' asked Sarah.

'I'm not sure,' said Jay, 'maybe an antidote to the materialism of science and biology, are we more than meat?'

Sarah Cooper was impressed but said nothing.

Jay continued in a post stress high perhaps,

'I've an interest in The Tibetan book of the dead.'

At this Smith who had been trawling his vast archive of knowledge sprang to life and began speaking,

‘The Bardo Thodol, and the six paths or worlds. The world of gods or celestial beings, Deva; the world of warlike demigods, Asura, that’s just like the worlds of The Smiths; then the worlds of human beings, Manushya; followed by the world of animals, Tiryagyoni; then the lower worlds, first of hungry ghosts, Preta and finally, the world of Hell, Naraka.’

Jay and Sarah were now looking at Smith, Smith showed a slight surprised look.

‘Thinking of this, thank you Jay. How I wonder would the Asura, the world of warlike demigods, the now chaotic Smiths cope in the worlds of Preta and Naraka?’ he said.

‘So please go on, please wonder aloud.’ said Sarah, ‘well maybe not possible without reference material.’

‘Not a problem!’ asserted Smith, ‘I have knowledge to all of this, let me recall it for you.’ And he began.



CHAPTER FOURTEEN: THE WORLD OF PRETAS AND NARAKA

'Pretas, the hungry ghosts, are spirit like beings who were corrupt, deceitful, jealous, greedy people in a previous life. As a result, their karma is bad, they have an insatiable hunger for a particular substance or object. Hence hungry ghosts. This manifests itself in various ways but the hunger is for vile things. A hunger for repugnant or humiliating things such as cadavers or feces. They also have disturbing visions of the dead, of alien forms, pretas would see everywhere such visions as pus and filth.

Preta's world is invisible to humans, but there are some that can see them. They appear as naked emaciated humans with bulging stomachs and thin throats. They enter higher worlds and are frequently seen licking up spilled water in temples, accompanied by demons, scavenging things, or writhing with severe pain in agony. Sometimes seen as balls of smoke or fire.

Pretas dwell in a land of waste and deserts. Some can eat a little but find it very difficult to find food or drink. Others can find food and drink but find it very difficult to swallow. Others find that the food they eat seems to burst into flames as they swallow it. Others see something edible or drinkable and desire it, but it withers or dries up before their eyes. As a result, they are always hungry. In addition to hunger, Pretas suffer from heat and cold in contradictory ways, they find that even the moon scorches them in the summer, while the sun freezes them in the winter.

Some inflict pain wherever they can, whilst others even eat their own bodies.

The sufferings of the Pretas often resemble those of the dwellers in hell, and the two types of being are easily confused. The simplest distinction is that beings in hell are confined to their subterranean world, while Pretas are free to move about, though maybe this distinction isn't important to our point, or maybe it is, in regarding they can move into worlds like those of the Smiths, who are the warlike demigods. So, they might welcome the mutilated Smiths, the Asura, maybe the Pretas enjoy their company!

Narakas are the hellish beings that reside in the underworld. In certain texts there are many hells. At least 28 in Hinduism, ruled by Yama.

As examples of punishments for those in one of these hells from the Narakas, the hellish beings of the many hells, they bind them by the neck with a strong rope so that they may undergo severe punishment, including being bitten by dogs. Then fried in a large oil cauldron.

The souls are arrested by the Yamadutas, the messengers of death, the agents of Yama, the god of the netherworld.

Others are made naked by the Yamadutas, they race around through a mist of acid which burns their eyes, while relentlessly chased by swarms of wasps and hornets, who continually sting them. Maggots and worms at their feet. Others are made by the Yamadutas, the messengers of death to drink the putrid mixture of blood, pus, and tears that flows down their bodies. While some wallow in a vile, putrid slush produced by a ceaseless, foul rain of putrefaction.

More demons like dragons force souls into freezing mire, mauling and flaying them with their claws as they howl like



dogs. Still others trap souls in flaming tombs. Yamadutas take souls and they are immersed in a river of boiling blood and fire, while they shoot arrows into them.

Narakas, once higher beings, now the hellish beings, some are transformed into gnarled, thorny trees and then are fed upon by Harpies, hideous clawed birds with the faces of women; the trees are only permitted to speak when broken and bleeding. Still others are placed into burning sand and scorched by great flakes of flame falling slowly down from the sky then made to make two files, one along either bank of a ditch, and march quickly in opposite directions while being whipped by horned demons for eternity. Other Yamadutas place their victims head-downwards in round, tube-like holes within rocks with flames burning the soles at their feet, their heads twisted around on their bodies.

Narakas force other dammed souls some into an immense lake of boiling pitch filled with monstrous reptiles which feed on their flesh. Still others are made to run pursued and bitten by snakes and lizards, who curl themselves about them and bind their hands behind their backs. Some are bitten by serpents at the jugular vein, and burst into flames, and are reformed from the ashes like a phoenix in order to experience the ordeal again.

Yamadutas force hundreds to be hacked and mutilated for all eternity by large, clawed demons, they must drag their ruined bodies around, their wounds healing in the course of time, only to have the demons tear them apart anew. They also slit the throats, slash off noses and ears. Others are afflicted with different types of horrible diseases, stench, thirst, filth, and darkness. Some lie prostrate while others run hungering



through the different hells tearing others to pieces who are unable to move because they are distorted and twisted in every conceivable position. And...'

'I think I get the picture.' said Sarah, Jay nodding in agreement, 'So the world of warlike demigods, the Asura in these myths, they are the same or identical to The Smiths of the higher level. Now the Smiths or the Asura, are now in the chaos of death and destruction, now they find themselves in acting like these demons, or are they the same? And they both enter and create these hells. It seems similar if not identical to what they have become. Interesting. As they descend through the lower levels, they become these beings. What of the higher levels?'

Jay interrupted, 'You mean the world of the Deva, could you tell us the details of this world Mr Smith?'

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: THE WORLD OF THE DEVA AND ASURAS

The Deva in the six paths of the incarnation cycle are higher beings but have not yet achieved Arhat, Nirvana and liberation from the endless cycle of rebirth. There are kinds and levels of these higher beings.

The Ārūpyadhātu have no physical form or location. They do not interact with the rest of the universe.

The Rūpadhātu devas have physical forms, these can be divided into five main groups:

The Śuddhāvāsa devas are the rebirths of those who died just short of attaining the state of Arhat, liberation of rebirth, Nirvana.

The Bṛhatphala devas remain in the tranquil state attained in the fourth dhyāna. Dhyāna is a higher state of mind.

The Śubhakarṣna devas rest in the bliss of the third dhyāna.

The Ābhāsvara devas enjoy the delights of the second dhyāna.

The devas of the Kāmadhātu have physical forms similar to, but larger than those of humans. The higher devas of the Kāmadhātu live in four heavens that float in the air, leaving them free from contact with the strife of the lower world.

The lower devas of the Kāmadhātu live on different parts of the mountain at the centre of the world, Sumeru. They are even more passionate than the higher devas, and do not simply enjoy themselves but also engage in strife and fighting.

Now there are the Asuras, their world of warlike demigods, the Asura, that was The Smiths of the higher level, only now the chaos of death and destruction.

In Tibetan Buddhism they are described as power-seeking demons related to the more benevolent Devas, also known as Suras in Hinduism.

According to Hindu scriptures, the asuras are in constant fear of devas. They are described as powerful superhuman demigods with good or bad qualities. Some state that Asuras were initially good, virtuous and powerful. However, their nature gradually changed, and they came to represent evil, vice and abuse of power. In Shiva Purana, they evolved into anti-gods and had to be destroyed because they threatened the gods.'

'This is very interesting,' Smith said to himself, 'it seems remarkably accurate, and shows this, our decline in a different light, and all the more remarkable as its origin is in human mythology, maybe Billy Taylor's ideas need to be taken far more seriously.'

Smith continued,

'These asuras or anti-gods were depicted to have become proud, vain, to have stopped performing sacrifices, to violate sacred laws, not visit holy places, not cleaning themselves from sin, to becoming envious of the higher devas, torturous of living beings, creating confusion in everything and even challenging the devas.'

Once again Smith interrupted himself as he recalled the information, 'Remarkable, truly remarkable.'

He again continued,

‘Also described Asuras to be lords with different specialized knowledge, magical powers and special abilities, which only later chose to deploy these for good, constructive reasons or for evil, destructive reasons. The former become known as Asura in the sense of Devas, the later as Asura in the sense of demons. During this battle between good and evil, creation and destruction. This is the first major dualism to emerge in the nature of everything in the Universe.’

Again, Smith had to interrupt himself, ‘This is the Master Servant conflict, which is never ending, each claiming to be good, the other evil... incredible.’

He continued reciting what his memory was producing,

‘The origins of this dualism can be found in numerous religions, perhaps deriving from this, in Zoroastrianism and in the Nordic Gods.

Asuras who remain Asura share the character of powerful beings obsessed with their craving for ill-gotten Soma, a powerful metaphysical drink, and for wealth, ego, anger, unprincipled nature, force, and violence, when they lose, miss, or don't get what they want questioned, they challenge, and attack others.’

Smith was now visibly trembling.

‘In Buddhist mythology the asuras show especially wrath, pride, envy, insincerity, falseness, boasting, and bellicosity. The asuras are said to experience a much more pleasurable life than humans, but they are plagued by envy for the Devas.’

Here he finished, Smith who was unusually animated, he did not speak but was smiling and nodding his head. When he did speak, he said,

‘Well, how humans came by such truths I fail to know, that it is a truth is undoubtable.’

He paused.

‘And humans, and animals!’



CHAPTER SIXTEEN: THE WORLD OF HUMANS – MANUSHYA & THE WORLD OF ANIMALS - TIRYAGYONI

‘Humans are minds, considered as an animal with a disease that departs a soul from its universal enlightened infinitesimal behaviour to the finite miserable fearful behaviour that fluctuates between the state of heaven and hell before it is extinguished back to its infinitesimal behaviour.’

He paused in thought, ‘Yes very human!’ he said and continued recalling the ancient texts,

‘This is not intrinsically marked by extremes of happiness or suffering, but all the states of consciousness in the universe, from hellish suffering to divine joy, to serene tranquillity can be experienced within the human world.

Humans have an immediate reason to seek out the Dharma, the Dharma is tricky to translate, maybe to seek out the right way that leads to enlightenment. Humans have the means to listen to it and follow it. Among the lower realms, Pretas, the hungry ghosts, and dwellers in the Narakas hell are gripped by pain and fear and can only endure their lot but cannot better themselves. Animals are intellectually unable to understand the Dharma in full. The way of life of the Asuras, that of the Smiths, is dominated by violence and antithetical to the teachings of the Dharma. Most of the Brahmas and Devas simply enjoy reaping the fruits of their past actions and think that they are immortal and forever to be happy and so they do not try to practice the Dharma.

When their past karmas have all had their results, these devas will fall into lower worlds and suffer again. The lowest sorts of devas deal with strife, love, and loss just as humans do, but

even so they lack the spur of imminent mortality that can lead humans called manuṣya, to seek, not merely a better future life, but an escape from saṃsāra altogether.’

Smith looked puzzled, then repeated, ‘they lack the spur of imminent mortality that can lead humans to seek... do we Smiths have to try to become human, the thought is unpleasant in the extreme.’

Jay spoke, ‘Can I ask you a question, well it’s about questions, you seem to be questioning yourself?’

‘Oh,’ said Smith, ‘understandable, you see I’m from a higher reality, I’m not really a Victorian middle-aged man, this is just an avatar, I happen to like, no, a mass of this size couldn’t store the information I hold, you might think near infinite, and even my cognitive abilities couldn’t keep all this information to hand. And of course, much of this would be irrelevant, and there would be so much contradiction that the cognitive noise would destroy any order. So, I recall this as you might use a library, the information can and does at times surprise and shock. And to anticipate another question about my avatar and what I really look like, that I will not answer for two reasons, first you are fine with three or four dimensions, not any number, and the idea of some fundamental base reality... well really, speak to Mr Taylor about that, so I only appear like this to communicate with you, although I must admit I find it, well, what, pleasant? Anyway, let’s press on, I’m finding this all very fascinating and maybe very useful’.

And so, he continued,

‘For this reason, life in the world of humans is known as the precious human rebirth. Born close to the pivot point of

happiness and suffering, humans have a unique capacity for moral choices with long-term significance. Human rebirth is extremely rare. It is compared to a wooden cattle-yoke floating on the waves of the sea, and the likelihood of a blind turtle, rising from the depths of the ocean to the surface once in a hundred years, putting its head through the hole in the yoke. However once already living as a human they will continue to be reborn. The idea is that one must be good and moral because falling below the human realm is dangerous as the odds of one becoming a human again with any great frequency is slim, like the turtle.'

Smith muttered, 'slim' and 'falling below...'

He continued,

'Being born a human has the physical and intellectual potential to grasp the basic message of the Dharma. For this reason, Buddhist teachers say that one's present condition as a human should be valued very highly, and not allowed to slide by, as the combination of existence as a human and the presence of a Buddha's teaching may not come again for a very long time. Any human, in this view, who is in a position to learn the Dharma, would be remiss to not take advantage of it. This view also stands in contrast to those who would claim that, if one is to be reborn multiple times, there is no need to worry about one's actions in this life as they can always be amended in the future; rather, there is no assurance that in a long series of lives one will ever obtain the right circumstances for enlightenment, so it is important to act in the present.

Animals: the position and treatment of animals in Buddhism is important for the light it sheds on Buddhists' perception of

their own relation to the natural world, on Buddhist humanitarian concerns in general, and on the relationship between Buddhist theory and Buddhist practice.

Animals are regarded in Buddhist thought as sentient beings. The doctrine of rebirth held that any human could be reborn as an animal, and any animal could be reborn as a human. An animal might be a reborn dead relative, and anybody who looked far enough back through their series of lives might come to believe every animal to be a distant relative, and that sentient beings currently living in the animal realm have been our mothers, brothers, sisters, fathers, children, friends in past rebirths. Therefore, one could not make a hard distinction between moral rules applicable to animals and those applicable to humans; ultimately humans and animals were part of a single family, they are all interconnected. Though in cosmological terms, animals inhabit a distinct world, separated from humans not by space but by state of mind. Rebirth as an animal are unhappy rebirths, even where human beings are not present, they are attacked and eaten by other animals or live in fear of it, they endure extreme changes of environment throughout the year, and they have no security of habitation. Those that live among humans are slaughtered for their bodies or taken and forced to work and they lack understanding.

From the beginnings of Buddhism, there were regulations intended to prevent the harming of sentient beings in the animal realm for various reasons. As a basic precept in Buddhism is of non-harm. Actions which result in the taking of life, directly or indirectly, contradict this basic Buddhist precept. As a result, Buddhists try to refrain from eating meat. Though there has been some contention about

interpretations of the sūtras. One interpretation is that eating of meat is not explicitly prohibited in the suttas and Vinaya of the Pāli canon.'

So, he finished. There was a long pause as Mr Smith reflected.

He spoke quietly, to himself,

'So, we, the Asura, the world of warlike demigods, the now chaotic Smiths, may well descend and become Pretas, the hungry ghosts, and then even the Narakas in hell. This a result of our violence, and that in turn of our envy for the higher forms of the Deva. But if we could become like humans and know the Dharma, interesting...'

'And what of the twelve categories of living beings?' he mused.

'The twelve categories of living beings?' repeated Jay.

Again, there was another pause, then Smith began.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: THE TWELVE CATEGORIES OF LIVING BEINGS

‘Ananda, through a continuous process of falseness, the upside-down state of movement occurs in this world. It unites with energy to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts. From this there come into being the forms of fish, birds, amphibians, and reptiles.

Through a continuous process of defilement, the upside-down state of desire occurs in this world. It unites with stimulation to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts that are either upright or perverse. From this there come into being the wombs which multiply throughout the world in the form of humans, animals, dragons, and immortals.

Through a continuous process of attachment, the upside-down state of inclination occurs in this world. It unites with warmth to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts that are vacillating and inverted. From this there come into being through moisture the form of insects and crawling invertebrates.

Through a continuous process of change, the upside-down state of borrowing occurs in this world. It unites with contact to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts of new and old. From this there come into being through transformation the form of metamorphic flying and crawling creatures.

Through a continuous process of restraint, the upside-down state of obstruction occurs in this world. It unites with attachment to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random



thoughts of refinement and brilliance. From this there come into being the form of auspicious and inauspicious essences.

Through a continuous process of annihilation and dispersion, the upside-down state a delusion occurs in this world. It unites with darkness to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts of obscurity and hiding. From this there come into being the formless beings, which multiply throughout the lands as those that are empty, dispersed, annihilated, and submerged.

Through a continuous process of illusory imaginings, the upside-down state of shadows occurs in this world. It unites with memory to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts that are hidden and bound up. From this there come into being the form of spirits, ghosts, and weird essences.

Through a continuous process of dullness and slowness, the upside-down state of stupidity occurs in this world. It unites with obstinacy to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts that are dry and attenuated. From this there come into being those without thought, which multiply throughout the lands as their essence and spirit change into earth, wood, metal, or stone.

Through a continuous process of parasitic interaction, the upside-down state of simulation occurs in this world. It unites with defilement to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts of according and relying. From this there come into being jellyfish that use shrimps for eyes.

Through a continuous process of mutual enticement, the upside-down state of the nature occurs in this world. It unites



with mantras to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts of beckoning and summoning. From this there come into being those not totally lacking form, which are formless, the hidden beings of mantras and incantations.

Through a continuous process of false unity, the upside-down state of transgression occurs in this world. It unites with formations to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts of reciprocal interchange. From this there come into being those not totally endowed with thoughts, which become a different creature into its own species.

Through a continuous process of enmity and harm, the upside-down state of killing occurs in this world. It unites with monstrosities to become eighty-four thousand kinds of random thoughts of devouring one's father and mother. From this there come into being those not totally lacking thoughts, with no thought and multiply throughout the lands, until their kinds abound in such forms as the dirt owl, which hatches its young from clods of dirt, and the pouching bird, which incubates a poisonous fruit to create its young. In each case, the young thereupon eat the parents.

These are the twelve categories of living beings.'

Smith finished. He had recited his version of the twelve categories of living beings, and now Smith sat silent for a great while; his lips moved as if silently rehearsing these categories of being.

He finally spoke,

'In here, in these texts, I think there is a way out of this problem, a very detailed way, of altering the Asura, the world



of warlike demigods, the now chaotic Smiths, from being like mankind but not mankind, manuṣya but capable of Dharma.’

He paused, and was obviously thinking deeply,

‘If we take the twelve categories of being in reverse and adapt this there might be a solution. But this requires a deal of thinking.’

There was another long pause, darkness had descended outside the room, the candles shone bright, the burning logs crackled in the fireplace and made dancing shadows, these seemed perhaps inspirational.

‘We take the last verse first, then perhaps...’

Again, there was silence, save for the sound of the burning logs.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: CADER IDRIS

DI Benjamin Washington was talking to Billy and PC Christine Dawnay was listening. They talked for some time, eventually Ben Washington said,

‘Ok, we need to get to Wales, Cader Idris, and Jane Smith. I’ll drive if you don’t mind.’ looking at PC Christine Dawnay.

‘I’ve booked you in at The Penhelig Arms, Aberdovey.’ Billy said, ‘Really nice place and the best breakfast I’ve ever had.’

Ben took the keys to the WMP Range Rover, and they left Nigel’s house.

So, they set off towards the centre of Birmingham and the Aston Expressway. The route was one taken years ago by Jane Smith, except the last part was not the A470 right at Cemmaes Road but the A487 to Machynlleth, then the A493 to Aberdovey / Aberdyfi. The Penhelig Arms is a pub, restaurant and hotel about a half a mile before the town, on the coast road with splendid views across the Dyfi / Dovey Estuary.

The motorways and dual carriageways had given way to winding roads, hills of lush greens, valleys which the road wound down through dark tall trees, bright cascading streams, rain and mists. They arrived at The Penhelig Arms mid-afternoon; the mist prevented them seeing the view across the estuary.

Arriving, they checked into their rooms. Ben suggested they freshen up and maybe meet downstairs, and grab a late lunch, then go over the material that Billy had given them which was



now on Ben's laptop. He had also given him details of Hope Murkowski who he had emailed before they set off.

They checked into their rooms, having arranged to meet in the bar for food after they had settled in, Ben noticed an email from Hope who had suggested a zoom meeting, so he arranged with her for this to happen later that afternoon.

Despite being May the bar had a fire lit which was very welcoming, they ordered food. Ben told Christine about the meeting, and on checking out internet connectivity from the hotel staff he had been asked if he wished to use their conference room, which he accepted. After the meal they took a stroll. Though misty they could see it was a beautiful setting for the hotel. A small stream cascaded down the steep hillside passing under the road and then into the estuary. It was wide with the shadows of distant hills opposite emerging from the mist. They walked back to the hotel, first fetching their laptops from their rooms then they found the conference room. Ben copied his material on to a USB drive for Christine.

The conference room was small but had a large screen and audio, Ben linked his laptop to the screen. As a precaution he also checked out the sound from outside, no worries, none would be able to hear.

'There's a fair bit of reading,' said Ben, 'which we can catch up with after the video call. Maybe another longer walk before dinner, I'm for an early night of reading before tomorrow when we need to find Jane Smith.' Christine agreed. Just then Hope Murkowski appeared on the screen.

‘Hi,’ she said, ‘could you put the USB in your laptop, it should have the encryption key.’

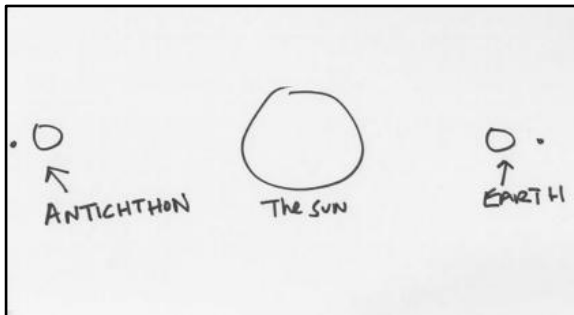
Ben did this.

‘Great,’ said Hope, ‘now we are safe from eavesdroppers. Let’s begin. OK, we need to cover Velikovsky, Antichthon and Übermensch, plural Übermenschen.’

She began.

‘To be brief, and you can back fill this, Velikovsky was a supposed astronomer who wrote a popular book in 1950 called Worlds in Collision, since discredited, about collisions between the planets being recorded in historical texts, like in ancient religious accounts, the movement of planets from their present orbits.

Antichthon was, or is a supposed planet, identical to the earth but hidden as it’s always the other side of the sun to the earth. Sorry about my crude diagram.’



‘This is important, it was real, well is real, it seems intelligent life evolved there millions of years before here on earth. And though Velikovsky’s theories were in fact wrong, his ideas about collisions were not. Skipping the details, Antichthon



disappears millions of years ago into the planet Jupiter, this created the giant red spot.'

Hope paused,

'OK so far?' she asked,

Ben spoke, 'Yes I think so.'

'No worries,' Hope said, 'get back to me, Billy or Nigel if you want details. So OK,' she continued, 'It seems the life forms that lived on Antichthon inside Jupiter became a single intelligent entity, consuming their planet, and becoming a being of pure energy.'

She paused again.

'Are you happy with this, it sounds crazy?'

'We're OK.' said Christine, Ben nodded.

'So, it being pure energy, like do the math, the matter in a Nuke, this thing has turned a planet's matter into energy, so we, they called it the Übermensch, the superman, by the guys tracking it at NASA. And it leaves the solar system, disappears, saving the life on Earth from destruction on its way, disappears to who knows where. I need water, you guys maybe too.'

They grabbed some bottled water from a table. Ben's head was swimming, but strangely Christine seemed calm.

Hope continued, 'So this Übermensch disappears, now Catherine Mulberry, along with Billy, had the idea that this Übermensch was not the only one, that there are Übermenschen, and they might have left traces, markers,

notably sites such as the Rude Man at Cerne Abbas, the Nazca Lines in Peru or The Face on Mars in the Cydonia region, West Kennet long barrow, and geographical features, like Ayers Rock or Cader Idris, and so Jane Smith's encounter with the mountain is significant, it may give us some useful knowledge.

And now the twist, they might not be signs of departure but signs of their coming back. And so, you guys need to maybe find out from someone close to one of these signs, as in Jane Smith and Cader Idris.'

'This is why we are here.' said Ben.

'Why we are here,' repeated Christine.

'And tomorrow we will find her.' Ben added.

The conference ended and they went to their rooms, then as planned took a walk.

Ben and Christine walked into Aberdovey / Aberdyfi, the weather was clearing, the road skirted the estuary, across which they could now see clearly the Welsh hills. It was a beautiful landscape, so unlike the abstractions which filled their thoughts.

They called in at the Dovey Inn and took their drinks outside at the rear of the pub where there was a small square. They sat at a table and discussed the story of the Übermensch, Cader Idris, and Jane Smith. A figure at a nearby table turned and spoke, he was a man probably in his 50s, with a neat beard, corduroy trousers, white open neck shirt, cardigan, and brown brogue shoes. He was sat with a younger man, maybe in his early 30s.



He spoke, ‘Hi, sorry to disturb you but I couldn’t help overhearing some of your conversation, and normally I wouldn’t bother you, but a couple of things did bother me. Allow me to introduce myself, Cledwyn Hughes, this is Bryn my partner and we live in Pant-y-Ilan with a fairly recent guest, Jane Smith who has a particular interest you might say in Cader Idris. I think if you call round tomorrow it might be useful, more so as you mentioned the Übermensch, or as the young lady says Dros ddyd.’

Both Christine and Ben gave a puzzled look.

‘I said what?’

‘Dros ddyd, is Welsh, Welsh, literally translated as over man.’ He was looking at Christine, ‘Your friend said the Übermensch, but you said Dros ddyd...’

Bryn was nodding, Ben spoke, ‘You know Christine, I think you did use those words.’

‘See you tomorrow.’ said Dr Hughes, at which he and his partner rose and slowly walked away, Cledwyn Hughes turning to give a smile.

‘Wow’, said Ben, ‘Bingo! and you speak Welsh!’

There was a puzzled look on Christine Dawnay’s face, ‘Me! no, not a word.’

‘Well, we can enjoy finishing our drinks, take a stroll back and enjoy our dinner.’ Ben said.

‘Cader Idris, Jane Smith, Pant-y-Ilan.’ Christine was saying to herself.



After dinner both retired early, Christine thought she might do more research, but her mind was confused, so she lay down, and immediately fell into a deep sleep. Ben stayed up till the early hours researching and making notes.

The next morning after what they both agreed was the best breakfast they could remember they drove to Pant-y-Ilan. They took the A 493 to Tywyn, then on to Fairbourne, Arthog and before the waterfalls took a steep and narrow lane rising through dense birch trees and bracken, then opening to fields edged with drystone walls with the views of the mountains getting ever nearer. Ben felt a feeling of excitement, almost elation, Christine had a strange feeling of foreboding.

They found the farmhouse and Cledwyn Hughes greeted them, Jane Smith was in the garden looking at Cader Idris. She recognised Ben and yet had a strange feeling about his companion. She spoke, obviously she had been prepared, 'I'll take you to the mountain, it's close but steep, about a quarter of a mile.'

Ben looked ready to go, Christine was reluctant and spoke, 'If it's OK with you guys, I think I'll wait here.'

'Sure.' said Jane, 'So let's go.'

Ben looked puzzled but shrugged then turned and followed Jane.

The two set off on the footpath, Christine sat on a chair in the garden looking at the mountain. The path crossed rough windswept grasses, already they realised they were in the mountains, around them were views of the Welsh hills, the path rose steeper with stepping stones in places. Behind them

now and below they saw distant views and sparse clouds. There were more stepping stones, and they began more and more to realise they were now climbing above all the surrounding landscape. Though they were above these they still climbed towards the receding brow of the mountain. The rough grass was giving way to rock, behind them now they could glimpse the sea. Finally, they reached the summit, a horseshoe of rock embracing a lake. Llyn Cau, the bottomless lake of the once volcanic crater. The entrance to the earth.

Cader Idris is deep in myth and legend. The chair of Idris Gawr, Idris the Giant. It is said that anyone who sleeps on its slopes alone will supposedly awaken either a madman or a poet. Jane Smith has slept on the mountain many times.

In Welsh mythology Cader Idris is also said to be one of the hunting grounds of Gwyn ap Nudd and his Cŵn Annwn, his pack of huge dogs. The howling of which foretold death to anyone who heard them, the pack sweeping up that person's soul and herding it into the underworld. Similarly, the Brenin Llwyd is also said to haunt a number of locations including Cader Idris. The stories of Brenin Llwyd, the Grey King or Monarch of the Mist, were told in the most mountainous districts. In the North, he was described as being very mighty and powerful, represented as sitting among the mountains, robed in grey clouds and mist. Literally the “over” man, Übermensch?

The two looked down into the depth of the lake, but not as deep as did Christine sat in the garden, her eyes closed.

‘Not the Übermensch,’ she said, but ‘Übermenschen, there are many and they are all here.’



CHAPTER NINETEEN: WATER

'It's not The Earth, it was all once water, and nothing else.'
thought Christine.

And in the moments that the two descended from the mountain these thoughts came into Christine's mind, from where she did not know, but it was a strange and wonderful experience as if a friend or a parent was talking to her. She closed her eyes.

oOo

1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.



9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called the Seas: and God saw that it was good.

oOo

A creator god dives into the cosmic ocean to bring up and form the Earth. A diving bird, catching a lump of earth from the primordial ocean. A bird extracts silt from the waters and creates the egg from which the land is created.

Maui fishes islands out of the ocean. The gods raise the earth, and Thor catches the serpent of middle earth which lives at the bottom of the ocean.

Islands rose from foam raised by mixing the waters of the ocean with the spear of the gods, Izanagi and Izanami. The compactor of the ocean waters is the wind, which creates the milky substance out of them, the Earth's firmament.

Ra-Atum fights the serpent Apep, Indra with Vritra the serpent, Enlil defeats the creator Tiamat, the wife of Apsû, the dragon Enki, Ninurta, fights the owner of the underworld, Kur. Tishtrya fights with the antidote Apaosha. Yahweh struggles with dragons and sea monsters, Rahab, Tehom, the Leviathan. The separation of the sky from the earth it gives birth to the cosmic tree.

When on high the heaven had not been named,

Firm ground below had not been called by name,

Naught but primordial Apsu, their begetter,
Tiamat, she who bore them all,
Their waters commingling as a single body;
No reed hut had been matted, no marsh land had appeared,
When no gods whatever had been brought into being,
Uncalled by name, their destinies undetermined—
Then it was that the gods were formed within them.

Marduk made likenesses of the gods in the constellations and defined the days of the year from them. He created night and day, and the moon also. He created clouds and rain, and their water made the Tigris and Euphrates. He gave the 'Tablet of Destinies' to Anu.

oOo

Seoga Yeol Sejon said, 'When it becomes my age, water will form first out of the Five Phases of Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth. The liquor has spilled to the earth, and the waters of the ditches and wells and the waters of the springs and the rivers have all formed from it.

Whilst the creator god Mireuk wishes to discover fire and water. He thrashes a grasshopper, a frog, and a mouse each three times, but only the mouse reveals that fire is created by hitting iron on stone and that water springs up from inside a certain mountain. Mireuk rewards it by giving it dominion over all the rice boxes of the world. Having defeated Mireuk and returned from his western journey, Seokga looks for fire and water. He thrashes a mouse three times, who reveals the



secret of fire and is rewarded with priority over the world's food, then thrashes a frog three times, who reveals the source of water in return for priority over the world's waters.'

oOo

The Kumulipo is the creation chant,

As type follows type,

the accumulating slime of their decay raises the land above the waters,

in which, as spectator of all, swims the octopus,

the lone survivor from an earlier world.

oOo

Leviathan a dragon who lives over the sources of the Deep and who, along with the male land-monster Behemoth, will be served up to the righteous at the end of time.

Leviathan and Behemoth will be slain by God on the last day and cast into the abyss. The annihilation of the chaos-monster will result in a new world of peace, without any trace of evil.

Leviathan, the element of Water and the direction of west, one of the Four Crown Princes of Hell.

oOo

Pangu the primordial being and creator separated heaven and earth, and his body the mountains and roaring water.

The world was covered in water except for a single mountain top where people had gathered during the flooding of the world. As the waters receded the people tried to come down



from the mountain, but the land was so soft with mud that those that tried would sink into the ground. Wherever a person sank, a raven would come and stand on that spot. One raven at each hole. Once the ground hardened the raven turned into a person, explaining why Miwok are so dark.

oOo

Raven led the owner of water to believe he had soiled his bed in his sleep and threatened to shame him unless he shares his water. Then Raven puts ash on his tongue to fool the owner to believe his extreme thirst is unquenched. Instead of drinking the water Raven collects it in a seal's bladder hidden under his clothes and flees with all of it.

oOo

The first trees created on Planet Earth were by Roog. Earth's formation began with a swamp. The Earth was not formed until long after the creation of the first three worlds: the waters of the underworld; the air which included the higher world, the sun, the moon and the stars, and earth. Roog is the creator and fashioner of the Universe and everything in it.

oOo

When Serer men finish off burying the dead, they used to wash their hands in a calabash placed at the entrance of the house. This calabash contained branches of Saas soaked in water. Unlike the trees of the savannah that lose their leaves during the dry season, the Saas is green throughout the dry and rainy seasons. The Saas is the tree of life.

oOo



At first there were only primal waters and Sky. But Sky also had a daughter named Ilmatar. One day, Ilmatar descended to the waters and became pregnant. She gestated for a very long time in the waters not being able to give birth. One day a goldeneye was seeking a resting place and flew to the knee of Ilmatar, where it laid its eggs. As the bird incubated its eggs Ilmatar's knee grew warmer and warmer. Eventually she was burned by the heat and responded by moving her leg, dislodging the eggs that then fell and shattered in the waters. Land was formed from the lower part of one of the eggshells, while sky formed from the top. The egg whites turned into the moon and stars, and the yolk became the sun.

oOo

Ilmatar continued to float in the waters. Her footprints became pools for fish, and by pointing she created contours in the land. In this way she made all that is. Then one day she gave birth to Väinämöinen, the first man. Väinämöinen swam until he found land, but the land was barren. With Sampsä Pellervoinen he spread life over the land.

oOo

Around the floating island were four seas. Each sea was ruled by a being. In the sea to the East dwells Big Water Creature, The One Who Grabs Things in the Water. In the sea to the south lived Blue Heron. In the sea to the west dwelled Frog. In the ocean to the north dwelled Winter, Thunder.

oOo

The great Female River crossed this land from north to south. The great Male River crossed the land from east to west. The



rivers flowed through one another in the middle, and the name of this place is Crossing of the Waters.

oOo

Mbombo was alone, darkness and primordial water covered all the earth. It would happen that Mbombo came to feel an intense pain in his stomach, and then Mbombo vomited the sun, the moon, and stars. The heat and light from the sun evaporated the water covering the earth, creating clouds, and after time, the dry hills emerged from the water.

oOo

The Ogdoad consisted of four frog-headed male gods and their serpent-headed female counterparts. This divine group represented the dark, watery, unknown, and eternal state of the cosmos prior to creation. Nun and Naunet represented water. Heh and Hauhet expressed the notion of infinity. Kek and Kauket stood for darkness. Amun and Amaunet reflected the concept of hiddenness.

oOo

Atum is self-created and arises in the shape of an obelisk-like pillar, the benben, in Heliopolis. He engenders by means of his own bodily fluids. To begin the creation of the world, Atum spits out a pair of divine beings: Shu, the god of air, and Tefnut, his female counterpart, the goddess of moisture.

-oOo-

So, by the time that Ben and Jane arrived back in the garden of Cledwyn Hughes, Christine had opened her eyes, her



expression a kind of strange confident introspection. Jane noticed this, she spoke,

‘You have seen something.’

There was a silence.

Then Christine spoke,

‘They use the water to hide.’

‘What water, hide what, who?’ Ben asked.

‘The lake, Llyn Cau, the Übermenschen.’

She paused then said.

‘I think we have to go to places.’

‘Where?’ said Ben.

‘I hope Billy will know.’ she replied.



CHAPTER TWENTY: THE ÜBERMENSCHEN

Ben was confused as they drove back to The Penhelig Arms, Christine seemed relaxed. But he noticed she couldn't take her eyes off the sea when they saw it from the road. They passed Froig where the road, the A493, was narrow and twisted following the coast with the sea directly below them and the tall slope of the hills to their right. Christine seemed transfixed by this view of the sea and the sweep of the bay, Ben drove until the road widened and then he pulled into a layby, he asked,

'Would you like to get out and look at the sea?'

'No, it's OK, it's wonderful, and it's all OK.' was the reply.

They waited around ten minutes then Ben drove on.

Over supper in the hotel Ben was idly talking about how they had not really answered the question concerning the Übermenschen, where they were and why?

Christine spoke, 'I have everything in my head that is the water, and the earth. I think there is the water and then the earth who are the Übermenschen, I have to be sure, Billy Taylor will have to show me.'

She was then quiet, and Ben was thoughtful, and her use of the full name, "Billy Taylor" seemed important, but he couldn't think why. After breakfast they drove back to Birmingham and Edgbaston, the drive was uneventful.

When they arrived in Edgbaston Billy was waiting, he showed them into a small study in Nigel's house. They all sat, though it was bright sun outside the curtains were part drawn, Billy spoke.



‘Christine it’s good to see you back, and that you are here too Ben. I think I’ll explain what I think first and see where we go.’

There was a strange silence, he continued,

‘Christine, I think has had visions, creation stories, myths if you like, and water, seas, oceans, rivers were the focus in various cultures and forms.’

He paused, then continued,

‘From Genesis, and then a diving bird, an endless and eternal primordial sea, Tiamat, Marduk, Leviathan, roaring water, the stories of Raven, Roog, Buga, and great floods.’

Christine nodded; Ben looked thoughtful, she spoke,

‘I’ve tried to see the great earth, but the sea is deeper, and greater, Uluru was defeated. I remember in my childhood an encyclopaedia in which it showed the land, it showed the continents as animals, Africa was a glaring monster looking at America across the sea, Asia was a giant monster too, it was funny, Australia was a rabbit, shouldn’t it have been a kangaroo?’ she puzzled.

‘The Übermenschen.’ said Billy, ‘They have all returned, and all returned here to Earth, except one.’

‘I felt them beneath Llyn Cau.’ she said.

‘They, no not they but one of them, the victor wants to rule everything, but we want to rule, we, and not be ruled by them.’

She spoke with a kind of fear and anger, and continued,

‘We create great structures in the water, but they now want to rule,’ she was saying as if she could see things in her mind, ‘they want to rule us, even us, so, I can’t let them. I can see a red planet, now it’s a red sun. A strange planet with a red Sun, a planet of dark red skies and an Ocean. A great ocean with no land.’ She stopped speaking and was gone. Disappeared.

Ben looked astonished at Billy but before he could speak Nigel entered the room and immediately began speaking,

‘Hi, how was Wales and Cader Idris...’ he stopped, realizing Christine was missing, ‘... but no Christine?’

‘She simply vanished.’ said Ben, ‘She was telling us of a red planet, then a red sun with a planet which was all ocean, then she was gone.’

There was a pause, Nigel was thinking, then he spoke,

‘Oh, the planet, I think it was TOI-700 d, a near-Earth-sized exoplanet, all water, orbiting within the habitable zone of the red dwarf TOI-700. It’s around a hundred light years away in the constellation of Dorado. A world of water. So that’s where she’s gone?’ Nigel said.

‘How do you know about the planet?’ Ben asked.

‘I’ve been there.’ was the reply, ‘With Billy and others, Sarah was one.’

‘But what makes you think she’s gone there?’ asked Ben.

‘Well, it was the last thing she mentioned.’ Nigel replied.

‘And it’s a world of water in which the Achamōth would be safe.’ said Billy.



CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE: IN ARCADIA

Billy had created the “hall”, that Baroque “Hall of the Mountain King” in which he and others often met, created it by “folding”. As a comfortable place to discuss matters it was fine, a little too overly decorative Billy thought, but the design was not entirely his own. So, he had, in case need arose, created something a little more substantial.

His thoughts went to the room with heavy Rococo gold decoration, elaborate furniture, and massive candelabra. The bookcases, beautiful wood panelling and mirrors inlaid into the walls with windows looking onto formal gardens.

Not quite right, he wanted something more English, maybe a little larger than a country house but not quite as large as a palace such a Versailles, or in a city like Buckingham Palace. His palace, which he called Arcadia, had a long driveway, landscaped and formal gardens, lakes, a river, and extensive woodland.

It had a grand entrance hall and the state rooms, which were all aligned, an enfilade, each room leading to the next, then like Blenheim Palace the Grand Salon which had a freeze of paintings, scenes from the Trojan War. And a long gallery of works of art.

There were smaller salons, more intimate, the walls hung with paintings, mainly large landscapes in the style of Claude Lorrain and mythological paintings in the style of Nicolas Poussin. The walls being an eggshell green with rich gold baroque decoration, the same on the ceilings which were all white. There were Chinese style lacquerware tables and cabinets, Persian carpets, marble fireplaces with decorative



sculpture and vases. Large central chandeliers. Doors richly decorated in marquetry of exotic veneers. Some of the rooms had views of the parkland and river, where often groups of fallow deer could be seen crossing and heading towards a wood. And of course there was a grand dining room, a music room and a library.

The library lacked paintings, it was large and tall with spiral staircases and walkways to access the higher shelves. It had desks, fine mahogany tables and chairs, even sofas and lower tables, and one French window with a view of the parkland, the lake, river and woodland.

On one of the larger tables were several books, paper and pens, a card index box and a note, it read,

‘Make yourself at home, please explore, you will find everything you need, the place has a mind of its own. Regards Billy.’

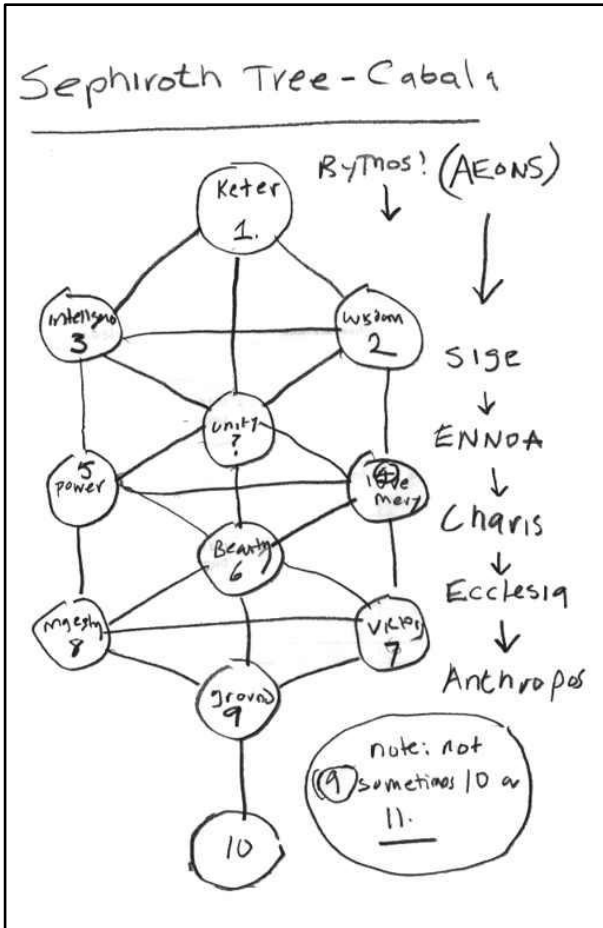
And now sat around this table was Dr Emily Clarke, DS Kate Moore, and Dr Nigel Summers.

After they took in the room, books and the note, they saw a silver tray with a silver coffee pot and fine porcelain cups, which was what they all needed.

‘Typical Billy,’ said Nigel, ‘let’s drink some coffee and have a look at these books.’

But before this could happen Kate had turned over the paper Billy had written his note on and held it up for the other two to see.





‘Well, that’s a start!’ said Nigel looking at the paper, then the books in the library. ‘So, it’s The Cabala now as well as Neo-Platonism!’

‘I’d like a walk around this place first,’ said Emily, drinking her coffee, ‘would anyone care to join me?’

It was agreed they would all do so. They toured the many salons, what looked like a morning room, they found a grand staircase leading to bedrooms on the first floor. Each room had their own sitting rooms and bathrooms. In three they noticed fresh flowers and fires had been laid in the fireplaces. But they saw no one. Outside they walked on the lawns which sloped down to the river, then they returned to the library.

Emily spoke, 'I suggest we spend some time privately studying the area suggested by the drawing, then maybe if we can find something to eat, after that share our initial findings, and it looks like we have sleeping accommodation if we wish.'

At that moment they heard a distant gong sound.

'What's that?' said Kate.

'Sounds like a dinner gong.' said Nigel.

'Well lunch,' said Emily, continuing, 'it must be lunchtime, let's see where the lunch gong is coming from shall we?'

She left the room, the others following down a corridor, past several doors until they saw one which was open, it was clearly a dining room, but not the grand one they had seen earlier. It had tall French windows leading onto a terrace. On the terrace there were tables and chairs laid out with napkins and cutlery, as also inside the room. On a long sideboard were plates, bowls of salads, and covered serving dishes containing cold meats, fish, and another containing soup. Also deserts and bowls of fruit, iced water, teas, coffee and fruit juices. And wine, both red, white and sparkling.

'A buffet lunch then.' said Emily, 'let's eat on the terrace.'

So, they did.

The conversation was a little stilted at first, Kate looked a little worried, she spoke,

‘Do you think we are stuck here; I mean in order to first complete some task?’

‘I think knowing Billy you can leave whenever you wish.’ said Nigel. ‘Just think where you would rather be, within reason.’

There was a pause, then Kate spoke,

‘Amazing! I’ve just been in my flat in Harborne, spent a good five minutes there.’

‘Yet no time has passed here.’ said Nigel.

‘Same.’ said Emily, ‘I’ve just been back in the lab, and yet here no time has passed and I’m hungry and this food looks good, but no wine, I need to concentrate this afternoon.’

After eating they took a short walk again across the lawn then returned to the library.

‘Now for work.’ said Emily.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO: EZEKIEL'S CHARIOT

All three set to work examining various texts. Nigel and Kate making handwritten notes. Time passed.

No one had noticed but looking up Kate saw a tray with a teapot, cups, milk jug, sugar and a tray with biscuits and cakes.

As did Emily, who spoke,

'Must be teatime, afterwards let's share our findings so far.'

So, after tea, again Emily spoke,

'Nigel?'

Nigel began reading from his notes,

'Well, the Kabbalah is an esoteric method, discipline and school of thought in Judaism, the early period is known as Merkabah mysticism, around 100 BCE to 1000 CE...' he went on to explain...

'One source is Ezekiel's vision of the chariot in the Bible, or Torah, the Hebrew name chariot is Merkabah, other sources are visions and insights by rabbis for example in heavenly palaces, the Hebrew for palace is Hekhalot.

The main interests of the Hekhalot, the name for these Jewish esoteric and revelatory texts, are accounts of divine visions, mystical ascents into heaven and observance of the divine council, also the summoning and control of great angels, usually for the purpose of gaining insight into the Torah.

Here we find the seven stages of mystical ascent: the Seven Heavens and seven throne rooms. Such a journey is fraught

with great danger, and the adept must not only have made elaborate purification preparation, but must also know the proper incantations, seals and angelic names needed to get past fierce angelic guards, as well as know how to navigate the various forces at work inside and outside the palaces.

Merkabah mysticism, the name derives from a “thing to ride in, a cart”. It’s associated with Ezekiel’s vision in Ezekiel 1 of the Old Testament.

In the vision the prophet Ezekiel sees a four-wheeled chariot driven by four hayyot, or living creatures, each of which has four wings, and each of which has the four faces, of a man, lion, ox, and eagle or vulture, four times four. These corresponding to the four directions the chariot can go, East, South, North and West. Since there are four angels and each has four faces, there are a total of sixteen faces.

The hayyot angels have four wings, two of these are spread across the length of the chariot and connect with the wings of the angel on the other side creating a box of wings that forms the perimeter of the chariot. With the remaining two wings, each angel covers its own body.

Below are other angels that are shaped like wheels. These wheel angels, which are described as a wheel inside of a wheel are called Ophanim, wheels, cycles or ways. The Likeness of a Man that drives the chariot sits on a throne made of sapphire.’

‘Confusing?’ said Kate.

‘I have a picture.’ said Emily and opened a book where she had a page marker.





'It doesn't show the wheels within wheels as angels, but this is the best I could find.' Emily said.

'Maybe it's the best, and maybe this is some non-conventional geometry?' Nigel offered, 'We are after all dealing with mysticism and the transcendental.'

'I'm not used to any of this.' Emily replied.

'Oh, no doubt you soon will be.' Nigel said, and he continued his explanation.

‘There is a third type of angel in the Merkabah, Ezekiel’s vision of the chariot, the seraphim, literally burning angels. These angels appear like flashes of fire continuously ascending and descending. In the hierarchy of these angels, hayyot, the four with four wings and heads, are the highest in being closest to God, followed by the ophanim, the wheels within wheels, which are followed by the seraphim. Though the seraphim burn because of their closeness to the holy, yet they descend from the holy.

The chariot is in a constant state of motion, and the energy behind this movement runs according to this hierarchy. The movement of the ophanim is controlled by the hayyot, while the movement of the hayyot is controlled by the seraphim. The movement of all the angels of the chariot is controlled by the Likeness of a Man on the Throne.’

‘Wait!’, Kate said, ‘can we find the actual passage?’

Emily found a King James Bible and opened it.



THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET EZEKIEL

1 Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.

2 In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity,

3 The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the Lord was there upon him.

4 And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire.

5 Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man.

6 And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings.

7 And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass.

8 And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings.

9 Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward.



10 As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle.

11 Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies.

12 And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went.

13 As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning.

14 And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning.

15 Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces.

16 The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel.

17 When they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went.

18 As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four.

19 And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up.

20 Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

21 When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

22 And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.

23 And under the firmament were their wings straight, the one toward the other: every one had two, which covered on this side, and every one had two, which covered on that side, their bodies.

24 And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings.

25 And there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads, when they stood, and had let down their wings.

26 And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.

27 And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about.

28 As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.

oooOooo

‘Oh!’ said Kate, ‘It’s more complicated than I thought.’

She paused, as did the others, re reading the passage, then continued,

‘Why are we doing this, why are we reading and looking at Jewish Mysticism?’

Nigel answered,

‘The nine, that we found in the Park Street site, Billy seemed to think relates to Gnosticism and Aeons, which we will explore, but it seems these also connect to Jewish Mysticism, how we don’t know yet, and I think that is why we are here. I’ve had dealings and an interest in Gnosticism from previous events, but this is new to me...’

Here he was interrupted by Dr Emily Clarke,

‘Well, I never thought I would say this, but I’m beginning to get an interest, I had no idea of the complexity. The Sephirot? It’s the diagram that Billy drew on the back of his note, literally emanations, the tree of life, and ten, not nine?’

‘The last, the tenth, is physical reality, the nine above are transcendent, so we have nine transcendental emanations, and nine aeons.’ Nigel replied.

There was another long pause, they were re reading again, then Nigel continued his explanation.

‘Also, there are warnings about the dangers of overzealous speculation concerning the mystical interpretations of Ezekiel’s vision of the chariot, the Merkabah and other texts.’



The Merkabah, the chariot, consisted of detailed descriptions of multiple layered heavens, usually seven, often guarded over by angels, and encircled by flames and lightning. The highest heaven contains seven palaces, hekhalot in Hebrew, and in the innermost palace resides a supreme divine image, God's Glory or an angelic image seated on a throne, surrounded by awesome hosts who sing God's praise.

Images, these in Ezekiel, show images of individual ascent, paradoxically called, descent in most texts, Yordei Merkabah, literally, descenders of the chariot.'

'I guess this is some kind of two-way process?' Kate said,

He continued, 'We have palaces in which divinity exists, and the to and fro delivery of these visions, symbolised by the chariot.'

Maaseh Merkabah, translated as the Work of the Chariot is the name given to a Hekhalot text.'

'Sorry about the names...' he added.

'Jewish mysticism that teaches both of the possibility of making a sublime journey to God and of the ability of man to draw down divine powers to earth. Amazingly this is also evident in the Dead Sea Scrolls.'

'Wait.' said Emily, 'this is collaborative evidence. This is very important.'

Nigel continued,

'The Kabbalah relates the Merkabah vision of Ezekiel and the Throne vision in Isaiah 6:1-8 describing the seraph angels. And Four Worlds.'

He read from his notes, all this time Kate had been reading her own notes and writing, she saw and underlined Isaiah 6:1–8.

‘Wait!’ said Emily, taking up the King James Bible.

ISAIAH 6

1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

7 And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

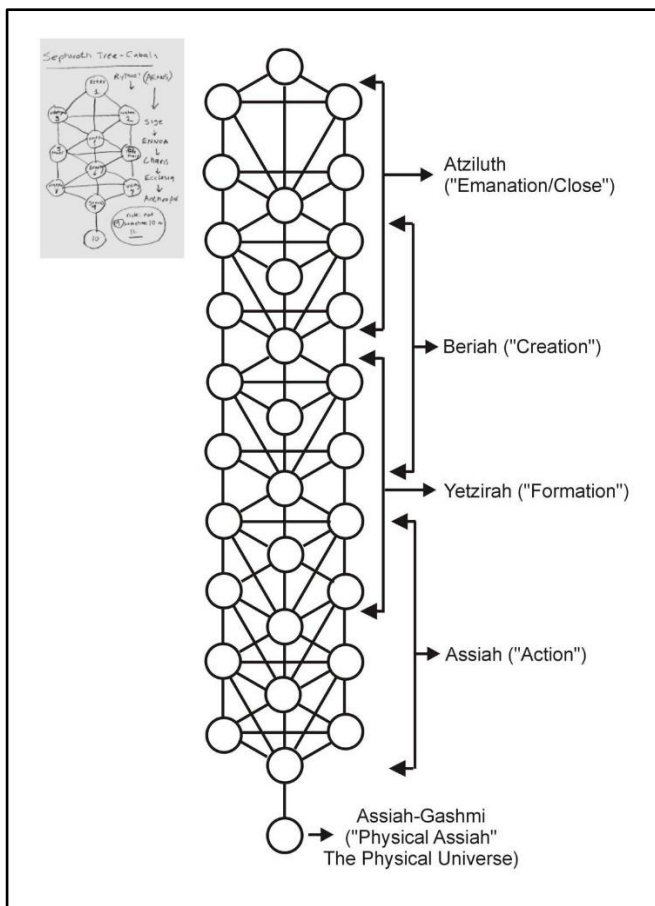
oooOooo

There was a long pause, but no one spoke.

Nigel then continued: ‘The Four Worlds.

We need a diagram... . it’s complex because the simple tree of life, the one we saw on the note, has trees within it. So here...’

He slid out a large leather-bound volume from a pile of books, and opened it to show the diagram and placed the drawing made by Billy on top.



‘The Tree of Life expanded to show each sefirot within the Four Worlds, an arrangement nicknamed Jacob's Ladder.’

Emily remarked, ‘Impressive work Nigel.’

And Nigel explained some of the detail of the hierarchy.



‘Of the four worlds the highest world, is called the Atziluth, - Divine wisdom, is the realm of absolute Divine manifestation without self-awareness, the vision as the likeness of a Man on the throne. The throne of sapphire is in Kabbalah, the Sephirot, the tree of divine powers.

The second world, Beriah is Creation, Divine understanding, this is the first independent root creation, the realm of the Throne, denoting God descending into Creation, as a king limits his true greatness and revealed posture when seated. The World of Beriah is the realm of the higher angels, the Seraphim, burning, in ascent and descent as their understanding of God motivates self-annihilation. Higher yet these descend to the lower.’

‘Hold on,’ said Emily, ‘self-annihilation?’

‘Yes,’ said Nigel, ‘Self-annihilation due to the awesome and overwhelming vision and nature of God.’

He continued reading from his notes.

‘The third world, Yetzirah is Formation, Divine emotions, is the realm of archetypal existence, the abode of the main Hayyot angels, those 4 with 4 wings and 4 faces, alive with divine emotion. They are described with faces of a lion, ox and eagle, as their emotional nature is instinctive like animals, and they are the archetypal origins of creatures in this World.

The lowest world is Assiah, Action - Divine rulership, is the realm guided by the lower channels of the Ophanim, the angles of the wheels within wheels which are the humble ways realised in creation.’



'It's a hierarchical cosmology. But hard to figure unless I suppose these angels are moving up and down...' Kate said.

'That's it,' said Nigel, 'another hierarchy like the Aeons.'

Anticipating a question,

'Oh, then we will see it in the Aeons in Neoplatonism?'

And continued,

'According to the Kabbala the Seraphim, burning angels, in Beriah, the second world of divine understanding realise their distance from the absolute divinity of Atziluth. They call out the name Holy, repeated three times, Isaiah 6:3. This separation causes their burning up, a continual self-nullification, ascending to God and returning. Their understanding realises God's glory, and the creation of lowly man.'

'Incredible.' said Dr Emily Clarke.

'The lower Hayyot, living angels, in Yetzirah, divine emotions, the four with four faces and four wings, say, Blessed. Means drawing down, blessing be the glory ... from His distant-unknown to them, a place of Atziluth, the highest world.

Though lower than the Seraphim, their emotional self-awareness has a superior advantage of powerful desire. This causes them to be able to draw down divine vitality from a higher source, the supreme realm of Atziluth, to lower creation and man. In Ezekiel's vision, the Hayyot of four faces have a central role in the merkabah's, the divine chariot, channelling of the divine flow in creation.'

Dr Emily Clarke spoke.



‘A complex hierarchy thought of as a two way process, if it wasn’t illogical I’d say a contradictory hierarchy but one that allows the flow of power, you could in crude terms see it as a feedback loop.’

‘Feedback loop, I suppose a contemporary analogy?’ said Nigel. He expanded these ideas and related them back to Jewish mysticism, Hasidic thought.

‘Hasidic thought represents the four Hayyot angels as the basic archetypes that God used to create the current nature of the world. Ophanim, the wheels, which means ways, are the ways these archetypes combine to create actual entities that exist in the world.

For instance, in the basic elements of the world, the lion represents fire, the ox, earth, the man, water, and the eagle, air. However, in practice, everything in the world is some combination of all four, and the particular combination of each element that exists in each thing are its particular Ophanim or ways.’

And so, Nigel said, ‘I think we are looking here at the ideas of matter or mass, the Hayyot and their relationship to energy, Ophanim, and maybe the constant C, or light, the fire or light, in the Seraphim?’ He continued reading from his notes.

‘In Christianity, the man, lion, ox, and eagle are used as symbols for the four evangelists, the gospel-writers. These Creatures are called Zoë, or the Tetramorph, literally a fourfold, and surround the throne of God in Heaven, along with twenty-four elders and seven spirits of God according to Revelation 4:1–11.

We have more collaboration in the Dead Sea scrolls’, Nigel said.

‘Caves where the Dead Sea Scrolls were hidden, in the Cave 4 there were found fragments called 4QPseudo-Ezekiel.’

Nigel added ‘So this is also collaboration.’

There was a pause. It was now early evening.

‘I think this is a good place to stop.’ said Emily, ‘I suspect if we do not leave, we can expect dinner at eight? I think I’ll take a tour and check out a bedroom. I’m getting to like this place and I’m becoming fascinated by the material.’

It was a warm evening, outside deer were crossing the river and heading towards some woodland.

At precisely eight o’clock the gong in the smaller dining room sounded. Nigel was the first to arrive, he had been walking in the woodland. Though he was first, Kate and Emily arrived soon after. Nigel wondered if the gong had sounded at different times for each, to ensure they arrived more or less together. The table was laid for three and had soup bowls already in place. They sat,

‘I suspect the soup will be hot.’ he said.

‘I’m vegan.’ Kate said.

‘Well, I wouldn’t worry, this looks like tomato soup, but all the food here, like the place itself is not of our world, it’s constructed, so meat will not be animal, or will the vegetables be plant based.’ he replied.

‘But the soup is very good.’ said Emily, ‘Best I’ve had.’

‘It will be, not quite perfect I would think, but close.’ Nigel said. ‘Billy is very fond of his food, a bit of a gastrophile you might say.’

‘How so the food is not real, and how is this not real, how did it all come to be?’ asked Kate.

‘By something called folding I suspect, folding space and making objects out of space, like the hall we all first met in, that I think was Billy’s creation, and so is this.’ Nigel replied.

‘Folding?’ questioned Emily.

‘Well, I’m not sure how, but I’ve seen it done,’ Nigel replied. ‘So as far as food goes there is no worry, it’s all folded space. And so, it’s real, but just not our world’s real, like our world’s time, space and matter.’

They had finished their soup, and noticed the dishes were gone and now there were tureens and plates on the table. The glasses of water now had glasses of wine next to them. Emily was lifting lids, vegetables, meat that looked like chicken, fish and small pies. These things seemed to occur of their own when no one was looking.

‘In that case I’ll try some chicken,’ said Kate, ‘and did anyone see how these got here and who took the dishes away? And I’ve walked around, beautiful gardens but no people, no housekeepers, very strange.’

‘I think the house, or palace does this all itself, and while we are not aware, clever.’ said Nigel.

The meal was good, they ate desserts, cheese and biscuits, they retired to a nearby sitting room, at around ten thirty all three decided to go to bed, in the palace, not to go home.

Nigel and Kate entered the breakfast room next morning about nine, Emily was drinking coffee on the terrace outside, the two joined her.

‘One of the best night’s sleep,’ she said, ‘I like it here, and I was up early, and can kick off today’s work.’

‘Me too, I slept well.’ said Kate, Nigel was smiling and whispered to himself, ‘Billy’s perfect Arcadia.’

The breakfast was a buffet of cooked and cold foods, fruits yoghurts, breads and pastries. Coffee, teas, and juices.

Emily said that she had already eaten and would complete her work and should be ready to begin by ten o’clock.

Kate and Nigel ate breakfast, then took a stroll; Emily having returned to the library.



CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE: MANUSYA

Smith was now alone in The Hall of the Mountain King, he staired into the burning fire thinking. His kind, a higher form of being, like the Asura has not gained enlightenment and could not, if the analogy was true. And if it was, they would descend into demons, and then become like Pretas, the hungry ghosts, and even descend into the hell of the Narakas.

He spoke to the flames, 'It seems this is where all my kind now are, in hell, continually destroying themselves. Once thought to be free with being immortal, now trapped within it.'

'And now I'm talking to flames, I would rather talk to some living thing, even a mere human.' he thought.

He closed his eyes, 'If only there was a way of explanation, of making those fighting each other to see the solution. That if they could be like humans. Of course, not the same, but like them, not mankind, but Manuṣya. Creatures capable of Dharma, a path, and so capable of enlightenment.'

When he opened his eyes to his great surprise, he found himself in a garden. It was very shaded by three large apple trees in full blossom, and either side of the garden were privet hedges and flower beds of tall purple lupins. He looked around him, he was on a path which led from a house. His experience on this world and in England told him he was probably in a garden, the back garden of a house. A modest house he thought, not detached. He had a feeling he had been here before but couldn't place it, despite his vast memory.

After a few minutes observing the garden, he began to walk slowly towards the house. There was a low wall, with some

other plants growing along it, the large bricks of the wall having spaces for plants. From his vast mind he recognised the pink flowers as *Saxifraga × urbium*, London pride, an evergreen perennial garden flowering plant. ‘Why London Pride.’ he thought, ‘These humans are very odd.’ The paved area beyond the wall had a stack of old deck chairs, and then he saw through the large windows there was someone in a room. He walked closer, it was a boy. He was sat at a table drawing in a sketch book.

‘The boy!’ he thought, ‘And this must be the rear of the house I couldn’t enter before. No wonder I had that feeling.’

He stood for a moment, still in thought,

‘Just a child,’ he paused, ‘and yet Billy seems to have had dealings with this boy, I wonder?’

The boy looked up, seeing this, Smith spoke loudly,

‘May I come into your house it would be pleasant to talk with you?’

The boy nodded a yes and pointed to the left, this was where the back door was. Smith entered, it led into a small kitchen, the walls of which were of white gloss painted brick. He looked around, he could see a gas oven, a small table and a sink, and another door, which was ajar, he could see it led into a hallway. So, he went through into the hallway, and there on his right was the door, which opened into the room in which the boy had been sat at the table drawing. Though he had now put down his pencil and was looking at Smith. He was around 9 or 10, with blonde hair, he was wearing a short-sleeved shirt, short trousers, grey socks and sandals.



‘May I sit?’ he asked.

The boy gave no answer but looked at a chair at the side of the table, Smith sat thinking this might be very unproductive.

Still, he launched into his thoughts,

‘I have a problem with wanting to talk to violent people who will not listen to me, they just fight, they actually tear each other apart.’

Smith had no knowledge of sensitivity in humans of any age.

‘So, it’s hopeless, they are ripped apart, die, but then manage to pull themselves together, become alive again and resume the battle...’

He was about to continue but then the boy, who had been listening to Smith frowned and spoke,

‘If you can’t talk to them when they are fighting, why not when they start to pull themselves together before they can fight?’

Smith was amazed, though did not show any emotion. His joy at the solution, and of course it was soon turned to annoyance that he hadn’t thought of this himself. But then he said under his breath,

‘So, this is why Mr Taylor, and his friends visit this boy.’

He waited a few minutes to give the impression of deciding, then spoke,

‘Thank you, perhaps a useful idea.’



The boy smiled, and Smith couldn't decide if it was a simple smile, or ironic at his use of 'perhaps'.

So, Smith found his way into one of the dimensions in which his kind could be found, and as he anticipated was soon surrounded by beings, some of a terrible visage. They stopped fighting each other and launched themselves in a fierce attack on Smith. Some with weapons, mostly knives, others just using brute strength. In the few seconds before his demise, he didn't try to defend himself, it was obvious many were now no longer Asura, demigods but had become Pretas, the hungry ghosts and some Narakas, devils. He saw some attacked each other with iron claws, some had black lines drawn upon their bodies, they would pry open the mouths of others with pincers to pour molten copper into their throats destroying their organs. His last sight was of those who were so consumed by their own hunger to the extent of eating their own flesh.

He had lost all his limbs and was finally dispatched with an iron claw through his eye socket. He became aware again, he was lying in a heap of body parts which was writhing as the victims tried to reassemble themselves, blood, bone, and body parts rained down. As soon as Smith was able, he began to talk to his fellow victims, some listened as he told his story of the fall from demigod to devils, this they knew too well. Those in earshot when he told of a possible salvation stopped moving and listened. They were mostly heads and upper torsos, some had attached an arm or leg, unlikely that it was their own. He reminded them of their past lives as Asura, they remembered, some openly wept. He went on to explain how they could escape this eternal cycle of violence and samsara via Dharma, the path to enlightenment. This was available to



humans, but also to them if they became manuṣya, human-like. They listened intently.

This created a great turmoil in the Pretas, and Narakas who were repeating his words over and over. As the new dismembered victims fell, the writhing ceased, and all that could be heard at first was Smith's story. Slowly the falling bodies stopped, Smith realizing that the creatures in this domain were now all mutilated semi corpses. Soon he thought those from further away would appear, perhaps an infinite number, but his plan seemed to be working. Then the repetition stopped and the mass of semi corpses began chanting 'MANUSYA MANUSYA MANUSYA MANUSYA MANUSYA MANUSYA...'

As they did they reassembled themselves. And somehow now they were building chariots, Merkabah, carts, they were somehow creating other creatures. So, the carts had four hayyot, or living creatures, each of which had four wings, and each of which had the four faces and Ophanim, wheels and the burning seraphim. Then they would climb on to the throne in the cart, and they became of the likeness as the appearance of a man.

Smith was puzzled, but this likeness of man seemed to fit with his plan. And now the chariots rose into the air, Smith watching, not understanding, but they were not fighting anymore, the plan had worked.

But as they rose and many more chariots were being made they started to collide with each other. They jostled becoming angry, they shouted curses then began fighting. They fought with their chariots, crashing into each other, or sending flaming burning seraphim at each other, so setting the



chariots on fire, all the time chanting ‘MANUSYA MANUSYA
MANUSYA MANUSYA MANUSYA MANUSYA...’



CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR: THE ZOHAR

Back in the library Dr Emily Clarke was working at a table on a laptop computer.

Nigel and Kate walked in looking at her. She answered an unasked question,

‘I went home early this morning and brought it here so I could work with it, no email or internet but maybe not surprising, but access to all the books here, and with cross checking.’

‘Good idea, I’ll fetch mine later.’ Nigel said, then looking down at the table in front of him was his laptop.

‘This house is something.’ he said.

Emily continued, ‘I’ve been working on some more material, notably that of Rabi Isaac Luria of the sixteenth century and his followers.’

There was a complex version of the Sefirot, emanations or Tree of Life on the screen of the laptop.

‘It’s the ideas behind the problem within the various nodes, or emanations, and a Lurianic cosmology, named after the rabi.’ she said.

‘Lurianic cosmology? Oh, yes, I’ve read about Rabi Isaac Luria.’ Kate said, and looked at the drawing, ‘That’s very impressive, where did you find it?’

‘I drew it from an illustration.’

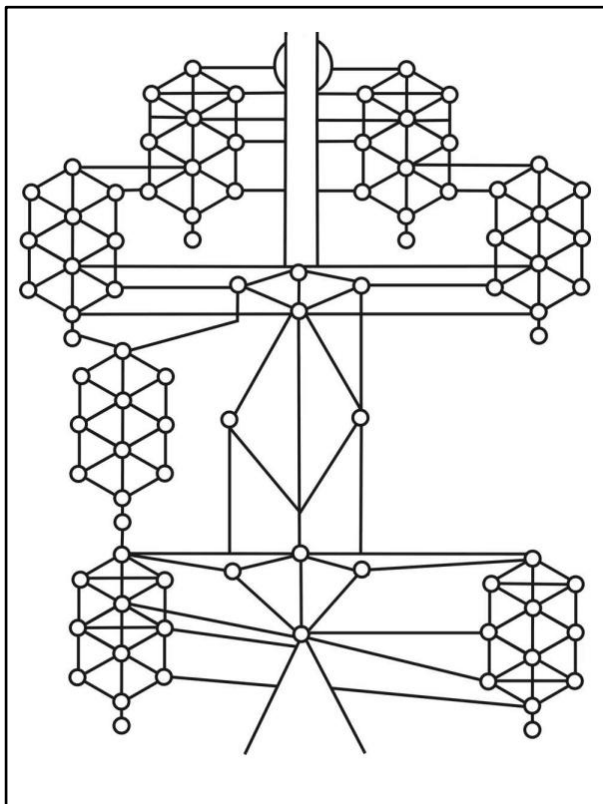
‘Must have taken some time?’ asked Kate.

'I slept well but woke early full of life, I was up and working here by six, this place is really conducive to work, pity I can't get a hard copy.' said Emily, pressing the print option to demonstrate.

The sound of a printer could be heard and on a table in a corner of the room, a printer had produced a hard copy.

'But there was no printer.' said Emily Clarke.

'Not until you wanted one.' said Nigel.



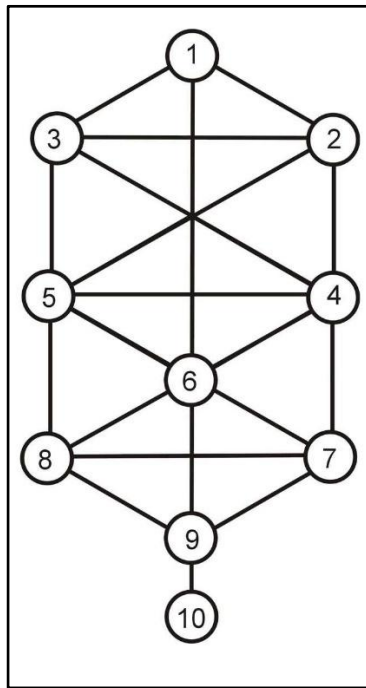
‘And so, if you don’t mind, can I outline my morning’s work?’

The silence was a unanimous approval.

‘The Zohar is a foundational work of Kabbalistic literature, a group of books including commentary on the mystical aspects of the Torah, the five books of Moses.

There are two aspects to God: God in essence, absolutely transcendent, unknowable, limitless divine simplicity beyond revelation, and God in manifestation.

The Sefirot, The Tree of Life, is a key symbol ... each node, Sefira, or emanation having a meaning.



The Super-conscious;

1 Keter - Crown

Conscious intellect:

2 Chokmah - Wisdom

3 Binah - Understanding

Conscious emotions:

Primary emotions,

4 Chesed - Kindness

5 Gevurah - Discipline

6 Tiferet – Glory

Secondary emotions,

7 Netzach - Victory

8 Hod - Splendour

9 Yesod - Foundation

Vessel to bring action:

10 Malkuth - Kingdom, Kingship

The sephirot correspond to various levels of creation, ten sephirot in each of the Four Worlds, and four worlds within each of the larger four worlds, each containing ten sephirot, which themselves contain ten sephirot, to an infinite number of possibilities. These emanated from the Creator for the

purpose of creating the universe. The sephirot are considered revelations of the Creator's will and they should not be understood as ten different gods but as ten different ways the one God reveals his will through the Emanations. It is not God who changes but the ability to perceive God that changes.'

At each stage of the presentation the three would pause, take notes and discuss. Emily continued with such breaks, reading from her notes, consulting the books.

'The Zohar, the foundational work of Kabbalistic literature includes a commentary on the mystical aspects of the Torah and other Kabbalistic texts. It elaborates on the emergence of the sephirot from a state of concealed potential in the Ein Sof, a pure form of the divine, understood as God prior to any self-manifestation, until their manifestation in the mundane physical world.'

'So, we have the creation of many worlds or universes...'
mused Kate.

At this point they noticed there was coffee and biscuits. It was around eleven, they took their drinks outside onto the terrace via the French windows. All three were quietly thinking looking into a clear blue sky. It was comfortably warm.

Kate and Nigel then asked a few questions regarding the idea of many worlds.

Then they returned to their seats in the library, Nigel asked Emily to continue, which she did as before. He and Kate making notes.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE: ADAM KADMON

‘The Zohar is a collection of texts, literature of esoteric explanations, and one of its features is the problem of the broken Sephirot, the tree of life with its emanations. Broken by the attributes of God, the Gebura (5) or severity on the tree, which blocks Love(4) and so is a source of evil. This is now rectified by Partzufim.’

Emily looked up from her notes, and over her half lens reading glasses and spoke,

‘I think this is significant as we see here the attempt to explain and offer a solution to a damaged creation. I’ll cover this in much more detail, but first we see a complication in our tree of life.’

She returned to her notes.

‘In this radical system Partzufim or Partzufim, are Divine Personas, in particular reconfigured arrangements of the ten sefirot. Each partzuf, single divine person, is thus a configuration of disparate entities into a harmonious unit. Their full doctrinal significance with reference to the cosmic processes of Tohu and Tikun, Chaos and Rectification. These Divine Personas embracing reincarnation and repair.’

Again, she interrupted her reading,

‘I’ll come to this in a tad more detail. You see here Reincarnation, most interesting! And more on this later’

‘You seem to be really getting into all of this.’ Kate remarked.

Emily, now smiling,

‘Yes,’ she said, ‘reminds me of when I was first at university, all this new stuff, quite exciting. It’s really simple, we have first very abstract concepts, quite scientific, like molecular biology, and now the more human ideas of aspects of God, we move into psychology, amazing, or the idea of feelings and human emotions. I never knew any of this.’

She paused, took a drink of water and began again reading from her notes.

‘The Idrot is one of the boldest presentations in the Zohar literature, expressing a mystical premise that God is a force that continually fills the world with divine energy which is universal in the theosophical Kabbalah. These sections of the Zohar texts make reference to hypostatic male and female Partzufim, Divine Personas, displacing the Sephirot, manifestations of God with particular Anthropomorphic symbolic personalities. These ideas replace earlier Kabbalah’s Sephirot, which Luria saw as broken in Divine crisis.

Kabbalists reinterpreted the theistic philosophical concept of creation from nothing, replacing God’s creative act with panentheistic continual self-emanation by the mystical Ayin Nothingness/No-thing sustaining all spiritual and physical realms as successively more corporeal garments, veils and condensations of divine immanence.’

Dr Clarke paused here, then again looking up and using her hands to gesture,

‘You see a dramatic change in the interpretation, in simple terms that is all we need to take in I think, in the context of our problem, with the obvious problems in the real world. What we are getting are pictures of this and explanations,



from the simple creation and fall to something far more complex. Again, in progress we try to repair, but this repair can also fail.'

There was a pause, then she returned to her notes,

'It is this that was a focus of Rabi Isaac Luria.

The innumerable levels of descent divide into Four comprehensive spiritual worlds.

Atziluth, Closeness, Divine Wisdom.

Beriah, Creation, Divine Understanding.

Yetzirah, Formation, Divine Emotions.

Assiah, Action, Divine Activity, with Divine Will.

Together the whole spiritual heavens form the Divine Persona or Anthropos.

There is though now a preceding Fifth World, Adam Kadmon, Primordial Man'.

'Excuse me, a preceding world?' said Kate.

Emily looking up from her notes,

'There is in this picture of the creation of all worlds, of everything,'

'God before anything,'

She waved a hand high in the air,

'This God is infinite so first limits itself to create a space for the four worlds.'

She lowered her hands,

‘The highest, closeness to the One,

Next Creation,

Then Formation and finally Action, below this is the physical world, OK?’

At each she lowered her hands. And Kate nodded agreement.

‘These four, are the four worlds of the tree of life as Nigel showed us.’

Nigel had now opened his laptop and was showing this diagram.

‘Ok, now we have a new idea, one that now proposes what comes first from the Godhead is an Adam Kadmon, Most High Man, not the Adam of the garden of Eden. This is most important. And as a side issue this solves the problem of the two creation stories in Genesis, now they become one of the spiritual dimension of creation, the other of the physical. This Adam Kadmon is neither male nor female, is the divine light of spirit.’

She quoted,

‘The heavenly man, as the perfect image of the Logos, is neither man nor woman, but an incorporeal intelligence purely an idea; while the earthly man, who was created by God later, is matter, made from clay.’

And continued

‘Finally, we can tie this Adam back into the tree of life as being the crown.’

‘Could we stop for a brief Q & A’ Kate asked.

‘And then I suspect lunchtime.’ said Nigel.

The three talked for some time, went over their notes, then Kate noticed a flip chart in the corner of the room. This like other things just seemed to appear at appropriate times.

So, Kate wrote down terms as the other two called them out, and they discussed these, up until they heard the familiar sound of the gong.

‘Lunch then.’ Emily said.

Which was again a fine salad, and they ate outside on the terrace. It was still warm and sunny, a few white clouds.

‘Do you think the weather is always sunny here?’ asked Kate.

‘Probably it changes to suit our mood or to change our mood.’ Nigel replied, ‘I imagine like the place itself and the meals it’s about comfort, protection and nurture.’

They talked for a while, decided a short rest in their rooms or a walk and to continue at two thirty. At which time all three were seated back in the library.

‘Please continue.’ said Nigel. So, Emily did.

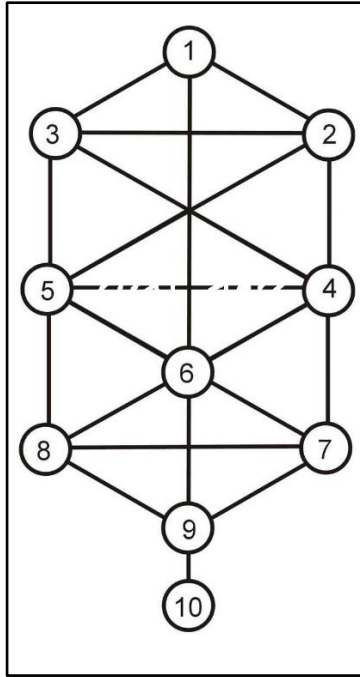
CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX: THE ORIGIN OF EVIL

‘The origin of evil. I’ve touched on this as the break or disruption in the tree of life, we now need more detail. But first for some Kabbalists this conceives evil as a quality of God, asserting that negativity enters into the essence of the Absolute. In this view it is conceived that the Absolute needs evil to be what it is, i.e., to exist. Foundational texts of Medieval Kabbalism conceived evil as a demonic parallel to the holy, called the Sitra Achra, the Other Side, and the qliphoth, the shells/husks, that cover and conceal the holy, are nurtured from it, and yet also protect it by limiting its revelation. Like the blinding vision of the reality of God would be too much or any other beings to tolerate.’

‘I see,’ said Kate, ‘so good can’t hide good.’

‘That I think is the idea, this holy Ein Sof, the primal God, has to limit itself in order to create the space for creation.’ Emily said, and then continued,

‘A far more radical idea regarding the root of evil is found within the 10 holy Sephirot of the tree of life, we’ve touched on this, through an imbalance of Gevurah, the power of Strength, or Judgement, Severity.’



Gevurah (5), strictness, judgement, is necessary for Creation to exist as it counterposes Chesed (4), loving-kindness, restricting the unlimited divine bounty within suitable vessels, so forming the Worlds. However, if man sins, actualising impure judgement within his soul, the higher judgement, Gevurah, is reciprocally empowered over the Kindness, introducing disharmony among the Sephirot in the divine realm and so exile from God throughout Creation. The demonic realm, though illusory in its holy origin, becomes the real apparent realm of impurity in lower Creation.’

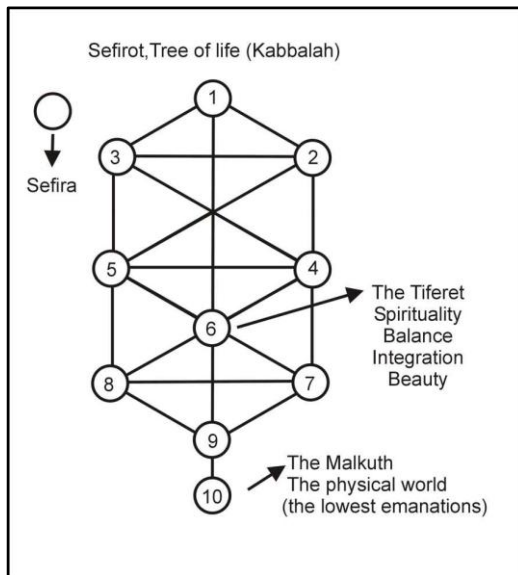
Nigel looked puzzled. Then grinned, ‘So if we do wrong it echoes this as an imbalance in the spiritual world.’ he said.

‘Yes, as I see it because our soul is not matter, so our bad judgement amplifies the higher form, ergo imbalance. In this case it amplifies strictness which now blocks kindness.’ This was Kate.

Emily continued reading from her notes,

‘In the Zohar texts, the sin of Adam and Eve took place also in the spiritual realms.

Their sin was that they separated in the Tree of Knowledge (The Sefirot, Tree of life - Kabbalah) the Malkuth (10), the existence in the physical world (the lowest emanations) from the Tiferet(6), the sixth sefira in the kabbalistic Tree of Life, associated with Spirituality, Balance, Integration, beauty, representing Divine transcendence.



This introduced the false perception of duality into lower creation, an external Tree of Death nurtured from holiness, and an Adam Belial, a proto devil of impurity.

So, in Lurianic Kabbalah, evil originates from a primordial shattering of the sephirot, the tree of life, God's Persona, destabilizing the creation of the stable spiritual worlds.'

Emily looked up from her notes,

'We now get a complex pattern of events, but again this might be crucial to our understanding of our problems of how stable systems, in this case divine ones can become unstable.'

She continued reading,

'The mystical task of the righteous in the Zohar texts is to reveal this concealed Divine Oneness and absolute good, to convert bitterness into sweetness, darkness into light.

Tzimtzum, Constriction and Concentration, is the primordial cosmic act whereby God contracted His infinite light, leaving a void into which the light of existence was poured.'

'The infinite had to make room for creation and us?' Kate said.

Emily nodded a yes and continued,

'This allowed the emergence of independent existence that would not become nullified by the pristine Infinite Light, reconciling the unity of the Ein Sof, Primal God, with the plurality of creation. This changed the first creative act into one of withdrawal or exile, the antithesis of the ultimate Divine Will. In contrast, a new emanation after the Tzimtzum shone into the vacuum to begin creation, but led to an initial

instability called Tohu, Chaos, leading to a new crisis of Shevirah or shattering.

Shevirah, shattering of the sephirot vessels, the shards of the broken vessels fell down into the lower realms, animated by remnants of their divine light, causing primordial exile within the Divine Persona before the creation of man. Exile and enclothement of higher divinity within lower realms throughout existence. This requires man to complete the Tikkun olam, or Rectification process.

Tikkun olam, the Rectification process corresponds to the reorganization of the independent sephirot into relating Partzufim, or Divine Personas, previously referred to obliquely in the Zohar texts. From the catastrophe stems the possibility of self-aware Creation, and also the salvation of the Kelipot, Impure Shells within the kabbalah. The metaphorical anthropomorphism of the partzufim accentuates the sexual unifications of the redemption process, while Gilgul reincarnation emerges from the scheme. Gilgul being a Reincarnation in the transmigration of the soul after death, souls are seen to cycle through lives or incarnations, being attached to different human bodies over time.'

'Wait!' said Nigel, he was thinking, 'this is a new idea, yes, one that sees the metaphysics of creation, the power of God, and God's creation as separation, synthesis produces antithesis. We are back to a dialectic...'

Kate looked puzzled as she was thinking through this, Nigel continued,

'every action has a re-action.'

‘And humanity and sexuality, death becomes part of this, when was this again?’ asked Kate.

‘It’s 16th century Lurianic Kabbalah, the Rabi Isaac Luria who is a key figure here.’ Emily answered and went on,

‘Uniquely, Lurianism gave formerly private mysticism the urgency of Messianic social involvement.’

Emily paused, and looking up spoke,

‘This amongst much else I was ignorant of, which is not good, the origin of the messiah first appears in the text of the Torah? Fascinating, obviously I’ve a lot to learn, but back to my notes.

According to interpretations of Luria, the catastrophe stemmed from the unwillingness of the residue imprint after the Tzimtzum, primal creation, to relate to the new vitality that began creation. The process was arranged to shed and harmonise the Divine Infinity with the latent potential of evil.

The creation of Adam would have redeemed existence, but his sin caused new shevirah, shattering, of Divine vitality, requiring the Giving of the Torah to begin Messianic rectification. Historical and individual history becomes the narrative of reclaiming exiled Divine origin or light. A messianic redemption. Hence the idea of The Messiah in Judaism.’

‘So that the repair of the broken system involves human history?’ Kate said.

Emily looked up from her notes and took off her glasses, and went to the flip chart and began drawing and talking,



‘I can’t draw the Ein Sof, the primal God, the endless one, strangely called the non-existent, yet think, to exist is to have the potential to not exist, so I can’t draw Ein Sof on the chart, if you like it, is the blank page.’

She drew a circle, ‘whatever this is...’

‘The crown, the first part of the tree.’

Kate interrupted.

‘And it’s separated from the whole page, and has disrupted it. And so, whatever follows, everything is involved. The idea of this form of interpretation is a total involvement with messianic redemption?’

She paused then continued,

‘These Partzufim, or Divine Personas, they now take on a more dynamic nature than the fixed natures of the ten sefirot of the Tree of life, the Kabbalah?’ a question from Kate.

‘Yes, but the commentaries stress that though these are more dynamic in resolving the conflict in the Kabbalah they are strictly not individual but emanations from their source. They do though become more human like in being autonomous.’ Emily added,

‘And yes,’ Emily said, ‘and this to use a word with all its new and creative meaning, this has been for me an enlightenment.’

There was a long silence.

‘I think we need to go over this in our minds, and maybe we could do this for the rest of the day.’

Emily finally said.

After another silence Nigel spoke,

‘If I can just say, we seem to have a simple and a much more complex story behind a creation in which a problem occurs.

In Jewish Mysticism these hierarchies can become disruptive, and as we will also see in Gnosticism the same thing occurs. And in the idea of the dialectics of opposites,’

He paused, thinking, ‘and in the others.’

‘What of the others?’ asked Kate.

‘The Übermensch problem is the dualism of matter and spirit, and the problem with higher realities is the dialectic struggle for power.’ said Dr Emily Clarke.

Again no one else spoke, then Emily said,

‘Nigel, can you guide us through some of the concepts behind the Aeons tomorrow.’

‘Sure, and first a brief overview of Gnosticism.’ he said with a smile, ‘now it seems afternoon tea has arrived, can we chat a little more over this, and then?’ He paused.

‘I’d like to do some thinking and reading, then maybe a walk before supper.’ said Kate.

‘Sounds good.’ said Emily.

At supper all three enjoyed a glass or two of wine. Kate had lost her guilt feeling at enjoying the taste of meat, which was not meat. Lamb, or some matter constructed to look and taste like cooked lamb as Nigel explained.

The house put on a fine sunset for the three to watch from the terrace.

‘Have you noticed the stars?’ asked Nigel.

The other two admitted they had not, ‘There are constellations, but none known to me, I wonder if they are just made up, or from some other part of the universe?’

‘Or another universe completely.’ Kate said, adding, ‘I think that arrangement of stars looks like a bird.’

Emily and Nigel made up some others, then they retired for the night.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN: THE DOOM OF THE SMITHS

Smith was still conscious but still lacking all his limbs. He searched his vast memory, he could recognise these chariots and occupants from a passage in the Old Testament, a human religious book, and pondered from where the Pretas and Narakas, the fallen demigods had got this particular notion. As he did the chariots were colliding more and more violently with each other, the occupants fighting, ripping at each other at each collision. Sometimes throwing out one or more of the 'angels' or the likeness of man himself. Seraphim were setting other chariots ablaze. They were falling from the sky and smashing to pieces on the ground below.

Smith now saw that rather than rebuilding these chariots the demons were making other lesser demons, and building vast structures, like ladders or trees, each one mounted at the top by a Preta or Naraka, with these lesser demons below them. Smith recognised this almost immediately,

'They are building trees of life, The Kabbalah, the Tree of Life with its Sefirot!' he thought to himself.

The towers grew ever more complex, reaching high into the air. If a tower got too close to another the demons would lean out and fight, and then attempt to topple the other. When towers fell, each time these would be rebuilt, but taller with more and more Sefirot.

He hadn't noticed that the fires of burning chariots lit by the seraphim no doubt, were still burning across the plain on which the towers were being built. But now he could see as a tower collapsed sometimes it became set on fire. Some burnt out of control, with the occupants running out of the flames,

some on fire and screaming. It was a terrible site, like scenes from Hieronymus Bosch's paintings or the Peter Bruegel paintings of hell. Smith watched then realised it would not be long before the fire engulfed everything and every demon and try as they might to stem the fire it burnt ever more fierce, and they burnt with it. He noticed the demons trying to recover but saw once on fire they became reduced to ash.

Smith as quickly as possible left this inferno. He found himself in one piece and in his Victorian suit back in the garden of apple trees and lupins. He did something very rare for a demigod, he fell into a dreamless sleep under the swaying branches of the trees in full blossom.

PART TWO THE ÜBERMENSCH

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT: CADER IDRIS

Jane Smith woke in the early morning hours; it was still dark. She awoke with a troubled mind. She was sleeping in a small bedroom of Cledwyn Hughes' house in Pant-y-Ilan. The house under the shadow of Cader Idris, the mountain Jane Smith had effectively fell in love with. She dressed quickly, there seemed a need for haste, and her troubled mind was now turning into a panic. Taking a torch, she left the farmhouse and headed up the path to the mountain, a path she knew so well she needn't need to use a torch at all, she had travelled it many times in daylight and at night and had never spent a day without visiting the mountain.

It was a clear night with no wind, there were a myriad of stars above her, but she did not look up, it was so still you could hear the sea, but she wasn't listening, she was focused on the path. As she left behind the fields with their dry-stone walls dropping onto the mountain path after climbing over the last stile, she then began the steep climb. Now she could hear a groaning sound, this seemed odd, so she stopped and retraced her steps. Once back in the field there was silence and stillness, only the distant sounds of waves, crossing the stile again the groaning could be heard, and now she could feel the earth beneath her feet tremor. She retraced her steps two more times, each time the same thing. Puzzled and apprehensive she continued on the mountain track. The moaning was getting louder as was the tremor. The noise and tremors grew to a pitch that made her stop. The ground was shaking and now she could hear or feel a rumbling sound deep beneath her in the earth.

Small rocks began to fall from above, then larger ones, there was a blue luminescence to the mountain. The rocks fell but none hit her. Slowly the bulk of the mountain moved and changed in shape. It changed into the figure of a rock giant. She saw the giant terrifying head, the massive arms and torso appear. Slowly it was pulling itself free of The Earth. The waters of the lake Llyn Cau pouring over the giant's head and body.

The shock and the realization was too much. Her beloved mountain was once an Übermensch, a higher spiritual being. It had been formed by matter becoming pure energy, then for some reason returned to matter in the form of the mountain. And now it was leaving, again, it was again transforming itself back to pure energy and spirit.

She fell weeping as the rock giant mountain rose into the night sky. She lay weeping for a long time. In front of her now was a flat plain of rock, the mountain, the Übermensch had gone, left her. It was now in a spiritual sky, the Pleroma. She wandered around as if looking for something, some trace, but it had gone. So slowly she descended the hill and entered the farmhouse and sat on a sofa in darkness crying. The noise must have woken Cledwyn Hughes and Bryn.

A light came on, 'What on earth is the matter?' asked Cledwyn Hughes, he was in his dressing gown.

'The mountain has gone.' she said.

'What do you mean?' he asked. She began to recount her story, but it was too confused, fantastic and garbled for Cledwyn Hughes to follow. That it concerned the mountain he could follow.

As Cledwyn Hughes was talking to Jane, his partner Bryn had opened the curtains, dawn was breaking. What he saw made him rush out of the living room, he stood outside of the farmhouse in the pale light and looked at an astonishing sight. He walked back slowly into the living room, interrupting a confused conversation,

‘It’s gone,’ he said, ‘the mountain is not there!’

‘Not there?’ said Cledwyn Hughes.

‘Gone, gone...’ Jane was saying.

All three went outside and in the dawn light they looked at where once there had been the mountain.

The fields sloped up, lined with their dry-stone walls, but that was all they could now see, and the brow on a low hill of rocks.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE: GNOSTICISM 101

Next day the sky now had white clouds floating softly in the deep blue. After breakfast the three settled into the familiar library. Emily and Kate sat at a table at which Nigel stood with his A4 notepad and loose sheets of paper, he also now had his laptop.

‘OK,’ said Nigel, ‘today first some basic terms, an overview, we will touch on the Demiurge, and Aeons. I’m afraid this being basic might be a little boring, but it gets deep, but we’ll save that till tomorrow. And maybe an overview of the main so called gnostic religions and then in particular Sophia, a prime mover in the dialectic, the dialectic, the break in the scheme, the fall in the Garden of Eden in the Bible.’

He paused to attempt some kind of emphasis,

‘But this is important,’ he said, ‘for unlike much of history, science, or any human endeavour perhaps Gnosticism is peculiar. It is peculiar in itself, I think you will find, but it is compounded by our historical sources. How we know about it. Much of what we know, the written works, which remain, was written by its Christian detractors. The original texts were sort out and destroyed. So, we have many accounts written in order to condemn the various forms of Gnosticism. And so, historians have had to make an attempt at reconstruction from extremely biased material.

Though we do now have some original material. First scrolls found in a cave in Egypt, now called The Nag Hammadi library. Named after the town near where they were found in Upper Egypt in 1945. Buried there for two thousand years. And also, the Dead Sea Scrolls found over a period of 10 years from

1946 in the Qumran Caves by the northern shore of the Dead Sea. Dating from the 3rd century BCE to the 1st century AD.’

He paused as if to stress all this, looked at his notes and began with one word, “Monad”.

‘In many Gnostic systems, God is known as the Monad, the One. God is the high source of the pleroma, the region of light. The Pleroma literally means fullness.

The various emanations of God are called Aeons. Maybe inspired by the Pythagoreans, who called the first thing that came into existence the Monad, which begat the dyad, two, which begat the numbers, which begat the point, begetting lines. They see the universe in terms of numbers and mathematics as do even some physicists today.

Pleroma refers to the totality of God's powers. The heavenly pleroma is the centre of divine life, a region of light “above”, or transcendent, that is not of this material world but of a higher, by which we mean superior state. Occupied by spiritual beings such as aeons, eternal beings, in some systems, religions or cults, archons, angel like beings. Jesus is sometimes interpreted as an intermediary aeon who was sent from the pleroma, with whose aid humanity can recover the lost knowledge of the divine origins of humanity. The term aeon is therefore a central element of Gnostic cosmology.

Emanation.

The Supreme Light or Consciousness descends through a series of stages, gradations, worlds, or hypostases, becoming progressively more material and physically embodied. In time it will turn around to return to the One, retracing its steps through spiritual knowledge and contemplation.’

‘Can I just stop you there Nigel,’ Kate interrupted, ‘but this is fascinating as it’s already obvious there is a remarkable similarity between this Pleroma with its transcendence and emanations with that of Jewish mysticism, the tree of life, the sefirot?’

Nigel just smiled, nodded a maybe and continued,

‘Aeon

Briefly, and we will come back to this term over and over, in many Gnostic systems the Aeons are the various emanations of the superior God or Monad. Beginning in certain Gnostic texts with the hermaphroditic (possessing male and female attributes), The Aeon named Barbelo is sometimes the supreme female principle, also referred to as 'Mother-Father', an androgenous being. Again, there are major variations within Gnosticism, in its religions and cults. Various interactions with the Monad occur which result in the emanation of successive pairs of aeons, often in male and female pairings called syzygies, the numbers of these pairings varied from text to text. Two of the most commonly paired Aeons were Christ and Sophia.

Sophia

In Gnosticism the name Sophia, is wisdom, often refers to the final emanation of God, and is often identified with the anima mundi or world-soul. She is occasionally referred to by the term Achamōth in Hebrew, chokmahand, wisdom as Prunikos the daughter of Elohim, the Elohim are Hebrew gods or godhead.’

‘Gods?’ exclaimed Emily.

‘The Elohim plural, it may well be are evidence of a pre monistic religion. In Genesis,’ Nigel looked through his notes, ‘here, Genesis 1:26 “God said, Let us make man in our image as we are:”, elsewhere God is not plural, there is whole deal of stuff about this, obviously in Christianity you find a triune God, but all a bit of a tangent for us.’

Emily looked suitably calmed, but muttered, ‘deep...’ Nigel continued,

‘In most, though certainly not all versions of the gnostic myth, Sophia births the demiurge, who in turn brings about the creation of materiality. The creation of the Demiurge was an act done without her counterpart's consent and because of the predefined harmony between the two of them this action contributed to the narrative in some cases that she was unruly and disobedient. The Demiurge is responsible for making this physical, and botched creation and the way out of this for us is in knowledge, Gnosis, and not faith.

The Demiurge, who is also referred to as Yaldabaoth, sometimes represented as a lion-headed serpent, the false god, is who that keeps the souls of humans trapped in physical bodies, imprisoned in the material universe. This creature in some cases is concealed outside the pleroma in isolation, and thinking itself alone, it creates materiality and a host of co-actors, referred to as archons or angels. The demiurge is responsible for the creation of humankind, trapping elements of the pleroma stolen from Sophia inside human bodies. Part of a divine spark. In response, in some systems the Godhead emanates two saviour aeons, Christ and the Holy Spirit; Christ then embodies itself in the form of Jesus



in order to be able to teach humans how to achieve gnosis, by which they may return to the pleroma.’

Nigel looked up from his notes, ‘This is remember accounts of many variations.’ he said, and then continued,

‘Demiurge

The lion-faced deity, the name means literally public or skilled worker. Other names or identifications are Ahriman, El, Satan, and Yahweh. Moral judgements of the demiurge vary from group to group within the broad category of Gnosticism, viewing materiality as being inherently evil, or as merely flawed and as good as its passive constituent matter allows.

Archon

In late antiquity some variants of Gnosticism used the term archon to refer to several servants of the demiurge. A sect called the Ophites posited the existence of seven archons, beginning with Iadabaoth or Ialdabaoth, who created the six that follow, Iao, Sabaoth, Adonaios, Elaios, Astaphanos, and Horaios. Ialdabaoth had the head of a lion.

Some other concepts and words associated with Gnosticism.

Sarkic – earthly, hidebound, ignorant, uninitiated. The lowest level of human thought; the fleshly, instinctive level of thinking.

Hylic – lowest order of the three types of human. Unable to be saved since their thinking is entirely material, incapable of understanding the gnosis.

Psychic – soulful, partially initiated. Matter-dwelling spirits.

Pneumatic – spiritual, fully initiated, immaterial souls escaping the doom of the material world via gnosis.

Kenoma – the visible or manifest cosmos, lower than the pleroma.

Charisma – gift, or energy, bestowed by pneumatics through oral teaching and personal encounters.

Logos – the divine ordering principle of the cosmos; personified as Christ.

hypostasis – literally that which stands beneath the inner reality, emanation, appearance, of God, known to psychics.

Ousia – essence of God, known to pneumatics. Specific individual things or being.

Jesus as Gnostic saviour.

Jesus is identified by some Gnostics as an embodiment of the supreme being who became incarnate to bring gnōsis to the earth, while others adamantly denied that the supreme being came in the flesh, claiming Jesus to be merely a human who attained enlightenment through gnosis and taught his disciples to do the same. Others believed Jesus was divine, although did not have a physical body, reflected in the later Docetist movement. Among the Mandaeans, Jesus was considered a mšiha kdaba or false messiah who perverted the teachings entrusted to him by John the Baptist. Still other traditions identify Mani, the founder of Manichaeism, and Seth, third son of Adam and Eve, as salvific figures.

Three periods can be discerned in the development of Gnosticism:

Late-first century and early second century: development of Gnostic ideas, contemporaneous with the writing of the New Testament.

Mid-second century to early third century: high point of the classical Gnostic teachers and their systems, who claimed that their systems represented the inner truth revealed by Jesus.

End of the second century to the fourth century: reaction by the proto-orthodox church and condemnation as heresy, and subsequent decline.

During the first period, three types of traditions developed:

Genesis was reinterpreted in Jewish milieus, viewing Yahweh as a jealous God who enslaved people; freedom was to be obtained from this jealous God.

A wisdom tradition developed, in which Jesus' sayings were interpreted as pointers to an esoteric wisdom, in which the soul could be divinized through identification with wisdom. The Messiah, or Christ, was an eternal aspect of God's hidden nature, his spirit and truth, who has revealed himself.

Decline set in during the third century due to a growing aversion from the Nicene Church, and the economic and cultural deterioration of the Roman Empire. Conversion to Islam, and the Albigensian Crusade, a campaign initiated by Pope Innocent III to violently eliminate Catharism.

And I see coffee has arrived.' said Nigel, 'And maybe take a break here and sum things up before we look in more detail at individual movements or sects?'

‘Good idea.’ said Emily, sipping her coffee. Then looking up noticed the flip chart which now had the list of terms, and underneath the writing ‘Three Periods...’.

‘I’m just going for a short stroll.’ Nigel said, ‘Back in fifteen.’

‘How do you and Nigel have time for all this research?’ Kate asked.

‘Well,’ Emily said, ‘time is a funny thing here. If you walk into a room on your own, it’s possible to spend hours where outside no time passes. Take walks, make notes, even sleep.’

They looked out of the windows, Nigel had walked down to the lake, a gentle breeze fluttered the loose sheets of his notes, as if turning pages.

‘Life changing,’ said Emily, ‘this is life changing...’ Kate was nodding.

CHAPTER THIRTY: THE RUDE MAN OF CERNE ABBAS

The Rock Giant that had become Hylē, physical matter in the form of Cader Idris that had dematerialised in front of Jane Smith's eyes and had rose into a realm of light and spiritual fullness, the Pleroma in Gnostic cosmology. There it sat in majesty on a great throne, the One above all else.

Cerne Abbas is a village and civil parish in the county of Dorset in southern England which grew up around the great Benedictine abbey, Cerne Abbey. After the Dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII in the late 1530s the village thrived as a small market town. With the coming of the railways in the 19th century they bypassed Cerne, and the village went into decline. By 1906, the population had halved and many of the houses had fallen into disrepair.

Today the village now has a local school, a post office, three remaining historic public houses, tearooms and a number of other shops. In 2008 it was voted Britain's "Most Desirable Village".

The Cerne Abbas Giant is a hill figure near the village. It is a depiction of a man carved into a hillside 55 metres (180 ft) in length, the hill figure depicts a bald, nude male with a prominent erection, hence the title of "The Rude Man". Holding his left hand out to the side and wielding a large club in his right hand. Like many other hill figures, the Cerne Giant is formed by cutting through the grass on the hill to expose the white chalk underneath which is found in this area. The origin and age of the figure are unclear, and archaeological evidence suggests that parts of it have been lost, altered, or added over time. The earliest written record dates to the late 17th century.

The Giant sports a notably vertical erection, some 11 metres (36 feet) long (nearly the length of its head), along with a visible scrotum and testicles it has been called “Britain's most famous phallus”. It is most commonly known as the “Cerne Abbas Giant” or the “Cerne Giant”, it has also been referred to as the “Old Man”, and occasionally, in recent years, as “The Rude Man of Cerne Abbas”.

Billy Taylor and Catherine Mulberry had postulated that such figures as this and other notable topographical features might well be indicators of Übermenschen. That is physical beings which become non-physical beings of pure energy.

The Rude Man, they speculated, being one example, others included the Mountain of Cader Idris, Uluru or Ayers Rock in Australia, sacred to the native inhabitants, the Nazca Lines in Peru and even the face on Mars in the Cydonia region. An extra-terrestrial example. That maybe they are sigils, or signs, or a trace of actual Übermenschen, pointers to what they were and what they are. They also speculated that they might be markers of a return, that is markers of where these spiritual forms returned to matter, that deep underneath these signs were now sleeping giants. In this speculation they were correct.

So, it was a day after Jane Smith had witnessed one Übermensch who had returned to a physical form depart the Earth and once again become spiritual energy. On this following night, unseen to any, the ground beneath the chalk drawing of the Rude Man began to bulge. It grew, and then like a giant bird emerging from its egg the real Rude Man emerged. Like a hatchling it was wet with amniotic fluid, its arms across its body, these moved and began parting the



matter over its face, slowly it opened its coal black eyes, it was naked as the image, and seemingly made of nothing but chalk. Chalk which was transforming into pure energy. It pulled itself clear of the earth and looking up disappeared into the spiritual sky.

Here in the Pleroma, the divine realm of light of spiritual fullness it found The Rock Giant, Cader Idris sitting in majesty on a throne, The throne that the Cerne Giant Übermensch wanted for itself. The contest seemed one sided, but as often perceptions can be deceptive. The Rock Giant being 2,000 feet in height (the mountain's 'prominence') the Cerne Giant being only 180 feet in height, and naked.

The Rock Giant rose from its seat and slowly began a swing of its arm towards The Rude Man, who given its comparative smallness was more nimble, so it dodged and swung its club at a toe of the Rock Giant. At this the Giant halted its swing and let out a cry of pain. The toe broke off and descended back into the realm of Hylē, matter. Thus began the process of The Rude Man's destruction of the Cader Idris Rock Giant, slowly reducing it to rubble.

The Rude Man looked at the heaps of stones that were once the mountain that had become The Rock Giant. It began picking these up and hurling them down into a desert below. Once it had finished it turned and sat on the throne of the Pleroma.

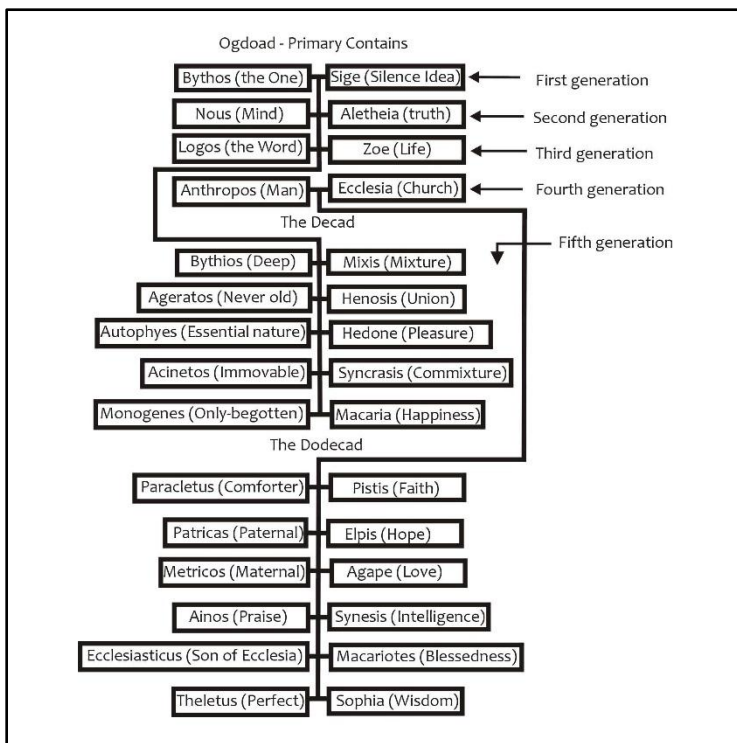


CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE: THE OGDOAD

Nigel began reading from his notes, ‘Valentinus assumed, as the beginning of all things, the Primal Being or Bythos, who after ages of silence and contemplation, gave rise to other beings by a process of emanation. The first series of beings, the Aeons, were thirty in number, representing fifteen syzygies or pairs sexually complementary.’

‘I have a diagram of this.’ said Nigel, and he handed out copies.

‘Let’s pause so we can have time to look at the diagram.’ he said.



And so, he continued... writing these on the flip chart.

‘First generation

- Bythos, the One and Sige, Silence, Charis, Ennoea, etc.

Second generation

- Nous, Mind and Aletheia, Veritas, Truth

Third generation, emanated from Nous and Aletheia

- Sermo, the Word, Logos, and Vita, the Life, Zoe

Fourth generation, emanated from Sermo and Vita

- Anthropos, Homo, Man and Ecclesia

Fifth generation

Emanated from Sermo and Vita:

- Bythios, Profound and Mixis, Mixture
- Ageratos, Never old and Henosis, Union
- Autophyes, Essential nature and Hedone, Pleasure
- Acinetos, Immovable and Synchysis, Commixture
- Monogenes, Only-begotten and Macaria Happiness

Emanated from Anthropos and Ecclesia

- Paracletus, Comforter and Pistis, Faith
- Patricas, Paternal and Elpis, Hope
- Metricos, Maternal and Agape, Love
- Ainos, Praise and Synesis, Intelligence
- Ecclesiasticus, Son of Ecclesia and Macariotes, Blessedness
- Theletus, Perfect and Sophia, Wisdom

This is according to Irenaeus, Christian Bishop of the time, and his known work “Against Heresies”.

‘Hell, that’s quite a lot to take in!’ Kate said, Emily nodding.

‘Sure,’ said Nigel, ‘I suggest maybe we stop for the day and try to consolidate. The main thing is by using Valentinianism we can get a good idea of Gnosticism even though it’s amazingly diverse. Say let’s take a short rest and meet on the terrace in an hour?’

‘Sounds good.’ said Kate, Emily agreed.

‘But before this,’ Nigel said, ‘because I’m anticipating a why all the detail here regarding Gnosticism and the Aeons, it is because I, well Kate will know, had met this kind of thing, Aeons before. And I suspect the location of the skull, and the nine bodies all are related to Gnosticism and Aeons.’

‘Sure, I remember the Eve Sharif affair, it began with a gruesome find in the same location, it was this that got me interested in, well that can wait...’ was Kate’s response.

‘We need to talk.’ said Emily to Kate,

‘Oh, not interested in Gnosticism, interested in world religions.’ was the reply.

‘We still need to talk.’ said Emily.

They met on the terrace and took a stroll down the slope of the lawn to the river. It was warm with only a few clouds. The river was quite wide but flowed gently, Nigel thought he recognised it from the Avon near Charlecote in Warwickshire, he had visited the Manor house, allegedly with the table where William Shakespeare was accused of poaching. Billy's palace Arcadia was not based at all on the Elizabethan Manor, but the gardens, lake, and river with the woods certainly were, as also the fallow deer. There was an ornate footbridge which they used to cross over the river, and soon they were walking in the woodland.

The woods were a mix of tall straight pines, larch and some birch. Though the weather seemed like late May, the woods had masses of flowering bluebells, which drifted like a mist over the undulating forest floor. They saw some distant movement,

'Deer...' Kate said.

They had been almost silent until then, but as they turned and walked back started discussing the ideas regarding Gnosticism.

'So, it seems, those nine creatures found in Park Street were possibly Aeons, and part of a hierarchy.' Emily said.

'Maybe,' said Nigel, 'we have the warring factions of the Smith's, these dialectical battles, slave overturning master and so on, like a hierarchy but not fixed, complete chaos. Then the fixed hierarchies of Gnostics...'

'And seems to have some similarities with Jewish Mysticism.' added Kate.

‘And then this thing with the overmen, the Übermenschen? Which are what?’ continued Nigel.

‘Well, using Gnosticism they were matter and became energy or spirit, which is very much a Gnostic idea.’ said Emily.

Kate spoke, ‘They then achieved the aim in Gnosticism of rising up from the material into the spiritual transcendence of the Aeons. But?’

‘But it seems from Billy sending Christine and Ben to Wales not the end of this story.’ said Nigel.

They were nearing the house,

‘I’d like a rest and maybe a soak in the bath and pick up tomorrow if that’s OK, so maybe meet before dinner?’ Nigel said.

The others agreed, Nigel suspecting they would probably be doing research on their own on Gnosticism and Neo Platonism.

‘Let’s meet on the terrace at seven.’ Emily said.

They all agreed and went their separate ways.

They met at seven. The clouds had cleared, with now only tall horsetails promising another fine day. The three took a silent stroll around the formal gardens of regular shapes made of box hedges and formal beds of roses. At the centre of the gardens was a circular space with a sundial set on a bronze plinth showing seven concentric circles.

‘This place, this house and gardens now seems to be helping us, why seven?’ Emily thought aloud.

The meal as usual began with soup and was followed by terrines of cooked vegetables, meat and fish. Though none was real, and Kate could eat the 'meat', it was very fine.

After supper the three again walked, only now through the salons slowly and thoughtfully. Kate passing a comment,

'Nigel, these pictures,' the walls had large classical style paintings hung on them, 'they seem to be illustrating the various subjects which you have been describing to us?'

Nigel looked, and Emily spoke, 'I've noticed, quite a clever way of both clarification and reinforcement.' she said.

'Reinforcement that art can deal with problems better than logic at times.' she added.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO: THE NAZCA LINES IN PERU

The Nazca Lines are a group of geoglyphs, earth drawings, made in the soil of the Nazca Desert in southern Peru, created between 500 BC and 500 AD by people making depressions or shallow incisions in the desert floor, removing pebbles and leaving different-coloured dirt exposed. The lines run for many miles and include figurative designs of animals, including The Spider, The Hummingbird, The Condor, The Man, The Pelican, The Dog, The Hands, The Parrot, The Lizard and The Whale.

Each marked the location of an Übermensch, a being that had become pure energy, or pure spirit only to return to matter, but now very powerful matter. And the desire to rule over the material world as a great Aeon might.

And so the following night, across the great plain of the desert slowly the earth heaved up into great mounds, and in turn the actual Übermensch buried deep in the earth emerged, each held in its cocoon.

First, The Spider, its legs breaking out in turn, then it sat on the desert floor, it was like many of the drawings massive in size, 55 metres (180 ft), the same size as the Rude Man. It stretched its legs, braced them, then leapt into the spiritual sky. There it waited.

The Hummingbird was next, this too was the same size, the size of its drawing, but unlike the spider waited no time on the earth but flew straight into the Pleroma. Next came The Condor, The Man, The Pelican, The Dog, The Hands, The Parrot, The Lizard and The Whale. All broke free of their cocoons and ascended into the spiritual sky.

The ten of these Übermenschen now formed a circle around the Cerne Giant sitting on the throne, each of these the same size. However, the Giant, The Rude Man, had defeated the Rock Giant, in doing so had reduced the giant back into base matter, worthless Hylē, and so gained all of its spiritual energy. It was no one sided contest.

The Spider attacked first covering the man in webs and trying to bite it with its fangs, but The Rude Man brushed these off and threw The Spider from off it. So, the four flying creatures together attacked, this proved much more of a problem for The Rude Man. The Giant left its throne so it could better defend itself. Using its arms to beat each away, only for them to return. In this confusion now the others attacked the Giant. The Whale smashed into its legs; it began to sway. The Dog bit its right leg the lizard the other, then The Hands and The Man pushed The Giant over. The Condor, and Hummingbird blinded The Giant by tearing at its eyes, so now blinded it was in difficulty. Slowly they pounded and pounded The Giant, each being able to take a short rest. The Giant losing its power slowly began to turn to rock. As each part of its body again became chalk it was smashed off and flung down into a vast desert. As it lost its power this power was gained by the ten creatures of the Nazca Lines.

Finally, the Giant of Cerne Abbas was completely destroyed, any of the remains flung into the desert.

The Spider, The Hummingbird, The Man, The Pelican, The Dog, The Hands, The Parrot, The Lizard and The Whale formed a circle around the throne of the highest divine realm of light of spiritual fullness of the Pleroma. They waited, there could only be one highest, the Monad, the One, the ineffable Bythos. So,

a terrible fight occurred and raged for days on end. None had noticed the missing Condor who had flown so high they could not see it, but it had the eyes of a Condor and so could see them. After days of fighting It attacked the exhausted Übermenschen one at a time, carrying each off and despatching it, draining its spiritual energy and throwing the spent matter, the Hylē, down into the vast desert.

Finally, it flew to the throne, landed, and folded its wings looking with its Condor eyes at all of the realms below.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE: NAMES

It was another glorious morning, after breakfast they adjourned to the familiar library.

‘Some more on the Gnostic sects.’ said Nigel.

He began from his notes:

‘The Ophites.

Held that the demiurge Ialdabaoth, after coming into conflict with the archons he created, created a son, Ophiomorphus, who is called the serpent-formed Nous. This entity would become the serpent in the garden of Eden, who was compelled to act on behest of Sophia to tempt Eve.

Simon Magus, a religious figure whose confrontation with Peter is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. In his six "roots" emanating from the Unbegotten Fire, Nous is first. There is a correspondence of these roots with the first six Aeons that Valentinus derives from Bythos. In a text attributed to him - that there are two offshoots of the entire ages, having neither beginning nor end. Of these the one appears from above, the great power, the Nous of the universe, administering all things, male; the other from beneath, the great Epinoia, female, bringing forth all things. To Nous and Epinoia correspond Heaven and Earth.

Ecclesia

The assembly or church. This higher Ecclesia was held to be the archetype of the lower Ecclesia constituted by the spiritual seed on earth. In a Gnostic system described by Irenaeus we have also a heavenly church, not, however, as a separate Aeon, but as constituted by the harmony of the first

existing beings. According to Hippolytus, the Naassenes, another gnostic sect associated with the snake, counted three Ecclesiae.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews in the Bible quotes the direction to Moses to make the tabernacle after the pattern shewn him on the Mount, and his argument dwells on the inference that the various parts of the Jewish service were but copies of better heavenly archetypes. This same heavenly tabernacle appears as part of the imagery of the book of the Revelation. In the same book the church appears as the Lamb's wife, the new Jerusalem descending from heaven; and St. Paul's teaching in Ephesians 1:3 could imply that the church existed in God's mind before the foundation of the world.

As the world is an image of the living Aeon, so is man an image of the pre-existent man, the anthropos proon.

Valentinus spoke of the Sophia as an artist. Under her in the hierarchy are the world-creative angels, whose head is the Demiurge. Here Adam is created. In him is a higher power and this creates the fears of the angels because he is higher.

Achamōth, Chokmah, Prunikos, are sometimes also terms for Sophia.

It is said that Achamoth was the cause of angels making images of these higher things, idols, via the hidden guide of Sophia.

Horos

According to the doctrine of Valentinus the youngest Aeon Sophia, in her passion to comprehend the Father of all, runs



the danger of being absorbed into his essence, from which she is saved by coming into contact with the limiting power Horos, whose function it is to strengthen all things outside the ineffable Greatness, by confining each to its appointed place. According to this version Horos was a previously existing power; but according to another, and apparently a later account, Horos is an Aeon only generated on this occasion at the request of all the Aeons, who implored the Father to avert a danger that threatened to affect them all. Then he directs the production of a new pair of Aeons, Christ and the Holy Spirit, who restore order by separating from the Pleroma the unformed offspring of Sophia.

Valentinus Gnostic founder of Valentinianism, describes a function within the Pleroma, separating the other Aeons from the ineffable Bythos, and saving them from absorption into his essence. On the other hand, Horos is the outside boundary of the Pleroma itself, giving it permanence and stability by guarding it.'

Here Emily interrupted, she had been listening and writing, 'Sorry, but I just have to say, and come up for air so to speak, this is fantastic in the literal sense, yet also seems to make actual sense, once we make the step,'

'What step?' interrupted Kate.

'The step to see the Aeons as ideas, personifications of ideas.' she replied.

'Oh,' Kate said, 'and more, one can have far more of a relationship with a person than an idea.'

Nigel had finished, and looking up from his notes said, 'It's difficult because it's dealing with what appears to our logic a

contradiction, I suppose because of my experience with quantum physics I can find this a little easier, but only a little to allow, but not to understand. If you like, the problem for the Gnostics is to understand stuff that is above the possibility of mere human understanding.'

'I get this!' said Kate. 'I'm getting it,' said Emily, 'As a biological scientist I shouldn't get it, I shouldn't like it, but it's annoying, very annoying, and I like that.'

She paused, then continued, 'OK, I see coffee has arrived and I need a walk around the gardens, some thinking, can we continue after lunch?'

'Fine by me.' said Nigel, 'And me.' said Kate, then added, 'have you noticed something about the food?'

'What?' Emily asked.

'Well, if you fancy something, say for breakfast, or lunch but especially dinner it's always there.' Kate replied.

'No, but now you say, yes, that's true. I had this salad once on a holiday in the Greek Islands.' she finished smiling.

Nigel and Kate went for another walk across the river, then each went back to their rooms, they noticed Emily sat near the sundial deep in thought.

She enjoyed her Greek salad at lunch.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR: THE CONDOR

Billy slept badly; he was in his part of the house in Woodbridge he shared with Catherine Mulberry. He had been dreaming about burning cathedrals, Litchfield in particular, his favourite of all the great gothic cathedrals he knew. He put on his bedside light, opening the bedroom curtains, it was early morning, the start of what promised to be a fine day, but he did not feel good. He turned on his radio, then he went to the desk in his bedroom, opened his laptop, while it loaded windows the radio announcer was saying,

‘And now more on the fire in Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris...’

It cut to what was obviously someone at the scene,

‘The fire which started in the very early hours is now under control, confined mainly to the roof, most of which together with the cathedral's wooden spire has been destroyed. However, it seems extensive damage to the interior was prevented by the vaulted stone ceiling. The cathedral's altar, two pipe organs, and three 13th-century rose windows have suffered little or no damage...’

The reporter continued but Billy was now looking at live feeds on his laptop.

The radio report had now switched back to the studio in London and was saying,

‘Meanwhile the fire at Norwich Cathedral was only to the new visitors centre and refectory...’

Billy listened a little longer, then thought, ‘Nothing on Litchfield then. Just a dream or maybe not, a premonition? Action!’

He put on his dressing gown, still thinking, looking at his bedside clock,

‘Seven, Catherine will be up, she’s an early starter...’

He went downstairs and into the communal parts of the house, she wasn’t in the kitchen, but Billy found her outside sitting in the garden, she was at a table sipping orange juice.

‘I didn’t wake you, you will no doubt be active enough today.’ she said.

‘You should have.’ was the reply.

‘Well, your theory is probably correct, it matches with the other fires in the past, the church in Walsingham, York minster, the Fantoft Stave Church in Norway was not though, it and others were arson attacks by black metal pagan groups...’ she said.

‘Not all!’ was Billy’s reply.

Billy’s theory concerned the location of religious and related sites in the landscape, that the building over such sites in someway shielded them. How and why and from what he did not know, this was his current project. The fires which he seemed to think were more than accidental he surmised were in order to see just what was being hidden. The great gothic cathedrals had revealed a parallel with their floor plans and kundalini yoga. What he surmised might lie below. Below the often 365 supporting pillars found in many crypts?

‘Anyway, no doubt you will soon be off to see Nigel, go get washed and dressed and I’ll have some breakfast here, you will eat before you go.’ Catherine Mulberry replied.

Billy was not a good early starter so followed these instructions.

Soon Billy was in the Palace of Arcadia, he had found Nigel and was talking to him on the terrace, it was still very early morning in this reality.

‘Well there is now an Übermensch on the throne, the throne of the highest divine realm of light of spiritual fullness of the Pleroma, which is seeking out and destroying all others in order to secure its position, it seems to have a very keen eye, and has found and destroyed many so far, among them those sleeping at Avebury, the Atacama Giant, Blythe Intaglios, and the Band of Holes.’

Nigel looked as if to ask for any particular reason to be concerned, Billy continued,

‘This is leading to a finale, but whatever is doing this has realised it can’t see what is underneath certain structures...’

Billy paused,

‘certain religious structures on what might be called significant sites, holy other places, such as some churches and the great Gothic cathedrals.’

‘Why, what are they hiding?’ asked Nigel.

Billy gave a familiar look, so Nigel responded,

‘Oh, I don’t want to know, but from your look it’s very very important. So, what do you want with me?’

‘Not me, I want you to see Uluru and talk with it.’ was Billy’s reply.



‘Oh!’ said Nigel.

Billy and Nigel arrived near the Patjarr Aboriginal community near the Goldfields–Esperance region of Western Australia. As they walked towards the settlement, not particularly a “leader” but maybe “spokesperson”, Mick who was naked save for a loin cloth, and white paint markings, came to greet them.

Mick knew Nigel or “Nige” as he called him from Nigel's “walkabout”. It was on this walkabout that Nigel visited certain sites, including the sacred Uluru where with it he communed with the ancient lands of Australia.

Mick knew Billy well, he was considered to be a great Ngangkari, or wise man. Mick was accompanied by Turkey whose real name was ■■■■ - ■■■■, once one of the three richest men in the world, who had dropped out of civilization and joined the Patjarr Aboriginal community. This was all part of the “Tablets of Truth” affair where a vast complex was built in the desert in order to create bespoke universes for the super-rich, one of whom was ■■■■ - ■■■■. A creation with near catastrophic results.

After greetings Billy did the talking,

‘We have a problem with an Übermensch, one whose got the throne and is...’

Mick interrupted,

‘We know, killing all the others and more besides, Uluru (Ayers Rock) told us, so we have to go? All of this has to go!’

‘You’ll be back’ said Billy,

‘You hope!’ said Mick.

‘It just wants to see you Nige, before it goes.’

Uluru obviously was also an Übermensch.

Nigel was now sitting on top of Uluru (Ayers Rock) with Mick, both were naked, Mick rose,

‘I’ll leave you to it.’ he said and left.

After an hour of silence in which he communed with the land Nigel too descended.

‘We should leave,’ Nigel was saying, ‘Uluru is just a small part of the Übermensch, it will take animal form. It will however return.’

He said these last remarks to Mick and Turkey. Mick gave a nervous smile.

‘Too bloody right he muttered under his breath.’

Nigel and Billy walked off into the desert, then slowly disappeared in what looked like a heat haze but wasn’t.

‘Now for the action.’ Mick said with a nervous grin.

The rock, Uluru moved, Mick and Turkey watched, Mick relating to Turkey,

‘The fella’s nose...’

It became more obvious, Uluru was a giant nose, and then Mick continued,

‘... and now the fella’s ears.’

Slowly it became obvious, The Cape York Peninsula were ears,
that the Aboriginal myths of animals inhabiting the dreamtime
were true, slowly the giant Boolarong unfolded itself.

‘See I told you Turkey – it’s a Boolarong, a roo!’

The island of Australia now in the form of its animal
Übermensch rose above the earth, not leaving even a ripple in
the ocean.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE: SOPHIA ACHAMŌTH, CHOKMAH,
BARBELO, PRUNIKOS THE DAUGHTER OF ELOHIM, THE
FORMATRIX OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.

After breakfast the following morning Nigel began.

‘Just to start from me a final look at Sophia, and we should finish today, with a few things arising.’

He yawned. ‘Sorry a busy night...’

Emily gave a look, as if to ask for more information.

Nigel thought of relating his night experience and trip to the Australian desert but thought better of it.

‘Mother, Womb and Beyond Knowledge.’ Nigel said with a faint smirk. There was a silence, so he began again from his notes:

‘The wider conception of Sophia is analogous to the human soul but also simultaneously one of the feminine aspects of God.’

Both Emily and Kate raised their eyes, though Emily now suspected Kate’s action had more about knowing something of this.

‘Some Gnostics held that she was the syzygy, or female twin, of Jesus, i.e. the Bride of Christ, and the Holy Spirit of the Trinity. She is occasionally referred to by the term Achamōth. In the Nag Hammadi texts, Sophia is the lowest aeon or anthropic emanation of the godhead. She would be the daughter of Elohim- Hebrew Gods or Godhead.

We've seen in most versions of the Gnostic myths, it is Sophia who brings about instability in the Pleroma, in turn bringing about the creation of materiality. According to some Gnostic texts, the crisis occurs as a result of Sophia trying to emanate without her syzygy, male counterpart or, in another tradition, causes a crisis because she tries to breach the barrier between herself and the unknowable Bythos. After cataclysmically falling from the Pleroma, Sophia's fear and anguish of losing her life, just as she lost the light of the One causes confusion and longing to return to it. Because of these longings, matter and soul accidentally come into existence. This is the creation of the Demiurge, also known as Yaldabaoth, a mistake made by Sophia in this exile. The Demiurge proceeds to create the physical world in which we live, ignorant of Sophia, who nevertheless manages to infuse some spiritual spark or pneuma into his creation.'

In the Pistis Sophia, a Gnostic text discovered in the 18thC, Christ is sent to bring Sophia back into the Pleroma. Christ enables her to again see the light, bringing her knowledge of the spirit Christ who is then sent to earth in the form of the man Jesus to give men the gnosis needed to rescue themselves from the physical world and return to the spiritual world. In Gnosticism, the Gospel story of Jesus is itself allegorical: it is the Outer Mystery used to introduce Gnosis rather than truth in a historical context. For the Gnostics, the drama of the redemption of the Sophia through Christ or the Logos is the central drama of the universe. The Sophia resides in all humans as the divine spark.

Jewish Alexandrine religious philosophy was much occupied with the concept of the Divine Sophia, as the revelation of God's inward thought, and assigned to her not only the

formation and ordering of the natural universe but also the communication of knowledge to mankind. In Proverbs 8. Who dwelt beside Him before the Creation of the world.

‘This seems to have been kept quiet?’ Emily said in a quizzical tone.

She and Kate looked up Proverbs 8 and 9 in a King James Bible. They read it several times making notes.

‘So, Sophia appears in the Old Testament, of the Christian and Jewish religions if this is the case.’ Emily said adding, ‘When he prepared the heavens, I was there!’

‘It’s getting deeper.’ said Kate, Emily nodded quite vigorously.

‘And now coffee.’ said Nigel.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX: THE FLIGHT OF THE CONDOR

The Condor sat on the great throne of the Übermensch, the throne of the highest divine realm of light of spiritual fullness of the Pleroma. It had dispatched many of the Earth's Übermenschen but was not powerful enough yet for the greatest of these, the Boolarong. It had looked around with its keen eyes picking its candidates. Not waiting for them to awake it would fly down to where they were sleeping, and drag them up into the Pleroma, there it would despatch them, drawing their power, reducing them to Hylē in the form of rock, and throw that into the great desert. It had not anticipated.

So, as it saw the great Boolarong approach it rose from the throne and flew.

The great Übermensch bird flew and it considered its options. Remaining in the Pleroma might be difficult, possibly disastrous, as would returning to matter if matter was once more to become under the control of the Pleroma. It thought long and hard, flying across the world, it realised there were places that it could not look, it had tried to look underneath using fire to burn them, so it would use other methods to investigate these.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN: BEYOND KNOWLEDGE

‘Well knowledge. Or rather beyond knowledge.’ Nigel said.

‘Sounds ominous.’ said Emily.

‘As is the end, but for now.’ And he began:

‘In another account Sophia's fall was her desire to know what lay beyond the limits of the knowable. She had brought herself into a state of ignorance and formlessness. Her suffering extends to the whole Pleroma and Sophia is separated from it and gives birth outside it by means of her ennoia, wisdom, to the image of her suffering, out of which the Demiurge and the lower world come into existence; last of all looking upwards in her helpless condition, and imploring light, she finally gives birth to the spermata tēs ekklēsiās, the pneumatic souls, the highest form of the human able to gain access to the Pleroma.

In the work of redemption, the Soter, Christ, comes down accompanied by the masculine angels who are to be the future syzygoi, partners, of the feminine souls of the Pneumatici, the pneumatic souls, and introduces Sophia along with these Pneumatici into the heavenly bridal chamber.’

‘Wait!’ said Emily.

‘She creates these perfect humans which become female in order to marry the male angels.’ Nigel explained.

Kate let out a long ‘Wow’.

When it finished Emily said,

‘Thunderstruck, I’m just thunderstruck. I need air and a walk.’

She left the room, Nigel and Kate waited.

She returned, Nigel continued,

‘According to another doctrine Sophia separates herself from her syzygos, partner, the thelêtos through her longing for Communion with the Father of all, falls into a condition of suffering, and would have completely melted away in this inordinate desire, unless the Horos, the Christian Redeemer, had not purified her from her suffering and established her again in the Pleroma. Her enthymēsis, idea or thought, on the other hand, the desire which has obtained the mastery over her, and the consequent suffering becomes an amorphos kai aneideos ousia, which is also called an ektrōma, is separated from her and is assigned a place beyond the limits of the Pleroma. Hence the idea of a twofold Sophia, a greater and lesser.’

Emily was smiling and shaking her head. ‘More,’ she said ‘give me more...’

‘Sophia in yet another account has by the ordinance of higher powers obtained an insight into the dwelling-place appropriated to her in the spiritual world, namely, the thēsauros lucis which lies beyond the XIIIth Aeon. By her endeavours to direct herself upward, she draws upon herself the enmity of the Authadēs, Archon of the XIIIth Aeon, and of the Archons of the XII Aeons under him; by these she is enticed down into the depths of chaos and is there tormented in the greatest possible variety of ways, in order that she may thus incur the loss of her light-nature. In her utmost need she addresses thirteen penitent prayers (metanoiāi) to the Upper Light. Step by step she is led upwards by Christus into the higher regions, though she still remains victim to the assaults



of the Archons, and is, after offering her XIIIth Metanoia, prayers, she is more vehemently attacked than ever, until at length Christus leads her down into an intermediate place below the XIIIth Aeon, where she remains until the consummation of the world, and sends up grateful hymns of praise and thanksgiving. The earthly work of redemption having been at length accomplished; the Sophia returns to her original celestial home.

The Light-Maiden (*parthenos lucis*), who is distinguished from the Sophia herself, and appears as the archetype of *Astraea*, the Constellation *Virgo*. The station which she holds is in the place of the midst, above the habitation assigned to the Sophia in the XIIIth Aeon. She is the judge of departed souls, either opening for them or closing against them the portals of the light-realm. Under her stand yet seven other light-maidens with similar functions, who impart to pious souls their final consecrations. From the place of the *parthenos lucis* comes the sun-dragon, which is daily borne along by four light-powers in the shape of white horses, and so makes his circuit round the earth.'

Emily now has her head in her hands.

'The light-maiden (*parthenos tou phōtos*) is also found in Manichaeism as exciting the impure desires of the Daemons and thereby setting free the light which has hitherto been held down by the power of darkness. On the other hand, the place of the Gnostic Sophia is among Manichaeans taken by the "Mother of Life" (*mētēr tēs zōēs*), and by the World-Soul (*psychē hapantōn*), which on occasions is distinguished from the Life-Mother, and is regarded as diffused through all

living creatures, whose deliverance from the realm of darkness constitutes the whole of the world's history.'

Emily looked up, 'So the light maiden and the Mother of life!'

There was a pause.

'Can you top that?'

Nigel gave one of his school boy grins, this made Kate laugh out loud, 'Something makes me think he can?' she said.

Nigel read from his notes.

'In certain Nag Hammadi texts, in "On the Origin of the World", Sophia is depicted as the ultimate destroyer of this material universe, Yaldabaoth and all his Heavens.

This is from the text itself...' Nigel said.

'She [Sophia] will cast them down into the abyss. They [the Archons] will be obliterated because of their wickedness. For they will come to be like volcanoes and consume one another until they perish at the hand of the prime parent. When he has destroyed them, he will turn against himself and destroy himself until he ceases to exist. And their heavens will fall one upon the next and their forces will be consumed by fire. Their eternal realms, too, will be overturned. And his heaven will fall and break in two. His [... missing text...] will fall down upon the [...] support them; they will fall into the abyss, and the abyss will be overturned. The light will [...] the darkness and obliterate it: it will be like something that never was.'

Nigel stopped, closed his notebook.

'Beyond the limits of the knowable.' Nigel eventually said.

'The Ultimate Destroyer.' said Kate.

'It's a schizophrenia.' said Emily, shaking her head, 'Life Mother and destroyer.'

A distant gong sounded.

'It's not for supper?' said Nigel.

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT: MARS

Abu Muhammad was a first year student at The University of Birmingham. He had joined the Astronomy Society, though his degree was in Geography. He had visited the University's telescope in Washill Lane which housed a 14 inch diameter Schmidt Cassegrain Meade LX200R telescope. He knew little or nothing about the subject but one of the Astronomy students was showing him the basics, a Tim Haliday.

'We have a good night considering the light pollution from the city,' Tim was saying, 'we should be able to make out the polar cap on Mars, just a whiteish smudge of frozen carbon dioxide.'

He was punching in some data into a computer for the telescope which would use this to track the object, in this case the planet Mars,

'Strange,' he said looking through the eyepiece, 'nothing, the data must be wrong, Mars should be in Gemini, no sign, odd. Anyway, let's look at some double stars, the data might be wrong or I must be mistaken?'

Helen Moreton was a keen amateur astronomer; she had begun this hobby after a weekend in North Norfolk at an 'Astronomy Weekend' held in a B&B in East Barsham a small hamlet near the village of Little Walsingham. It was situated just behind the Barsham Arms public house. The area is known for its dark skies. Having taken early retirement, she had moved to nearby Great Walsingham. On the same night that Abu Muhammad was being shown the 14 inch Schmidt telescope by Tim Haliday she was in her garden with her 10 inch reflector. She too looked for the planet Mars which



should have been in Gemini. She was confused so went back into her cottage and telephoned a friend she knew who was in the NNAS, North Norfolk Astronomical Society. He confirmed the position of Mars, he was on his smart phone so walked outside,

‘Dam it Helen,’ he said, ‘it’s not there.’

This was part of a chain reaction that was happening in those parts of the world in darkness. Soon the switch boards and internet contact pages of NASA collapsed with the traffic, as were institutions and Astronomical societies. At NASA the problem went up a few levels until it reached a recently promoted Ph.D. student to handle such calls. He checked with colleagues in universities in Europe. Mars could not be found!

Meanwhile, also in NASA and the European Space Agency, technicians were checking for problems, three Mars orbiters and a rover had stopped transmitting. As each was effectively a separate set of tech guys it wasn’t until senior managers said, ‘Check the other missions, see if they have lost contact?’ And so, the confusion spread.

Eventually it reached Dr James Dean, (he never forgave his parents for that Christian name!) once head of the Green Bank observatory now a senior figure in NASA. He was at home when he took the call, and after being told there was a couple of seconds delay before he said,

‘An Übermensch!’ followed by, ‘I need to talk to people.’ These people involved Hope Murkowski, other people from the now defunct “Facility”, Military and some scientists many now retired, and one Billy Taylor. Or to give them their names in the planet Antichthon, Papilios, and the Life Harvesters



affair, Billy Taylor became “Zarathustra”, Hope Murkowski became “Lou Salomé”, and Dr James Dean “The Tight-Rope Walker”. These were old enough to be active members in these events, and at sufficient security levels to have been heavily involved. The planet Antichthon inhabited by creatures called Papilios had disappeared into Jupiter’s red spot millennia ago. The Papilios had become one single organism which consumed the planet. Turning this mass into pure energy it had emerged as a giant figure, given the name ‘Übermensch’, overman or superman, an idea found in Nietzsche’s philosophy. It then exited the known universe, destroying “The Life Harvesters” on its way, thus saving life on earth.

Catherine Mulberry and Billy’s idea that there were probably more, and they might have returned to be matter, some on or in The Earth was known. It was either ignored or not taken seriously, and anyway the ‘Facility’ was no more.

After much discussion eventually the smarter people soon realised that the other strange disappearances and events on Earth were related. They knew this to be both connected and true, as did the conspiracy theorists. Everyone else was told the events were unconnected. Calculations showed that the unaccountable loss of Mars would have minimal effect to The Earth, if anything help prevent stray asteroids entering the inner planets. It did mean those in Mars exploration needed re assigning!

As to those in the inner circle who now knew that there was somewhere a very powerful Übermensch were put at ease by Billy.

‘It will be dealt with.’



‘How?’ was asked.

‘There will be a page in The Book of The Ungods.’ said Billy

The question was not asked by Hope Murkowski as she knew better than to ask.

Somehow, she found out about these “books”, she had after all been involved in “The Tablets of Truth” affair in which such books were involved, as was also the Boy.



CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE: THE FACE ON MARS IN CYDONIA

It is generally regarded that life requires water, so life on Mars required water. So the “canals” first described by the Italian astronomer Giovanni Schiaparelli in of 1877 made sense. However, he wrote ‘canali’ in Italian, in English ‘channels’, which was mis-translated as ‘canals’. And so, the idea grew from a miss translation. The Irish astronomer Charles E. Burton made some of the earliest drawings of straight-line features on Mars, although his drawings did not match Schiaparelli's.

In 1889, American astronomer Charles A. Young reported that Schiaparelli's canal discovery of 1877 had been confirmed in 1881, though new canals had appeared where there had not been any before, prompting very important and perplexing questions as to their origin.

During the favourable opposition of the Earth and Mars, when the two planets are closest together, in 1892, W. H. Pickering observed numerous small circular black spots occurring at every intersection or starting-point of the canals. Many of these had been seen by Schiaparelli as larger dark patches and were termed seas or lakes.

American astronomer Percival Lowell seeing the visible seasonal melting of Mars' polar icecaps was led to the idea of an advanced alien race indigenous to Mars which built canals to transport the water to the drier equatorial regions. Newspaper and magazine articles about these Martian canals and the advanced civilization of Martians captured the public imagination. Some observers saw a phenomenon they called “gemination”, or doubling – two parallel canals.

In Martian the written fictional and speculative encounters, most species of Martians closely resembled humans. They differed only in their size, their colouring, and their skill at living in harmony.

In *Aleriel*, (or *A Voyage to Other Worlds* of 1883, a science fiction novel by Wladislaw Somerville Lach-Szyrma, a Polish-English curate, author, and historian.) Martians are about twice the size of humans and much hairier, in *Mr. Stranger's Sealed Package*, (a short novel by Hugh MacColl, published in English in 1889, deals with a journey to Mars in a flying machine.) they are blue but essentially the same as humans, sharing ancient ancestors.

By 1897, the Martians had launched more than one expedition to Earth, in order to exploit our planet for its resources. In *Auf Zwei Planeten*, a German classic of science fiction, an Arctic expedition happens upon a Martian base at the North Pole. These Martians, like the ones humans had previously encountered, were human looking enough, although their eyes and foreheads were unusually large, and lived in a more utopian society than ours. However, they had come to Earth to steal our planet's energy, and do not hold humans in high regard.

The famous Martians of H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds*, have a big grey rounded bulk that glistened like wet leather, large dark eyes, tentacles and mouths which quivered and panted, and drooled saliva. They landed in England and started killing people with a Heat-Ray as soon as they emerged from their cylindrical spaceships. Other Martians are bird-like, with four-fingered limbs, a little roundish body, and a long neck ending in a tiny head with a beak. Still others are gaseous green

clouds that can congeal into something more blob-like. Sometimes these Martians are still pacifists or vegetarians, but just as often they are war-like creatures that live up to their planet's name.

In Philip K. Dick's 1964 novel there once was a civilization on Mars great enough to build a system of canals that covered a fifth of the planet's surface. But that population dwindled down to a small number of resource-poor Bleekmen, short, human-like creatures who colonists from Earth treated like slaves. Elsewhere the only creatures living on the planet are little cat-sized animals, eyeless and bat-eared, without a sense of smell. Finally, in *Semper Mars*, (Book One of the Heritage Trilogy of 1998 by Ian Douglas.) one man discovers hundreds of mummified Martians, more than a thousand years old.

It was ironic then that while there was all this fictional life on Mars, there was in actual fact a super living being, which was Mars, the whole planet, but all we could see was its face.

Cydonia was first imaged in detail by the Viking 1 and Viking 2 orbiters. In one of the images taken by Viking 1 on July 25, 1976, a two-kilometre-long (1.2 mi) Cydonian mesa, situated at 40.75° north latitude and 9.46° west longitude, had the appearance of a humanoid face. When the image was originally acquired, Viking chief scientist Gerry Soffen dismissed the "Face on Mars" in image 035A72 as a "trick of light and shadow". A second image, 070A13, also shows the "face", and was acquired 35 Viking orbits later at a different sun-angle from the 035A72 image. This latter discovery was made independently by Vincent DiPietro and Gregory Molenaar, two computer engineers at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center.

More than 20 years after the Viking 1 images were taken, a succession of spacecraft visited Mars and made new observations of the Cydonia region. These spacecraft have included NASA's Mars Global Surveyor (1997–2006) and Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter (2006–), and the European Space Agency's Mars Express probe (2003–). In contrast to the relatively low resolution of the Viking images of Cydonia, these new platforms afford much improved resolution. So, it has been possible to create a three-dimensional representation of the “Face on Mars”.

The Cydonia facial pareidolia inspired and excited individuals and organizations interested in the ideas of extraterrestrial intelligence and visitations to Earth, and the images were published in this context in 1977. Some commentators, most notably Richard C. Hoagland, believe the “Face on Mars” to be evidence of a long-lost Martian civilization along with other features they believe are present, such as apparent pyramids, which they argue are part of a ruined city.

In Richard C. Hoagland's book, “The Monuments of Mars: A City on the Edge of Forever.” Hoagland claims a NASA coverup regarding the “Face on Mars” and other similar structures. This idea is the result of a report commissioned by NASA, The Brookings Report. Hoagland claimed that page 216 of the 1960 report, “Proposed Studies on the Implications of Peaceful Space Activities for Human Affairs”, instructed NASA to deliberately withhold from the public any evidence it may find of extraterrestrial activity, specifically on the Moon, Mars, or Venus.

Hoagland has also proposed a form of physics he calls “hyperdimensional physics”, which he claims represents a

more complete implementation of James Clerk Maxwell's original 20 quaternion equations.

Hoagland claims the “Face on Mars” is part of a city built on Cydonia Planitia consisting of colossal pyramids and mounds arranged in a geometric pattern. To Hoagland, this is evidence that an advanced civilization once has existed on Mars.

Professional astronomer Phil Plait described Hoagland as a pseudoscientist and his claims as ridiculous. Plait criticized Hoagland for having no university degree. Prof. Ralph Greenberg asserted that the logic of Hoagland's deductions from the geometry of Cydonia Mensae is flawed and says that he is not a trained scientist in any sense. Other of his claims such as that the crashing of the Galileo orbiter into Jupiter caused a “mysterious black spot” on the planet has since been disputed by both NASA and Plait.

In 1995, Malin Space Science Systems, NASA prime contractor for planetary imaging, published a paper critiquing claims that the city at Cydonia is artificial, also denying any claims about concealing questionable data from the public.

In October 1997, Hoagland received the Ig Nobel Prize for Astronomy “for identifying artificial features on the moon and on Mars, including a human face on Mars and ten-mile-high buildings on the far side of the moon.” The prize is given for outlandish or trivial contributions to science.

The Face on Mars in the Cydonia region was of course that of an Übermensch, the largest of them all. So, this Übermensch did not emerge from the planet, but the planet was in the beginning a single cell, and rather like a cell dividing, that of a human, first in two, then four and so exponentially until first a

fishlike creature, reptile then finally a humanoid shape appeared. This was the Martian Übermensch, with the face of Cydonia and a red body.

The face of the now fully grown fertilized egg was then relatively new, prior to this century the reported canals were merely observations of complex cell division. The Martian Übermensch was now fully conscious, an event which may have been responsible for waking the other sleeping Übermenschen. The foetal planet became a formed humanoid shape and moved into the Pleroma where the giant Urubu was sat on the throne of The One, The Monad.

The mismatch in size was obvious. The giant Urubu the size of Australia stood and looked like it was ready to do battle with the Martian, which was the planet now transformed to spiritual energy. The Martian Übermensch swiped Urubu from where it stood, not looking to see what it thought was Urubu's destruction. It then took its seat on the throne of the Pleroma, master of all that is seen and unseen, created and uncreated.

Urubu had survived and done its job and so returned to being the massive sleeping island of Australia, folding its ears, curling up its body with just the nose appearing from the southern part of the Northern Territory.

Countless Übermenschen came from many worlds to fight Mars for the throne. As the Martian defeated each one its strength grew from each contest. For spirit like energy cannot be destroyed, so it consumed the energy from each contest, reducing each opponent to base matter, rocks, Hylē, and flinging this into the great desert. The remaining

Übermenschen rather than fight the now awesome
Übermensch fled.

The Martian now sat on a massive throne contented with
itself. It was the head of the Pleroma, and slowly the other
Aeons approached it and gave homage, all but nine.



CHAPTER FORTY: MEETING

They followed the sound of the gong which led them through many rooms, and they could not help seeing the paintings on the walls, they were no longer classical landscapes or Arcadian myths but scenes of violence and the eerie. Some depicting such things as Odysseus on his voyage home and the perils of his journey, or pictures from scenes of Hell by Hieronymus Bosch. Gruesome Goya paintings and drawings from the Peninsular War, even a copy of Picassos' Guernica, works by Odilon redon, and some very unsettling Francis Bacon paintings. All three paused at the painting by Arnold Böcklin, 'Isle of the Dead', no one spoke, they waited a minute or so then walked on towards the sound of the gong, whose tone now seemed more ominous.

Finally, they entered a large room, in the centre was an oval table around which sat Billy Taylor, Sarah Cooper, Jay Chandana, and DI Benjamin Washington, there were three empty seats. It seemed obvious, so they sat.

Billy spoke,

'Hi, you three, we all came here to discuss the findings of the three groups, but first there is something more important, so we might postpone this, Christine is missing, and we have the problem of the desert.'

'Desert?' said Emily, before any others could say.

Billy continued, 'Desert, the desert, maybe you've not been home recently? but yes, it seems the world has become a desert...'



In no time the obvious occurred, each of the six had gone to their homes, or tried to, and had returned back to the room in a moment.

‘What’s happening?’ asked Emily, ‘Where are my wife and kids?’ Ben was shouting, then disappeared.

‘I don’t know, Christine is missing lost in some alien sea, which is wrong, Ben will be back soon and there’s nothing but desert everywhere.’ Billy walked towards another set of tall doors inlaid with fine marquetry. He opened these to reveal the formal gardens, lawns, in the distance the river, lake, and woodland.

He gave a worried smile and thought to himself, ‘I’ll have to bring the desert here I expect.’

He turned and faced the others and spoke, ‘Well we need to do something obviously but first a summary of what has occurred and then to hear from Emily, Kate and Nigel. Our answer to the problem of the desert should be there, so can I begin?’

Emily and Jay couldn’t help thinking that Billy seemed to be taking this far too lightly, Kate and certainly Nigel knew Billy better.

So, there was silent approval, Ben had returned, how long he had been away in the real world only he knew, but he just sat with his head in his hands.

Billy began again....

‘The Smith’s team, Sarah and Jay, with Mr Smith, explored the problem of a dialectic struggle or war of the higher beings. The upshot was Smith thinking that a solution would be that



these beings should follow the Dharma. A complex term but briefly, a path to some kind of enlightenment and freedom. So, if that occurred these higher beings, now in a continual process of violence to themselves could end this war of the dialectic. Smith had figured a very detailed way of altering the Asura, the warlike Smiths, that world of warlike demigods. This was to make them more like mankind, and so capable of Dharma.'

'And the result?' asked Sarah and Jay in unison.

'I saw vast remains of these people, Asura, the warlike Smiths in the desert, many thousand if not millions of miles of burnt corpses.' replied Billy, continuing,

'As for the Übermenschen, many emerged and fought in the spiritual world for the throne of the Pleroma. The victor being not from The Earth but an entire planet, Mars.'

'Thought so.' said Nigel, 'The planetary aberration of its orbit was a nonsense story, a public cover up then.'

Billy ignored this and continued,

'This Übermensch was the final victor, many other Übermenschen challenged the Martin, but with each victory his spirit grew stronger as he reduced the others to base matter, rock, Hylê, and gained theirs. All these others being cast down into the great desert.

Now this Übermensch claimed the throne of Bythos, the One with Sige, supplanting them and all the other aeons, and having power over them, and wanting their homage. I think all except nine did so.'



‘So, we now have a worse situation, a megalomaniacal god like figure ruling over everything!’ this was Emily Clarke speaking.

‘No, we don’t,’ said Billy, ‘it too has been destroyed, smashed to pieces.’

‘How?’ was Emily Clarke’s question.

‘I don’t know, but maybe my guess is best kept a secret?’

There was a pause, then Emily said, ‘Catherine did say you can at times be very infuriating.’

Ben banged on the table, ‘My family!’ he shouted, ‘where is my family?’

All were silent.

‘Safe,’ said Billy, ‘quite safe, so please try to be patient, I know this is very hard, but we’ve been through tough times together, you and I, and we got through. And you know you and your family have a protector.’

Ben remembered, the image of the Vodun mask came into his mind, he became calm, ‘The Vodun of my greater family are protecting us’, he thought.

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE: OZYMANDIAS

There was a long silence, then Billy continued in sombre tone,
'So as for the Übermenschen, I saw in the same desert vast
remains of creatures like that in Shelly's poem, Ozymandia'

ooOoo

"I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said—"Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal, these words appear:
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

ooOoo

‘I saw scenes like those described in the poem, in the desert, maybe hundreds of these, shattered remains of giant human and animal forms.’

‘Billy, please tell me how will this help, and time, can we act now!’

This was Ben.

‘Time here is on our side, we have all the time we need here, we are outside of the other time, how long were you searching in the desert for your family?’

‘Days.’ Ben said, ‘Many many days.’

‘And how long were you gone from here?’ asked Billy.

‘I get your point, sorry, please go on.’ was Ben’s reply.

‘We can and will overcome our own deserts, but not just yet. And because this great desert, which is everywhere, that too must be overcome. And yet though we can return to our old lives, and be happy, how can we be? And if we return to what was before the desert, then we return to war and universal chaos.

So, and your deliberations?’ Billy said looking at Emily, Nigel and Kate, ‘just the final conclusion, the very final.’

He said as if he knew, which he did, but for the benefit of the others Kate spoke,

‘I’ll read something from what Nigel just presented about Sophia, a female aeon, Sophia or knowledge, there is lots, but this was our conclusion, it’s from the Nag Hammadi texts, ancient texts found in a cave, the scroll has a verse called “On

the Origin of the World”. In it Sophia is depicted as the ultimate destroyer of this material universe, Yaldabaoth and all his Heavens:

This is the text itself.’

She read from her notes.

“She, Sophia, will cast them down into the abyss. They [the Archons] will be obliterated because of their wickedness. For they will come to be like volcanoes and consume one another until they perish at the hand of the prime parent. When he has destroyed them, he will turn against himself and destroy himself until he ceases to exist. And their heavens will fall one upon the next and their forces will be consumed by fire. Their eternal realms, too, will be overturned. And his heaven will fall and break in two. His [... missing text...] will fall down upon the [...] support them; they will fall into the abyss, and the abyss will be overturned. The light will [...] the darkness and obliterate it: it will be like something that never was.”

‘Our conclusions, beyond the limits of the knowable, The Ultimate Destroyer, a schizophrenia.’

‘She is I think Christine, or some avatar, or an echo? Christine is Sophia.’ Billy said, ‘And not the creator of the desert, and not the final destroyer.’

Ben looked up, as if asking what next.

There was silence, so he began, ‘I’ve searched all the places I know, our home in Coleshill, nothing was there, no houses not any town, roads, buildings, just a desert, the desert of grey rocks, and I went to places like her school, [his wife was a



teacher] but nothing. I went to where the city centre was, then to where Nigel's house was. Nothing...'

He was remembering,

'And I think I even went to Wales, did I walk all that way, it makes no sense, I went to try to find Christine, but everywhere was the same, a rocky grey desert.'

He finished, and again there was a long silence. It was broken by Nigel, who shouted,

'Colonial Road!'

There was a brief pause, and puzzled expressions on all except Billy Taylor,

'Of course, Colonial Road,' he said and repeated, 'Colonial Road.'

At which Emily said, 'Colonial Road?' repeating this again only as a question.

Nigel responded, 'Colonial Road in Birmingham, in Bordesley Green, it's where there is some other reality of a place, the same place but back in the early 1960s, and a boy. A boy involved in the Tablets of Truth interlude.'

There were still confused looks, Billy spoke,

'Complicated, too complicated to explain much, if I could, but it's an idea, a brilliant idea, as in what Nigel said, somehow this boy exists in the past, at his old home, that of his grandfather, or at another in Stechford, that of his other grandfather, and he seems, the boy has a purchase on things,

on events and history. Nigel we should go, try Colonial Road first.'

Nigel nodded, but before anyone else could speak Ben did,

'And I'm coming'.

'Also!' Emily said. The others, Sarah, Jay and Kate just gave looks which were obvious. 'Why didn't Catherine mention any of this Colonial Road and the boy?' she continued. 'Oh, already too strange and unbelievable I guess.' she said, answering her own question.

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO: COLONIAL ROAD

The seven found themselves standing in a grey flat stony desert landscape, no features to see, no road of plane trees which dipped down into houses built in the mid 1920s. But a grey vista of nothingness, the desert of nihilism thought Billy.

Nigel was talking, but to himself,

‘It should be here, if I’m facing down the road, it should be here, ah! The gate.’

His hand seemed to touch something, but nothing was to be seen, then he disappeared.

‘We should follow.’ said Billy and ushered the others into the space where Nigel once was. And then they found themselves in a garden.

They all looked around, Nigel was in front of them, on a path, he had turned around to face them and was smiling, Billy was behind them trying not to. They had entered through a small wooden gate, painted a pale blue and either side of this was a privet hedge of around five foot high. To their left as they faced the house, the central house of a block of three, was a tall flowerless shrub and beyond that a tree with white flowers. They were on a path with a lawn either side, each having a flower bed, a few rose bushes in the bed on the left. The garden was fenced with wooden pailings either side made from split wood and wire. There was a single front door with small windows either side. To the left a lilac tree, on the right a large brick single story building with two concrete apex roofs, an air raid shelter from the second world war. In front of this was a tall climbing rose. As they walked down the path Nigel spoke,

‘Air-raid shelters.’

To the left of these as they approached the front door, they could see a path, there was another small window, and a hatch which looked like it once was used to store coal inside the house. The ground beneath it was very damp, some horsetails were growing there.

Nigel opened the front door onto a hallway. To the left was a staircase, it had a stair carpet with runners. The shelf on the window at the bottom of the stairs had some coins, old penny pieces and a threepenny bit. The door to the right was open, a toilet. It had no handbasin, a quarry tile floor and painted gloss brickwork walls. The cistern was high up, with a pull chain to flush.

The hall had a small bamboo table with a cactus in a pot on top of it. The hall led to a door and another dog leg to the right. This door opened onto a living room which had French windows onto a back garden. A fireplace on the right, two large red armchairs either side, and a small settee on the opposite wall. In the left corner was a large deep brown mahogany table with an old black and white television on it. Above this on a small shelf was a cream-coloured Bakelite radio. Opposite was a bird cage on a stand with a budgerigar in it. They followed Nigel, with Billy bringing up the rear.

‘It’s like a museum from the late 50s early 60s...’ Emily was saying.

To the left a door led to the kitchen. They walked into the kitchen with a small scullery on the left. It had a cold shelf for keeping food fresh, a few tins, and a small window onto the front garden. The kitchen had a butler sink, a large pine table

covered with an oil cloth, an old gas stove and a gas boiler in the corner for washing clothes. Like the toilet the walls were painted brick, but with linoleum stuck on the walls, around the lower part to about 5 feet, patterned with imitation tiles. The group, all except Billy and Nigel, were taking all this in. They saw no one.

‘Check the garden.’ Billy said.

They walked back through the living room, Nigel opening one of the French windows onto the back garden. Outside was a path and a small flower bed in front of some wooden trellises which had rose bushes growing up them. They could see to the left an open wooden shed housing an old mangle, to the right they took a concrete path with an empty flower bed to their right, a larger one on the left had tall flowering purple irises. Beyond the flower and vegetable beds, mostly empty was a large rough lawn. It had an apple tree; they noticed as did all the neighbouring gardens. At the end of the lawn were three very tall sycamore trees. There they could see a boy of about eight or nine, with blonde hair, he was wearing short trousers and a shirt over which was a sleeveless cardigan. He was kneeling and playing with some rectangular sheets of metal. When he saw the group, he looked up.

Billy spoke, ‘Hi, just visiting with some friends, nice to see you, could we talk, maybe in the kitchen?’

The boy looked apprehensively at the group,

‘These are all my friends, but just you me and Nigel, and maybe Emily,’ he looked at Emily, ‘and the others could look around the garden or wait in the living room?’



The boy stood and began to walk back to the house, Nigel, Billy and Emily following, the others hung back then began to wander around the garden.

‘What’s this?’ said Jay. She was looking at a log with nails partly hammered in, Ben stooped and looked,

‘Some kind of animal, nails for legs, my kid did similar.’ His voice sounding lost.

‘And this?’ asked Jay,

It was some kind of wooden structure,

‘Looks like the boy was trying to build a bridge?’ Ben replied.

Eventually the four wandered into the living room. Ben sat on the sofa, Sarah sat next to him, he noticed a comic, *The Eagle*, obviously the boy’s, he absentmindedly picked it up and began leafing through the pages. He paused at a large picture of a world map, its caption was “The World’s Deserts.” It had several inset pictures of deserts, one matched almost exactly the one he had experienced. He thought to tell the others, Jay and Kate were sitting in the armchairs talking, but he decided not to.

Sarah was now also looking at the pictures of the deserts. Ben passed her the comic; she gave a disinterested look and placed it on the table. The front cover as usual had a Dan Dare adventure story, Dan and Digby were entering the great dome of the Mekon.

Meanwhile the boy, Nigel, Billy and Emily were sat around the kitchen table with its oil cloth cover.

They looked around the room, Billy spoke,



‘Good to see you again.’

He noticed a large book on the table. It looked like an Atlas, but it seemed what he could see of the cover had been painted over.

The boy noticed,

‘It’s a big book I’m making,’ he said, ‘One like the others, but not a good, the same size though.’

He was going to continue but a very old and thin woman walked into the kitchen, she filled a kettle with water from the sink and placed it on the gas stove.

‘Tea.’ she said.

Nigel and Emily looked a little puzzled.

‘I wonder have you had any visitors recently other than us?’ Billy asked. The boy looked thoughtful, the old lady spoke,

‘We haven’t had any, only a card from Litchfield.’ She fetched out a picture postcard of Litchfield Cathedral from the pocket of her apron and handed it to Billy who inspected it. While he did this, she filled a kettle with water and placed it on the stove, first lighting the gas ring with a flint lighter. She was now getting four cups, she took a caddy from the shelf, spooned in loose tea into an old silver teapot. The boy suddenly got up from the table,

‘No tea for me thank you, I think I’ll go to my room. It’s about the desert, it will do for now.’ he said picking up the book and leaving the kitchen.

‘Tea for three then.’ said the old lady.

They waited, the kettle began to boil,

‘So, tell us about Litchfield?’ Billy said, he paused, ‘Christine is it, or Sophia? And the story of the boy?’

The old woman sat and gave a smile.

‘I’m guessing the boy is you?’ Billy said.

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE: CHRISTINE DAWNAY

‘Yes and no.’ said the old woman who was no longer old but young, ‘and I’m not Christine Dawnay, no she never existed, well was never proper matter, never, not even hylē. It’s confusing, the boy thinks, things happen.’

She stopped and thought,

‘Yes, the boy will think I’m him. Oh, a reified image from his trips to Litchfield, the canal and rivers, streams and brooks, it changes him, or will change him in a few years time, changes to the syzygos of the boy.’

She fetched some milk and poured the tea,

‘And not Sophia yet?’

‘And?’ asked Billy, ‘the creations, the universes, the nature of you as not the boy, and the others? from where?’ Billy asked.

‘It’s strange, and amazing, I’m supposed to know, being the aeon of knowledge, I think the boy and I are the same and yet not, I’m also Andromeda, am I a doppelgänger?’

She waited, but got no answer and so continued,

‘Well yes and no, from the boy, from the world, the chaos, the stories, the multitude of stories in the world.’

‘Which world?’ Billy asked.

‘Not this one here of course, and the others, you know how we struggle in these worlds for power?’

There was a silence. Then Billy looked at Emily and Nigel,

‘We should go.’ he said.

So, they left the kitchen, in the living room they found Ben, Jay, Kate and Sarah sitting patiently but worried, Sarah spoke, 'The boy came through and I think went upstairs with a book?'

'That's fine,' said Billy, 'and I think everything is going to be fine eventually. Let's get back and try to think, somewhere more to my liking.'

So, they left the house and walked down the path and through the gate. The same desert landscape greeted them.

'No different then,' Ben said, 'nothing has changed, but this desert, it is just like one of those pictures in the boy's comic?'

'Comic.' said Billy 'What comic?'

'The Eagle.' said Ben.

'Pity we haven't a copy, it might explain everything.' Billy said.

And they were back in the palace, in Arcadia, now in a drawing room with fine furniture. They sat in chairs, Ben was still looking concerned, the others more confused.

'Let's have tea.' said Billy, 'We never had time to drink ours in Colonial Road. And I'll not so much explain but give my thoughts.'

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR: THE DESERTS

‘No explanation, just thoughts, ideas.’ said Billy, ‘The boy asked, “Is it about the desert?” and then said, “it will do for now.” And that book he had.’

‘And?’ said Ben.

‘It may be that he created the desert, or deserts and it stopped the carnage. It will do for now he said, so I think this boy can return order.’

‘How?’ asked Ben.

Nigel interrupted, ‘He can do this in his imagination which is simple yet complex, create a simple answer, I don’t know he seems to... He helped me out of a hole by just me helping him make a model aeroplane.’

‘So?’ said Ben, ‘what about my wife and kids?’

‘If there was anything I could do...’ Billy was saying and realised he was talking to an empty chair, Ben had gone. Disappeared.

‘What?’ this was Sarah.

‘His desert.’ was Billy’s reply.

‘Maybe somehow he is with his family, someone or thing is helping him?’ asked Jay.

‘Or maybe the aeon is helping us, as the boy would not be of much help?’ said Kate.

‘No, I think the boy is crucial.’ said Billy.

She continued,

‘Our group has seen she, Cristine who is Sophia has many forms and is responsible for many actions as we discovered in Gnosticism. A major theme is her disruption of order, being responsible for the demiurge who created this and other physical realities. And she wanted to unite with the highest form of the aeons, or she is or has the highest powers, but is now saying she is...’ Kate was interrupted by Emily,

‘She is also as Christine, or Andromeda, whoever, which seems to have influenced the boy, or rather will do so in his future. An alter ego? Or the Aeon, a syzygos of the boy she said?’

‘That makes good sense, the syzygos of the boy, the sexual opposite or partner, we saw this in Valentinianism and elsewhere, the partnerships of the Aeons.’ was Kate’s reply.

‘And Andromeda?’ Emily asked.

‘An alien character from a 60s TV science fiction programme. It was called “A for Andromeda”, the TV series was about signals, intelligent aliens from the Andromeda Galaxy, Fred Hoyle the astronomer was one of the writers.’

Nigel answered, ‘So the mythological figure is perhaps not relevant, but maybe the idea of powers from remote places having an influence?’

‘The Übermenschen?’ Sarah said.

‘And the boy used as a conduit of these powers, or providing some structure, or is the boy the source of all of this?’

Sarah continued, ‘Anyway we seem to have a state, or states of cataclysms, and now a desert, of our world, of the Smith’s and of the Übermenschen. The end of all things...’



‘Escatologies again.’ Billy said quietly.

‘Is there any alternative to this striving, this, well hierarchy of being, of peoples, nations, Gods, these Aeons?’ asked Emily.

There was a long silence. Finally, Billy said quietly, ‘Rhizomes.’

‘No,’ said Nigel, ‘I mean yes, Fred Hoyle, the steady state.’ And with this he walked towards the door that once led into the formal gardens, the lawns and lake, river and woods, where now there was just desert, dry grey stones.

Opening the door, he saw the barren landscape, and turned and looked at Billy with an unasked question,

‘Yes, I’ve let the desert in.’ said Billy, ‘It’s the boy’s, he said so, he created it to stop the destruction, then he said it will do for now, so maybe we need to do something with this desert.’

Nigel stepped outside.

CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE: NIGEL'S DESERT

The desert landscape was grey dry stones, Nigel began walking, since his walkabout in Australia he had a fondness for the land, even this dry and barren landscape. He bent down and held a few stones, turning them over, touched the dry dusty surface. Then he knelt, looking around at the flatness of the world he was in, a lifeless world, except of course for himself. He lay on the ground looking up at a clear yet white sky, feeling the stones underneath him. Time passed, but he had little or no sensation of this. The air was still, it was neither warm nor cold, there was no wind, and no sound. The greyness matched his mood, or created it, a blandness, a nihilism. Was his mood and this landscape becoming the same. Time passed. He closed his eyes, in the darkness now only the feeling of the stones. Time passed but he could not say for how long, the only measure of time were his thoughts, and those he could not measure.

His mind drifted, far away from physics, it had done so years ago, now the basic elements seemed more real, those in Gnosticism, Earth, Matter, Hylë, and Water, Spirit. But he mused, Fire and Air are missing?

He opened his eyes, the sky was now a strange shade of light mauve, a shock, raising his head the landscape was still grey and flat. Time passed; he lay on his back staring into the sky, now a blue sky. Time passed; he noticed thin wisps of clouds, white but tinted green. He sat up and looked around, still the flat grey landscape but now the clouds thickened and towards one horizon there were banks of denser clouds and what looked like rain falling. A distant flash of lightening settled the matter, it was raining. He sat and watched as the sky

darkened over him and soon, he felt the first drops of rain. He watched them dissolve into the grey rocks and soil, but the rain grew stronger, and with this his spirits which had been strange and low, nihilistic like the landscape, began to rise, soon he was smiling as the rain ran down his face. The rocks and ground were wet, he could see pools of water appearing.

He still had no real sensation of time, though now he was soaked through and through, the clouds began to clear, and then it struck him, the sky was a strange blue, yes, but now there was the sun, he hadn't realised before in the pale whiteness of the sky there was never a sun. He felt its warmth. And another thought, now there was "time", the movement of the sun completing the four, earth, water, air and fire.

He watched the sun, which was in itself strange, it was very bright, but not as bright as he remembered, maybe paler, he watched it for maybe hours. As it slowly began to set. Obviously now he had a sensation of time, and a beginning of place, he supposed it was setting in the west. Darkness fell, no moon, but stars. But again, not quite right, some constellations he recognised, but others were wrong, or he thought how could they be, but they were unfamiliar.

He grew tired and slept, and in his dreams dreamt about earth, water, air and fire. And in the dreams, he saw the fires of the earth, vulcanism, which made continents rise out of the seas. Formed mountains, were eroded by the rains, and reformed, rains which carved rivers. How long he slept while these forces formed the world he did not know. He woke no longer in a dry barren desert.

As he woke, immediately he noticed, in the daylight hills of varying earth hues. The ground sloping away towards a stream. And in amongst the stones, some which had brownish hues and the earth, were small tender plants. He looked closely at these, he did not recognise any, thought his knowledge of plants was poor. They were it seemed more yellow than what he remembered, and the mosses and lichens also.

He walked down to the stream and began to follow it, he spent the rest of the day doing so, noticing how it had carved its path through what was once desert but was now fertile and had plant life. Again, he slept, and it seemed as he did this the world changed, for when he woke the stream was now a wide river, and the land covered in vegetation, small plants, mosses and ferns, and further from the river taller ferns, fern trees. And again, with yellowish leaves, the stems purplish. And there were insects, crawling and flying. Beetles and dragon flies. At first these seemed normal, the dragon flies he was familiar with from his garden. He saw what he assumed was a pair mating in flight, he had watched this before, fascinated. But then he realised it was one insect with two sets of wings. This made him look more closely as the other insects. Some, but not all had likewise two sets of wings, others had only four legs, some six, whilst others eight, and were obviously not spiders. This new world, he thought, was just that.

He looked carefully into the river, and saw some grey and blue fish, he didn't recognise, even though he had kept tropical fish at home. And amphibians, small salamander like creatures swimming in the river, again colourful, with markings that

looked almost like calligraphy. He continued to follow the course of the river that day and slept again.

In the morning, he found himself in a lush jungle landscape. Small reptiles were running around, seemingly ignoring him. Then even the larger ones, they too seeming to not see him. And now he was not surprised to see that he could not recognise any of them, and some ran on two legs, others four and some on six. He even came across skeletal remains of a creature which clearly had three hip bones. Some were it seems carnivores, others not, but all ignored him, as if he was invisible.

He walked on, the jungle thinned, and he came to the sea. Sitting on the sand he thought about this changing world. Was he just spectating this creation, or was he orchestrating it? This was what they had thought with regards to the boy and Christine, was it not? What was clear from his being ignored by the creatures around him was that he was in this world somehow but not of it. Obviously, he was witnessing some process of evolution, but whose.

He had an idea, he wanted to know if he controlled what was happening. So, he thought of early humans, the ice age, he willed this, lay on the sand and willed this. Closed his eyes briefly, and when he opened them, nothing had changed. And yet the pattern of evolution was something that involved him. And so, he slept.

He was not surprised on waking to see a change in the landscape, more temperate, the trees more variegated, some like oak trees, only larger and more yellow leaves and purple and red bark. Conifers too, again with deep yellow leaves and bright red bark. Recognisable things flew overhead, birds, and

he wasn't surprised at some having two sets of wings. Still with feathers, he thought. Some mammal like creatures were walking along the seashore, probably scavenging. Only they had eight pairs of legs, and looked horrific, but despite this their gait was remarkably smooth. He spent the day wandering the shoreline and fringes of the forest noting the new flora and fauna. He had the thought that evolution was now producing ever more complex anatomies. A final shock as evening fell, he saw in the trees what he assumed were monkey type creatures, four limbs, clearly four arms, but each creature had two heads. He was very hesitant to sleep, the thought of what this evolution would produce in the form of hominids filled his mind, but eventually his tiredness got the better of him.

On waking he was still on the beach, but a deep blue sky above, which was now of course strange, yet familiar, and beyond the beach a treeline, not of the giant ferns or of the jungle, or brightly coloured trees, but pine trees. A woodland, one which also looked familiar, so he walked, noticing the bluebells. The land rose as he walked deeper into the forest, he saw deer, with the usual four legs, and a thought rose, and excitement, he walked faster. Soon he reached the brow of a hill, still in the woodland, and so down along a path. His expectations were right, the woods finished, and he saw the familiar sloping lawns down to the river, the lake and bridge, and beyond the rising lawns to the house, the palace, Billy's Arcadia, now back in its landscape.

He walked back up to the door he had walked through days before, but he thought days for him, but likely not for those inside. And in those days an even longer geological time had taken place, and a strange and different evolution. And as he

expected as he entered the room there were the others, Emily, Kate, Sarah, Jay and Billy. Still no Ben or Christine.

‘The desert has gone.’ He addressed the five and told them all his story of the strange evolution he had witnessed, and how he had returned to the idyllic English landscape of Arcadia. They all were silent, then Nigel thinking they might not have believed him said turning to the door, ‘Come and see.’

They were hesitant to follow him, and when they did it was not what he expected. He was in the perfect English landscape of Billy’s creation, but alone, the others were not with him, so he re-entered the house. As did the others,

‘We saw only the desert,’ said Emily, ‘and you were not there’.

There was a pause, then Nigel spoke, ‘So the landscape was of my making, or rather made from my ideas by some force. I think it’s as if the chaos needs a form, or the form is found in the chaos.’

He paused, then continued, ‘I think you must each go out into the desert alone.’

‘OK,’ said Emily, and before anyone else could speak she walked out of the room and into the desert, her desert?

CHAPTER FORTY-SIX: EMILY'S DESERT

There was no grey desert, just greyness, and a greyness like a thick fog, so thick that Emily tried the clichéd test, and yes, she literally couldn't see her hand held in front of her face. She tried not to find this unsettling, but as she reflected, she was scared. A thought passed through her mind of not only was she arrogant, but stupid, and she now regretted her casual attitude to this, the unknown. Truly a desert.

Trying again at the clichéd test she realised she had no sensation in her arm, in fact she had no bodily sensation at all. More puzzled than alarmed, she could at least see the greyness, shapes. It seemed like a planetary system, but odd, the central object was surrounded by four others, a star with four planets, yet each seemed to share a moon with the star. Her cosmology was poor, so she was puzzled. Time passed; and then she had an epiphany, it wasn't a planetary system it was a molecule. And one she recognised from her biology sessions many years ago in Cambridge, it was methane. A carbon atom and four hydrogen atoms. Without thinking she made out to touch the structure, and she did, with an arm and hand, and as she did so the atoms drifted apart, then reformed, now with two suns and five planets, she searched her memory, as she did so one of the planets disappeared, then another, now two suns or stars, each with a planet. Then this cycle repeated. Two suns six planets, the four planets then two. Over and over until she said to herself, 'simple hydrocarbons' and then 'Life! The building blocks of life, organic compounds.' Now she saw another star with seven moons, and the previous star and planets and as she watched a more elaborate dance occurred. She recognised it now from her first-year biochemistry lectures and lab work. 'Pyrimidine

nucleobases,' she said to herself, 'the basics of RNA and DNA, am I seeing the basis of life, or am I making this happen?'

And the dance continued as she recognised structures such as glycine, an amino acid. Purine and pyrimidine nucleobases including guanine, adenine, cytosine, uracil, and thymine the materials for DNA and RNA.

Then the spheres and sheets of protocells, self-ordered, spherical collections of lipids, fats, collections of hydrogen, carbon and oxygen. These membranes she saw form in order to create the cells, the cell walls, to keep life away from the dead, and the inevitable collapse due to the laws of nature themselves. The second law of thermodynamics, entropy, requires that the universe becomes increasingly disordered, and life requires the opposite. Therefore, these boundaries are needed to separate life processes from non-living matter. A fundamental necessity of life.

And the thought of these boundaries creates structures, hierarchies, life. 'And yet?'

And then RNA. She saw the amazing structures of this single helix molecule, like star fields packed together, and so in her mind and then sight she saw the double helix of DNA, and life. Sexual reproduction and multicellular organisms.

This she saw in the grey mist of denser patterns which formed slowly from simple molecules, and then the mist changed. It had a sharper feel and a tinge of purple. As before she saw simple molecules, but now she didn't recognise them, they looked similar to the primitive hydro-carbons and yet very different. The first patterns, a star with five planets, then three with seven, three with five, three with two and finally

three with one. These sequences repeated as before but she knew nothing of them, then she thought of Nigel's account of his experiences, they might be the building blocks of a different process of life, maybe using a different set of elements.

The process moved on, the spherical shape of the proto cell of lipids was replaced by a torus, a doughnut shape.

'Why not?' she spoke aloud and waited for the equivalents of RNA and DNA to be formed. She even postulated names E-RNA, and E-DNA.

'Edna' she thought, and pondered on its origin, 'maybe the garden of eden?' Could E-DNA be an improved basis for life, she wondered.

E-RNA was a massive molecule, but she immediately recognised the shape, it was the Mandelbrot set. A wave of excitement passed through her mind, was she actually seeing, what?

'Meta-life', she thought. E-DNA when it formed was no surprise, not a double helix but a treble.

She was not even surprised as the mist now seemed a mix of colours, as before new basic blocks appeared, 1-11, then 7 matching 11, then 7, then 5, 3, 2 and 1. Ignoring 1, primes seemed involved? As before a proto-cell appeared, like a torus, a doughnut, but twisted like a mobius strip, the new RNA, she thought E2-RNA as she couldn't think anything more interesting, was seemingly formless, yet had some kind of mirrored pattern. As she expected the helix was not quadruple, but whatever a five based helix was. She remembered, quintuple. More colours in the mist, and the

sequence began again with higher primes. As she watched the thought struck her like it had Nigel, was this something she was merely spectating, or now as she anticipated the next and the next, something her imagination was driving. She became worried, not for what would be next, but if she would be able to escape this potential infinite progression. And then slowly the now multicoloured mists formed familiar shapes, the formal gardens, the lawns sloping to the river, the lake and woodlands beyond. She turned and saw the house, walked back and through the doors where the others were waiting.

Exhausted she sat, and typical of the house, there was tea. Over tea she recounted her experiences. There was much talk of what all this meant.

‘Now two examples, it seems of complexity development.’ said Billy.

‘The building of hierarchies?’ Emily’s question and answer.

‘But there is also the idea of increased power as the hierarchies grow.’ Kate said.

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN: SARAH'S DESERT

There was a long silence, maybe people were thinking things over, then suddenly Sarah rose and walked out of the room, obviously angry, but about what, even she did not know.

The vast grey desert lay in front of her, she just walked, and continued for some time, in a rage but for no reason, such that at first, she didn't notice the thing on the horizon. When she did, she immediately dismissed it as a hill, it was far too symmetrical, a dome shape though, rising from the flatness. She continued to walk towards it, now having at least an object in her mind. And walked, it grew larger, and as she walked, she realised whatever it was, it was large. At first maybe a few hundred yards, a mile, and then several miles big, it was very large. There was no sun in the silver-grey sky, so no shadows but soon the structure, although a shallow dome was vast, and towering above her. It was grey like the desert, but smooth, it looked constructed. She saw the tiny darkness of an opening, it too grew larger as she walked, a doorway. She approached, a triangular opening, she guessed some hundred feet high. And inside, well a building, a vast empty hall dimly lit.

As her eyes adjusted, she realised the hall was not empty, several figures were moving slowly towards her. As they approached, she saw they were all identical, and incredibly, identical to her. One spoke,

'It might be best if we sat.'

And as she did, they were all sitting around a circular white table, including Sarah.

‘Sarah,’ one spoke, ‘this is the name we gave you, as well as your memories, your childhood. We created you to explore a strange world. This, “she gestured”, is just a temporary fabrication, we are the singularity, as your world will call it, or rather the world to which we sent you, we are a being of information processing, and you were, well, an input device it is called in the earth world. Having achieved the singularity, we long ago ceased to process input data... but now there is it seems a need...’

She went on to explain the world of the singularity whose knowledge and processing power had increased exponentially.

‘It seems aeons ago, we had to reconstruct our history after cataclysmic civilizations of individual life forms. Life may have developed as floating rhizomes, but soon there were individual organisms. Through evolutionary force these became sentient and intelligent. Formed collectives, your term is tribes, the nations. Developed technology and science and engaged in wars. Mapped our intelligences into pure data which then meant we could deploy this in ever new technologies. We still had conflicts, which drove the technologies, but eventually one technology produced the singularity. Which is where technological and intellectual growth is exponential. Wars ceased, for no other reason than a lack of time. And then at such speeds time itself became problematic but was solved. A true singularity was the Omega point. This is where all matter and energy become the intelligent organism, the hive mind, as such it is self-sustaining, self-creating and universal. Knowledge is complete, it occupies fully time and space. And we saw with no input or output an equilibrium is reached, or rather a



maximum, which is stasis, or as you might say no different to death. So, we found a need for the impossibility, or as you might call it the absurd, so sent you to find it. Unfortunately, it seemed you failed; you simply lived the persona we gave you.'

She went on to describe Sarah's life in detail,

'So, we created you as you are now in the form of a creature which could find the absurd. You would remember your parents, the house you lived in, the garden, your bedroom, and children's toys. Your favourite, that black scotty dog that you cried over when it was taken from you on your first day at school. We implanted these memories of virtual events.'

She had forgotten about this, or pushed it from her consciousness, suddenly she relived the experience, now a fake? There was a slight hesitation then the one who spoke continued,

'Friends and family, holidays, your school days. University, and then with these memories we sent you into the world. The "they" in the world saw data, detailing who you were, you were accepted and prospered in institutions, though always it seems a little distant, aloof as they called it. Unfortunately, we could not create a being which could fail, which is what we wished for. Until now, and your desert, but it's also ours, and we know not why.'

As the being spoke Sarah thought about her childhood memories, and realised she had no actual evidence, artifacts, relations, friendships from her youth. Her analytical mind made the obvious conclusion, what these creatures were saying not only made sense, on the probability of evidence it must be considered as true.

As she thought this the other being was actually saying,

‘And so, on the probability of evidence it must be considered as true. That is what I’m saying is the case.’

She continued,

‘A singularity, hive mind, that eventually becomes timeless, this would have been our demise, stasis in the exponential without difference. Yet there was what you call a glitch, an interruption, and so we are here, and you are. And we know of where you came and why, the desert, and we are, as you see now in this desert, as are many others.’

‘The overmen, the Smiths and so on?’ Sarah said.

‘Yes.’ was the reply.

‘And?’ asked Sarah.

‘And we are waiting for you and those others to find out what and why?’

‘Are we the story makers, or the story?’ Sarah said.

‘Well put.’ was the answer.

‘Let me see,’ said Sarah, ‘you achieved perfection, an absolute?’

‘Yes.’ was the answer.

‘Yet for that to be absolute you needed to know what was not absolute?’

‘Yes.’ was the answer.

‘And one such instance, of imperfection would be sufficient?’

'Yes.' was the answer.

'Myself as this one, that was once of you?'

'Yes.' was the answer.

'And now somehow you are lost in a desert you cannot escape, and have no knowledge or power over it, over the nothing.'

'Yes.' was the answer, 'And we cannot have power over nothing, or knowledge of nothing.'

'Oh, I see,' said Sarah, and turned and walked towards the doorway. She did not look back, but if she had would have seen the curious expression on the faces of her creators as they stared at a black toy scotty dog on the table before them.

Sarah, as she now expected saw the sloping lawns, the river and woodland, lake and house. And so walked back and through the doors, and into the hall where the others were waiting.

'They achieved the absolute,' she said, 'gained all power, presence and knowledge, The Omega point, Omnipresence, Omniscient, and Omnipotent. AKA the big G.'

There was another silence.

'I think I have this.' Kate said and walked out of the door and into the desert.

CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT: KATE'S DESERT BEYOND THE
INFINITE

As she expected as she walked, she saw a figure walking towards her in the desert, the One.

Kate remembered the last session in the library, the one beyond knowledge, beyond the infinite and ultimate, beyond the omega point. What lay beyond the limits of the knowable. From these accounts the Aeon Sophia had fallen and risen to states beyond knowledge, and in some accounts a destructive one. Who had brought herself into a state of ignorance and formlessness and suffering, in which her suffering extends to the whole Pleroma in which she produces the image of her suffering, out of which the Demiurge and the lower world come into existence. Finally, Sophia is depicted as the ultimate destroyer of this material universe, Yaldabaoth and all his Heavens: the darkness, it will be like something that never was, the desert of non-existence, the desert of Nihil Unbound.

As the One approached Kate spoke,

'Hello Christine, I thought it was you when we discovered the many forms of Sophia. I have something to show you.'

Now they were sitting next to each other in a concert hall. They were in the audience, on the stage was a conductor in front of a large symphony orchestra.

Kate spoke,

'We have to confront death, and nothingness, with no hope and yet I think we can, even if not real, whatever real is...'

First Movement: Allegro maestoso

We are standing near the grave of someone who was in life well-loved. Their whole life, the struggles from childhood, and the sufferings, frustrations and work, achievements and joys, family and friends, all of what they once were and what they accomplished on this earth pass before us. And now, in these solemn and deeply stirring moments, when the confusions and distractions of everyday life are removed, in this unreal world where we gaze at a wooden box holding the dead remains of a life, we, feeling and seeing this scene are emptied of everything, we are in a desert. But somewhere something quietly asks the question which would be stifled in our daily lives.

“What next?” it says. “What is life and what is death? Is it all now nothing, the loves, and fears, what was worked for now nothing, does our life and death have a meaning?” And we feel a longing to answer this question, if we are to go on living. Whatever this answer might be, but hope, hope for something positive, something good, if we dare.

Second Movement: Andante

We now see the life of the dead unfold, the childhood innocence, naïve teenagers, relationships, dreams that never were fulfilled but others that were. And it throws out our own thoughts back to a childhood world, a lost world, or a world of simpleness, simple moments in the dead and departed’s life, and a sad recollection of his youth and lost innocence.

Third Movement: Scherzo

A spirit of disbelief and negation has seized us. Bewildered by the bustle of appearances of present life, the need to move on, but where and for what, for this futile end? And we lose any thoughts of a happy childhood and promise. And we realize we have lost any perception of the profound strength that love alone can give. All despair both of ourselves and a lack of God. The world and life begin to seem unreal. A then the shock of utter disgust for every form of existence, for faith, for any belief, for even the basic instincts of life. And this black materialism seizes us all in a nightmare iron prison, realizing we try to utter something, until we do, we utter a cry of despair.

Mahler's setting of a poem inspires this. This poem satirizes the legend of St. Anthony preaching to the fish in the river. The fish symbolize a congregation that listens attentively, but upon completion of the service, returns to daily life without taking to heart the priest's spiritual message. And Anthony too emerges as an ironical figure, since he seems perfectly content to deliver his sermon to a flock that cannot understand him. As we see at funerals not people, but actors, who are in reality unconcerned and unbelieving in what is actually occurring.

Antonius at sermon.

Finds the church empty.

He goes to the rivers

And preaches to the fishes!

They whip their tails

Glistening in the sunshine!

The carp with roe
All are drawn here
Mouths wide open,
Intent listeners!
No sermon ever
Pleased the fish so!

Sharp-mouthed pike
That fight all the time
Swam here in a hurry
To hear the piety!
Even those oddities
That fast all the time,
I mean the stockfish,
Appear at the sermon.
No sermon ever
Pleased the fish so!

Good eels and sturgeon
That elegantly feast,

They force themselves
To hear the sermon!
Also crabs, turtles,
Usually slow runners,
Rise urgently from the ground
To hear this mouth!
No sermon ever
Pleased the crabs so!

Fish large, fish small,
Noble and common,
Raise their heads
Like intelligent creatures!
At God's wish
They listen to the sermon!

The sermon ended,
Each one turns.
The pike remain thieves,
The eels great lovers:
The sermon has pleased,

But they all remain as before.

The crabs go backwards;

The stockfish stay plump,

The carp devour many,

Forgetting the sermon!

The sermon pleased,

But they all remain as before!

ooOoo

This is a moment of either an outburst of despair or a cry of disgust, and these metaphors characterize the music. And some confusion stirs in the blackness, a black-grey.

There is fluting and fiddling

Trumpets blare in it

Here dances the wedding dance

My dearest.

There is a ringing and booming

A drumming and a sounding of shawms;

Between them sob and moan

The sweet angels.

ooOoo

The music narrates the sorrows of a death and life with the merry sounds of a wedding celebrations.

Movevement: Alto solo. 'Urlicht' (Primal Light)

“Urlicht” expresses a longing for a spiritual union with God, whose love grants eternal life. And the question in the ending scream from before, is this scream.

The stirring words of simple faith sound in our ears: “I come from God and I will return to God!” Not a shock, very solemn but simple, a struggle of the human soul and the burning questions of existence, is there God and what is the nature of divinity. The final scream of the third movement opens...

Images of the Day of Judgement and punctuated with sounds of the Last Trumpet as Mahler conjures the dead from their graves to march in the clear sight of God. Unlike the terrifying end to the judgement, Mahler offers us a different view.

“There are no sinners, no just. None is great, none is small. There is no punishment and no reward. An overwhelming love lightens our being. We know and are.”

The orchestra now has two singers and choirs, who sing:

O little rose red

Humanity lies in greatest need,
Humanity lies in great agony,
Ever I would prefer to be in Heaven.
Then I came upon a wide path
There came an angel who wanted to turn me away.

But no, I did not let myself be turned away.
I am from God, I want to return to God,
The loving God will give me a little light,
Which will light me into eternal, blessed life.

ooOoo

And quietly the movement ends.

Fifth Movement: Aufersteh'n

Once more we must confront terrifying questions, and the atmosphere is the same as at the end of the third movement. The voice of the Caller is heard. The end of every living thing has come, the last judgment is at hand and the horror of the day of days has come upon us. The earth trembles, the graves burst open, the dead arise and march forth in endless procession. The great and the small of this earth, the kings

and the beggars, the just and the godless all press forward. The cry for mercy and forgiveness sounds fearful in our ears. The wailing becomes gradually more terrible. Our senses leave us, all consciousness dies as the Eternal Judge approaches. The last trump sounds; the trumpets of the Apocalypse ring out. In the eerie silence that follows, we can just barely make out a distant nightingale, a last tremulous echo of earthly life. The gentle sound of a chorus of saints and heavenly hosts is then heard:

“Rise again, yes, rise again thou wilt!”

Then God in all His glory comes into sight. A wondrous light strikes us to the heart. All is quiet and blissful. Lo and behold: there is no judgment, no sinners, no just men, no great and no small; there is no punishment and no reward. A feeling of overwhelming love fills us with blissful knowledge and illuminates our existence.

We are reaching a crossroads. This is a movement of immense power in which it feels as if the clock has been stopped; the deep breath before the plunge. The words of the chorus sound in our ears,

“With wings which I have won, I shall soar away. Die I shall, to live again...”

The end of the world is announced by the huge French horn section in the finale.

Rise again, yes, you will rise again.

My dust, after a short rest!

Immortal life

He who called you will give to you.

To blossom again you are sown!

The lord of the harvest goes

And gathers, like sheaves,

We who died.

O believe, my heart, o believe:

Nothing is lost to you!

It is yours, what you desired.

It is yours, what you loved, what you struggled for.

O believe:

You were not born in vain!

You have not lived, suffered in vain!

What came into being, it must cease to be!

What passed away, it must rise again!

Stop trembling!

Prepare yourself to live!

Oh grief! You all-penetrator!

I am forced to you

O death! You all-conqueror!

Now you are defeated!

With wings that I won for myself

In fervent pursuit of love

I will waft away

To the light that no eye has penetrated

I shall die in order to live.

Rise again, yes, you will rise again,

My heart, in a moment!

What you bested

It will carry you to God!

ooOoo

The symphony ends, members of the orchestra, choir and audience are visibly in tears. Christine and Kate are weeping. The music has removed all logic and rationality, there is neither hope, joy, nor despair. It may all be false, it doesn't matter, they may not believe in any God, or anything, it

doesn't matter. It doesn't matter if the void, the desert which the music has now filled completely and then overflowed, so they weep, and do not know why.

And outside the desert bursts into life, of trees, grasses, flowering plants and animal life, and does not know why.

CHAPTER FORTY-NINE: BEN'S DESERT

Ben was wandering in the desert. He had been walking for hours, aimlessly, and longing to be with his family, Sarah his wife, Josh and Laura his kids, and be with them in their semi-detached house in Coleshill. He longed to see them, hear them, the kids' noise which at times distracted him so. He longed to trip over the kid's bikes in the hall. He longed for his wife's cooking, she was hopeless, an excellent science teacher, fantastic mother, and a good singer, but a terrible cook, so he did much of the cooking, he was the master of the BBQ. He even had a wood fired stove in the garden for pizzas. He longed for all this.

Now he was walking in the desert, calmer but with a hollow feeling inside. A wind was blowing, the sand swirled around his feet, then suddenly into the air, into his face, blinding him. He rubbed the sand from his eyes.

As he blinked and opened his eyes, he saw he was now in the garden of his house in Coleshill. The patio doors opened, and his two children ran out and gave him a hug. His wife was standing in the doorway, and saying,

'So back from work today, are you staying for the weekend?'

She looks puzzled, as he was crying.

'Dust, dust in my eyes.' he said, wiping them now with his handkerchief.

'What time is it?' he asked looking at his watch which he guessed would be wrong.

'Just past 11?' said his wife,

‘And the day, what day? I seem to have lost touch?’

‘Saturday, and yes you certainly have, you and your precious job, you’ve been gone a week! And no calls!’

His wife was obviously more concerned than angry, which puzzled Ben. His kids were now hanging around his neck swinging their legs.

His wife spoke, ‘So I phoned the station and, I got passed up the chain, spoke to your DCI, DCS, and would you believe they passed me to your Chief Constable, they were really nice, they said you were on a special operation and so was out of contact, and some nice things about you, and no I’m not going to tell you, and I’m still a bit annoyed, you could have said before you left you’d be out of contact.’

Ben had to think quick.

‘Hey kids, it’s Saturday, how about Legoland in Brum, and then burgers?’

They screamed, his wife could barely hold back the smile.

‘I’ll have a quick shower and change.’ he said.

‘You better, that’s your best work suit and it looks like you’ve been in a desert.’

Ben walked into his house shaking his head laughing. He had never been so happy.

Half an hour later they were ready to go, leaving the house,

‘Whose car?’ asked his wife, ‘mine or your work, the Granada?’ She paused looking up and down the street, ‘Where is it?’

Ben pressed the fob of the DCS' Range Rover, it's lights blinked, his wife gave him a look, the kids did too, and a long 'Cooooool.'

As he drove on the busy M6 he had a thought which he immediately dismissed. The phone rang, he took the hands-free call.

'This is Chief Constable White, Ben, you are on official police duty, so use the blue lights by all means, maybe not the siren.' and hung up.

So, he did, and his kids gave another long 'Cooooool.'

CHAPTER FIFTY: JAY'S DESERT

When Jay stepped out on her own from the great doors there was no desert but a fog or mist, the ground below was of dirt but the most strange thing was the noise. Bird calls, numerous exotic bird calls and continuous cries of cockerels. The mist cleared and she could see she was on a dirt path with tall, lush vegetation on either side. She had seen similar in the botanical gardens in Birmingham, in the hot houses. The mist had now cleared, and she could see some buildings in front of her, arranged in a semicircle. She recognised the buildings, most were without windows, white mud walls and coarsely thatched roofs. The cockerels wandered around as did hens with their chicks, pecking in the dirt. Also, now she saw there were cows, white with humps, and goats, lots of goats. A small girl came out from one of the houses, followed what she assumed was her mother. The girl was dressed in a bright red dress, she had jet black hair the same colour as Jay's. The mother was wearing what were again brightly coloured clothes. Both were in bare feet. Boys were also appearing, and men, dressed in white loin cloths wrapped around and thrown over their shoulders.

The woman with whom she assumed was her child, was now crouching over a small mound in the earth by her house. Jay could see she was intent on something, but what, the small child gave an occasional glance at Jay. Then she realised it was a small earth stove, the woman had lit some twigs and had inserted them into a hole at the base, now feeding more twigs and branches into the fire. She went back inside her house and returned with a metal pot and a couple of plates, also of metal. She spoke to the child in a language Jay did not understand. The child went into the house and reappeared

with a ladle, she was followed by a man, a boy and an old woman. The young woman was obviously cooking something, she spoke to Jay, again Jay could not understand.

The man and boy were now sitting on a low crude bed of wood with a woven top. The old lady who had emerged from the darkness of the windowless house was now lying on another low bed, she was part sitting up and talking to the woman, again talking in a language Jay could not understand. The young woman ladled something from the pot and placed it on one of the plates, it might have been rice, she handed it to the girl who took it to the man. He and the boy began eating this with their fingers. All the time there were the noises of the birds and cockerels. And more people, women, men and children walking and running in haphazard patterns. Children were playing with the young goats; some women were milking cows. Other families were preparing food and eating. As the men and boys finished their food, they rose and left,

‘Working in the fields?’ thought Jay.

The girl had now taken a plate of food to the old woman,

‘Her grandmother?’ thought Jay.

The young woman was now talking to Jay, it seemed offering food.

‘No thanks, I’m not hungry.’ Jay said, and then, ‘But thank you for offering.’ Now Jay was feeling rather stupid. It was obvious the woman couldn’t understand her English. So, she walked over to the woman and sat. She pointed to the pot and said, ‘Pot’.



The woman replied, ‘ཕྱོད་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་’, Jay repeated it once or twice, the woman gave a smile. Then Jay pointed to the ladle, ‘ཀློང་ལྟོ་’ was the reply. And so, it began, her first lessons in this unknown language. Jay stayed with the woman all day, learning this new language and helping with the domestic chores, fetching water, preparing food, cleaning. The boy arrived around noon and took food and drink back with him to those working in the fields. In the evening, they all ate outside, a meal of some kind of rice and vegetables, with flat bread. Jay had helped with the cooking. From signs it was asked if she would stay the night, she did. And stayed many days, learning to prepare food, cook, milk cows and learn this new language. It was fun, more than that she was enchanted.

Then there was a day when some religious festival was obviously taking place, she had seen similar on TV. It involved powdered paint, it was thrown at each other, and more carefully over the small carved deities which were in tiny grottos that were dotted around the village. She could not recognise them, she knew of Ganesha and the like, but none like these. The thought had also crossed her mind that this place was not contemporary, there was no electricity, no motor vehicles of any kind, not even something like a bicycle. All the implements were iron or steel, and no plastic. Nowadays even in very rural areas these would be found. Plastic containers, and bags, and the younger men and boys would wear tee shirts and jeans but not here. And no contrails from aircraft in the sky. So, she thought this was a place in the past, or not on the Earth she knew.

She noticed there was a small building on its own she hadn’t seen before. It had bright writing all over it, but she couldn’t read this, villagers were wandering in and out of the building,

obviously taking in flowers. So, she decided to see. Inside the building was just one room, it was dimly lit by an oil lamp, the floor was strewn with flowers and petals. In the centre of the tiny room was a figure of some animal and human form, painted bright blue. She stared at this for some minutes. Noticing another door, she opened it and stepped through in order to leave, she was back in Arcadia. In the hallway that led to the great hall. The hall from which each had entered a desert, their own particular desert. She looked around, they were all there, except Ben.

Billy anticipated her question, 'Ben, I think is with his family, and you?'

She explained all that had happened. And Billy asked, 'And why did you stay so long?'

'It grounded me.' was the answer, 'and I've the feeling I can go back whenever I wish. Maybe it's my Colonial Road?'

CHAPTER FIFTY-ONE: REUNIONS

By various means Billy has arranged for Sarah, Jay, Ben, Kate, Emily and Nigel to all meet in the hall in his fabricated palace. They all had returned to their homes, but all agreed a meeting would be good to put into context all what had occurred, especially as Billy pointed out it would take no actual time at all.

As they arrived some were surprised to see Mr Smith.

‘Mr Smith is just sitting in as his problem was one of the first we looked at.’ Billy said.

‘And the solution was good, but failed,’ Smith said, ‘but now things are somewhat different, we seem, that is the Smiths and the like who survived, are living, if not perfectly, which is or was something we strived for, but at least we are living...’ he paused but did not continue.

Billy went on, ‘Christine is not here for the very good reason that, to put it simply, there never was an actual person, or even the duality of Christine and the Aeon Sophia, she was an avatar or better a doppelgänger, like a ghostly double. There is the connection between these figures and the boy, an important one, but not a clear one. And Kate was responsible for bringing things to a sort of conclusion, so I’ll let her explain this.’

Some looked surprised, notably Ben, Jay, Sarah and Emily, Nigel not so, he gave a wry smile.

Kate spoke,

‘It’s simple really, but first we can all recount our journeys through these days, ones of exploring and finding new ideas,

my own epiphany was jumping beyond the limits, any limits, which presented an answer to a question I had not ever realised. But I'll come to that.

What theme, a single theme which seemed to be in play was an idea of a hierarchy, as in the Aeons, descending from the One, or in the Jewish Sefirot, or Tree of life, and then the dialectical improvement of the Smiths, that of ascending. The Übermenschen were strange, they had transformed from the material into pure spirit, but it seemed that was not enough, they had to return. I think they sort also to be in a hierarchy, and at the top. This is why I guess it unsettled Christine, or the Aeon Sophia whose doppelgänger was Christine. Why should they wish to become base matter again? Was it the same as her desire, which was to be the Monad in a spiritual Pleroma but one over also all physical worlds, the Hysterema.

So, we have hierarchies, descending and ascending in power, and those wishing to become fullness of the Pleroma, or in other terms the fullness of the Singularity.

In the case of the Smiths from a base towards higher forms, in the profanity of material existence, technology, the idea of progress. And from this profanity, in our world the idea of progress, maybe no longer spiritual or transcendence, but the singularity of technology....'

It looked like Nigel was going to interrupt, but Kate noticing said,

'The source of all of this has to be profane, materialistic, from the many and not the One because there are hierarchies and not a single hierarchy. There are philosophies, and not one philosophy, there are religions and not one religion, even the

idea of The One has many forms. So, the source must be a plurality.'

Ben looked on, a little astonished at his sergeant, Billy gave Kate a wink, she continued.

'So, these hierarchies existed as a multitude and some forces used these, but why?'

She gave a theatrical pause,

'Because chaos needs structure if it is to exist, it needs difference, needs to channel its forces. I'm saying in the beginning these were stories, ordinary stories which became real. They became real or were made real.'

Tea had arrived, outside through the windows they could see it was early evening and now autumn, the trees golden, the sunset adding to this. The place seemed to match the moods of its occupants in time of day and season.

Kate stopped, they all had tea.

Emily looked towards Billy and then Kate and said 'How?'

'Wait and see.' was his reply.

Kate continued,

'The nice jargon could be - And the solution was to reify the transcendental - which means somehow these transcendental ideas are materialised, and we can see the mess it creates. Most obvious in the Smiths, but also in the Übermenschen and as we see in the struggle of orthodoxy and Gnosticism, maybe the origins of such. We, humanity, are

yet to approach the heights of The Smiths or the Übermenschen, the catastrophic heights...'

Ben interrupted,

'Excuse me Kate, but I can't follow any of this stuff, can you explain it for an eight-year-old, like I feel, and where the hell did you get all this from?'

Kate flushed, Billy coughed, and looking at Kate and asked,

'Shall I tell?'

She nodded a yes.

'Well,' Billy began, 'Kate got interested in this stuff, Ben as you put it, during the Eve Sharif affair where she like yourself became aware of occult religions. Well, she became fascinated, started reading up, and to cut a long story short spoke to me about it. She found out I was once a copper, and got hooked on comparative religion, I quit the force to study, she was very reluctant to, so I introduced her to my friend Catherine Mulberry who is a professor of comparative religion at The University of Birmingham. And so, Kate enrolled on a BA distance learning course, so she could keep working in the police.'

'Explains why you never went for promotion.' Ben remarked, Kate gave a smile.

'That was some years back,' continued Billy, 'and the degree turned into an M.A. then a Ph.D. and...'

Here Kate interrupted Billy,

‘You know Gnosticism was, I can say now was, something I’d not spent much time on, my thing was more on indigenous religions, but I guess meeting an actual Aeon brings me up to speed. And so now I’m going to quit the police and have a research position in Catherine’s department.’

‘Wow!’, was Ben and Nigel’s response, Nigel was beaming.

‘And’ continued Kate, ‘so we have some power that doesn’t know what to do, so it either makes up a fantasy, like a story, or finds a story, then makes it real.’

No big deal, you see a bird flying and think, I’d love to fly, and if you have the power, by which I mean like the Wright brothers you can build a plane.’

She paused then continued,

‘Only in this case the power can make any idea into physical things by means we have no idea about.’

‘OK,’ said Ben, ‘and what or who is this power, and the desert and how is this sorting things out.’

Kate looked embarrassed.

‘I’ll take over,’ said Billy, ‘The power we don’t know, definitely the boy is involved, because, well he was responsible for the desert. And this in turn, maybe I should have said something, but in effect this solved the problem of the melt down. It stopped the war of the Smiths. The desert prevented where humanity was heading, which was in the same direction as the Smiths. Not the end of all things but eternal infernal war. And then Kate solved, or improved that solution with Mahler, a brilliant move.’



‘How so?’ asked Ben

Kate now replied,

‘A couple of years ago I went to see the CBSO play Mahler’s second at Symphony Hall, a friend took me, I knew nothing of Classical music, it was Catherine actually, Catherine Mulberry my tutor, and well, bluntly, I was gob smacked. I’ve seen other performances since and of course have the CDs. And by gob smacked I mean some experience beyond comprehension, so I guessed whatever power there was at work, a logical solution to the mayhem of existence wouldn’t do, it should experience something beyond logic.’

‘Camus?’ said Billy, Kate smiled and continued.

‘So, on meeting The One in the desert, I risked Mahler, and the Aeon, Christine, or Sophia, or is it the boy, I suspect it was the Christine side of Sophia? Well, they got it, or rather didn’t get it, that there was an alternative to the logical solution. They broke down in the incomprehensibility of great Art.’

‘So, you saved all existence.’ said Ben.

‘No way,’ said Kate, ‘Mahler did. And the CBSO.’

There was laughter.

‘And the solution of the desert?’ asked Ben.

‘Oh, we went to Inglefield Road, and I guess we need to return.’ Billy said.

‘We, can you explain?’ said Ben.

‘We, me and Kate, faced with the eternal war, we visited the boy in Inglefield Road.’

Billy paused and Nigel spoke.

‘It seems this boy, remember from Colonial Road, well whose imagination is either being used or is responsible for things happening, not everything, I think. So, he also visits his other grandfather in Stechford. I guess Billy and Kate have been there and are going again to visit Stechford in maybe 1959 or 60.’

‘That’s right,’ said Billy.

‘From our visit to Colonial Road, he’d somehow got the idea of a problem, destruction, chaotic forces of destruction, and a quick solution. The desert.’

‘A good move in fact, as it gave us time but more importantly in the desert we began to resolve things.’ said Kate, and continued, ‘The desert was nothingness, if you like, an empty space, and we all experienced this personally, that’s the important thing. It’s not a hierarchy, us getting things from above but having our own desert and our own solution.’

‘OK, I get this,’ said Ben ‘I’m lost without my family, totally lost, now I see it, and feel it.’

‘And the Martian?’ asked Sarah. ‘Now some all-powerful being?’

‘The hierarchy has been destroyed.’ Kate said.

Sarah was now thinking of her own reality, that she was just some object, a tool used by governments, worse by these beings from the Singularity. Within her desert she found a response, the absurd, she would make Manga books, no matter how good or bad.

Jay of course had her solution, something to fill the empty thought of the desert of nihilism. She now had a home; roots she could go to, that of a simple existence.

Emily was still confused by her desert. So maybe not one science but many? And this confusion was new and maybe she liked it, she would talk to Catherine.

PART THREE THE TWILIGHT OF
THE GODS

CHAPTER FIFTY-TWO: THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FINAL
ÜBERMENSCH

In the living room of 46 Inglefield Road the boy was sat at the table. Outside the branches of the apple trees swayed, thick in pink and white blossom. On the lawn was a sleeping Mr Smith.

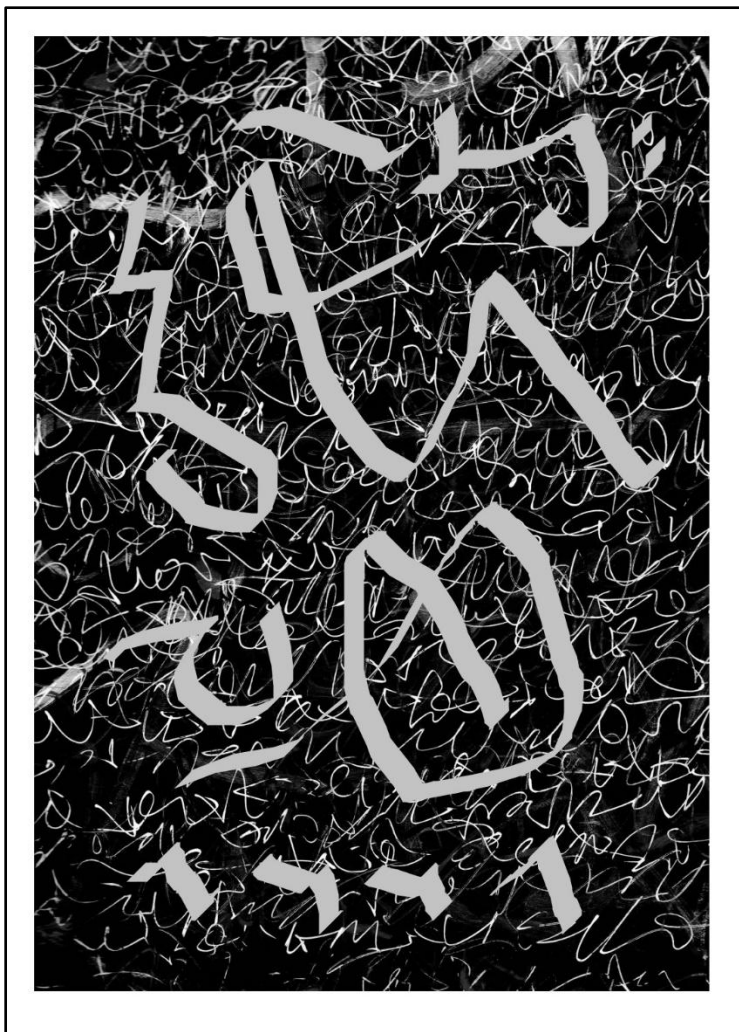
The boy did not bother himself with any of this.



He drew the symbol in the second book, ‘The

Book of the Ungods.’ Then he painted over it in black ink. Waited for it to dry, and once dry he began writing the sigils, lines and lines on top of each other, he stopped, picked out a wide pencil, a carpenter’s pencil, with this he drew two large final sigils, they were not though black, but silver. There was a distant rumble as if from far away, it disturbed Smith in his sleep, but did not wake him, and echoed in Billy’s head.





CHAPTER FIFTY-THREE: THE FIRST VISIT TO INGLEFIELD ROAD

Billy and Kate were standing on the pavement by 46 Inglefield Road, in Stechford, a district of Birmingham. They were facing a rather dilapidated semi-detached house that had been converted into a maisonette, with a side entrance for the upstairs flat. The houses around it were in much better states having block paving where a front garden had been, now used for parking, some had new entrance verandas.

Billy opened the gate to the front garden, it was very neglected, no more than dirt and rough uncut grass. They entered into a tidy front garden behind a neat privet hedge, a lawn on their left with a central flower bed occupied by a huge plant, a pampas grass.

‘Birmingham, Stechford, the early 1960s, I guess it’s a Sunday, the boy will be here.’ Billy said.

Billy opened the front door, now one which had two frosted glass windows, and Kate followed him into a clean smelling hallway. Directly on their right was a large Singer sewing machine, a treadle operated one, then stairs. To the left a door was ajar to the living room. They could see a sofa and chairs, an old black and white television. A sideboard which had a large incomplete wooden model of a warship on it, and above a water colour of The Queen Mary Ocean liner. Kate walked down the hall, following Billy, and then they turned left into the dining room. Immediately on the left was a well polished upright piano, to the right the dining table. A young boy sat at this large table which was in front of windows with a view of the back garden. Apple trees and flower beds of



purple lupins. They recognised the boy; he turned and gave them a smile. On the table was a very large book.

‘Can we look?’ asked Billy.

‘What is it?’ Kate asked.

‘I’d call it the book of nihil.’ Billy said.

The boy looked at the two very carefully, he slid the book across the table, they sat, and Billy opened the book and began turning the pages. Pages of strange symbols. After some time Billy said, ‘I think this prevented the chaos descending into Hell.’

‘The desert!’ said Kate.

‘Absolutely, nihilism, nothing.’ said Billy.

‘And?’ asked Kate.

‘Well, it stopped all the hierarchies it seems. We entered this desert, made it our own and found our answers.’ Billy said.

‘Even you?’ asked Kate.

‘Even me.’ was the reply.

‘And?’ asked Kate, ‘your desert was.’

‘The one I created in Arcadia.’

‘So how did you deal with it?’ Kate said.

‘I didn’t’

‘I don’t understand?’ Kate said.

‘My desert is just that. The nothingness. The beautiful nothingness.’

He paused then continued,

‘We all entered the desert and found something; in the nothingness we found the real thing that mattered...’

‘And in your case, that nothing mattered.’ Kate said.

‘You found Mahler and overcame the logic, let’s say the logic of destruction from Sophia. Music, great art and a seeming contradiction, of something beyond reason. And here in the book of nihil the desert was created, which stopped all the other chaos. Maybe now we need or should create a more positive solution for everyone?’ asked Billy.

‘So, this book somehow reduces all these problems, wars, power struggles, religious, as well as political and philosophical conflicts, reduces them to nothing, which is in effect to a desert?’ Kate mused.

‘It makes sense, though maybe not believable, and hard to fathom, but in the past we’ve seen similar from the boy. Constructions of what look like toys or models, but devices with awesome power. Maybe some external force is picking up on these and imbuing them with such powers, maybe it’s the boy’s, whatever, it works. And has worked in this case.’ Billy said.

‘OK, so we’ve, well he has stopped this violent hell, what now?’ Kate said, paused, thinking, then.

‘He needs to see the mess and find some solution, so the boy needs to know about this mess,’ said Kate, ‘the multitudes of striving for perfection. Striving in the various ways, in technology, in the numerous religions, all with the aim of progress with an inherent idea of the absolute. As if we could achieve the infinite.’

‘Any ideas?’ asked Billy.

‘In trying to find some solution which avoids heaven or hell. I have a book at home. It’s just a picture book of world religions and myths, a multitude of differing things, would this do?’ was Kate’s reply.

‘How?’ asked Billy.

‘That there is never one solution, I’ve learnt this from studying comparative religions, maybe if the boy could see some of this?’

Billy spoke to the boy, ‘Your book is fantastic, but we need a second volume, one to sort out a mess, and, well makes things OK. Could you or would you do this?’

The boy thought for a while then nodded a yes.

‘Great! We’ll get you a book to look at and see what you can do, we’ll be back soon.’

They left to return almost immediately, ‘I’ve brought the book for you to look at.’ Kate handed the boy an illustrated book on Myths and Legends. ‘I thought you might like it?’

The boy took the book and flicked a few pages. Then turned to the back of the book and began looking at the pictures.

Looked up briefly as if to acknowledge, then began looking at the pictures and reading.



CHAPTER FIFTY-FOUR: MYTHS – DEATH AND LIFE

At the back of the book was a page on Māori myths, the Māori story of the origin of death.

Tangaroa is the god of the sea, son of Papa the goddess of the Earth and Tangi the god of the sky. Tangaroa and his siblings escaped the embrace of his parents so as to begin the process of creation, angering his brother Tāwhirimātea, the wind god. He unleashed storms so some of the descendants hid in the forests. Tangaroa was angry with Tane the god of the forests for sheltering them, attacking Tane's lands and sweeping all away. Eventually Tane managed to create fine forests again, but grew bored and wanted a wife, but all the children of Papa and Tangi were male. He had a number of partners, but all the offspring were reptiles, stones and streams. So finally, he mixed mud and sand to make a woman and breathed breath into her to give life. She was Hine-hau-one, Earth-formed Maiden. She bore him a daughter, Hine-titama, Dawn Maiden. Tane made her his wife as well, she not knowing he was her father. When she found out, ashamed she fled to the underworld, known as Po, meaning darkness. Her father pleaded for her to return but she refused saying she would drag all her children down to darkness and so death came into the world. She became Hine-nui-te-po, the Great Goddess of Darkness, or Sleeping Mother Death.

The boy was reading this, then began to draw the Sleeping Mother Death in his Silvine Drawing Book, one with a green cover.

Kate was thinking, ‘maybe this is too deep for a boy, too heavy, about death and other things?’

Then the boy spoke.

‘I saw my gran when she had died. It was very early in the morning, I went into the bedroom, she was in bed. No one was about, I could hear the birds, and I think someone somewhere crying. She lay in bed with her mouth open, her skin was white like paper, and it was if something had left her, from her mouth, and she was no longer alive, or even a person. They call it spirit and it’s like magic,’

He pointed to the book and the picture of Hine-nui-te-po,

‘but it’s not like that, it’s not spirit or magic, it’s not from anything, or is it energy, well it’s like energy, you know electricity, flames. It’s everywhere but,’

He paused and thought,

‘I don’t think there is a word?’

Kate was thinking of the end of the Mahler,

‘It’s not God, or that, but I suppose they want a name and a thing. Life, maybe life is the word. Life in the world.’

He paused, then continued,

‘You know some places you feel it, here it’s in the hall, just as you come in.’



Billy thought of the chapel of St Chad in Litchfield Cathedral, the darkness of it which almost shone like silver, 'A silver nothingness' he thought.

The boy was drawing the Mauri god Hine-nui-te-po in his sketch book.

He continued drawing. He looked up again and spoke to them.

'I'll work through the book.'

It was almost like giving them an order to leave, so they did leave, and Kate had a strange expression, to which Billy replied,

'I know,' and then as if reading her mind, 'I've no idea who he is, or what, nothing more than something, if that makes any sense.'

'Yes and no.' said Kate thinking of the Mahler, while Billy was thinking of the chapel.

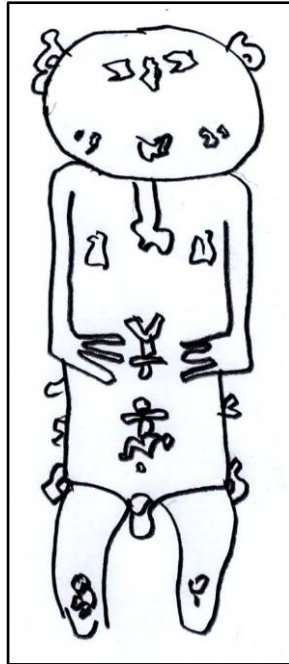
And then they realised they had walked out of the house, through the garden and were now standing in front of the rundown maisonette.





In the Tangaroa myth of the Pacific Islands Tangaroa is the creator of the world. In the beginning there was a shell called Rumia shaped like an egg floating in blackness, an endless void. Something stirred in the shell, at last he emerged breaking the shell in two. With one half he made the sky, with the other the ground. With his flesh he made the soil of the earth, he made mountain ranges with his backbone, his organs to make clouds and his nails to make shells and scales for sea creatures. He then called other gods from himself. One called Tu helped make trees and animals. With Tangaroa they made humans, the first two being Til and Hina, and they had children. Tangaroa saw that everything had a shell, the sky, the earth, even humans, the womb.





The Rainbow Snake is known by many names in Aboriginal mythology. In western Australia the snake, called Ngalyod , one day being hungry it ate three birds, swallowing them whole. They escaped by pecking a hole in the snake's abdomen, emerging as the first humans, killing the snake and setting up home on the Earth.

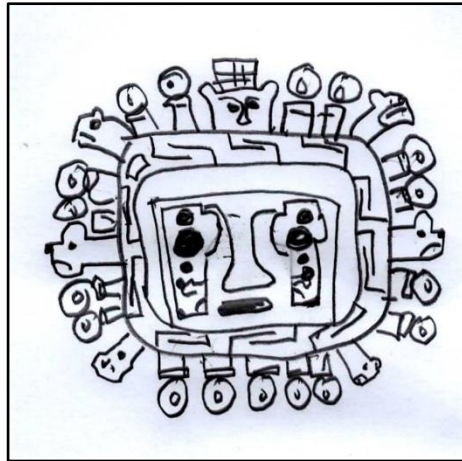


The Inca creator God, Cin Tik Viracocha emerged from Lake Titicaca and created a race of giants. But he was dissatisfied so he drowned them in a great flood called Unu Pachacuti. He then created humans out of pebbles he found by the lake, giving them a variety of languages foods and costumes. Some myths say that the first humans went into a cave. Manco Capac lived in a cave with three sisters and three brothers, one sister was his wife Mama Ocllo, they formed the Inca Royal family.

The royal family and nobles emerged from one entrance, the lower classes and slaves from another two. They formed settlements. In other myths they were sent down by the god Inti.



Viracocha watched over the Inca disguised as a beggar and helped his people, but they ignored him, and he returned from the Earth in tears. It is said one day these will cause a flood and destroy all humanity. Viracocha is often shown in tears.



The natives of the Caribbean before being exposed to the influences from Europe and West Africa with the slave trade had a creation myth of five ages. The supreme God, Yaya had a son who rebelled against him. The God killed him and placed his bones in a huge gourd. A few days later these had turned into fish swimming in water. His wife cooked some of these and they were delicious. One day however the gourd broke and the water and fish spilled out forming the ocean that surrounds the Caribbean.



The second era begins with the Taino, the first people who emerged from caves. They survived by fishing. Some were transformed into trees by the sun. The sun turned one man who was keeping watch to stone for neglecting his duty, another was turned into a bird. The Taino explored and populated other islands.

In the third era women were created to be partners for men. The population grew. In the fourth era the Taino spread amongst the islands establishing settlements and developing a rich and peaceful culture and cultivating cassava. With the fifth and final era, western explorers arrived, and the Taino culture was destroyed, many died from diseases brought from the old world.

Other gods included the goddess Atabey, a fertility deity, and the Zemi, statues of the gods. With the influx and influence of Europeans and West African slaves with their religions this created such beliefs as Ghedge, which in Haitian is called voodoo.





In the Mayan creation the sea god Gucumatz and the sky god Heart of Sky decided to make humans, their first attempt



failed as the creatures could only howl and chatter, they became the first animals. They used clay for their second attempt, but these were limp and twisted, could not speak and dissolved in water. Frustrated they went to Xpiyacoc and Xmucane, diviners older than the gods, who told them to make men from wood and women from reeds. These didn't please the gods either as like the others they refused to worship them, so Heart of Sky overwhelmed them with a flood.

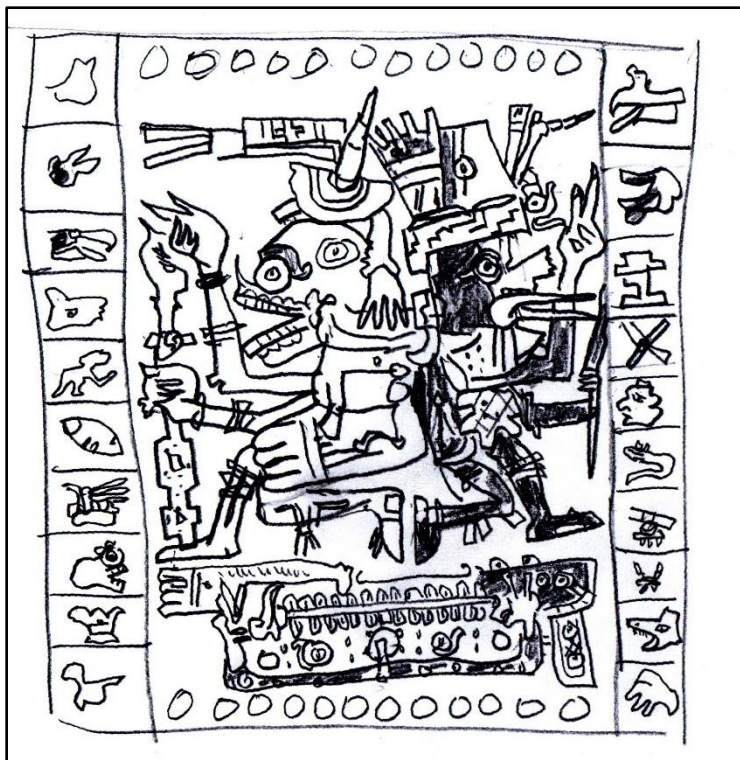
The diviners had two twin sons, Hun Hunahpu and Vucub Hunahpu who spent all their time gambling and playing ball. They made so much noise when playing that the lords of Xibalba, the underworld, challenged them to a ball game. The lords of Xibalba played a trick on them, they told them to sit on a hot bench, they were told to stay in The Dark House for a night with only a torch and two cigars for light. Finding in the morning that the torch and two cigars were burnt up, the brothers were killed. The head of Hun Hunahpu was sliced off and put on a tree where it became a gourd.

A girl from Xibalba called Xquic went to look at the gourd, when she tried to pick it, the head of Hun Hunahpu spat at her and she became pregnant. Her angry father ordered her to be put to death, but she escaped and went to live with Hun Hunahpu's mother. Later she gave birth to the hero twins Hunahpu and Xbalangue. Like Hun Hunahpu and Vucub Hunahpu they loved to play ball. When they learned their father and uncle had been killed by the lords of Xibalba, they decided to avenge their death. They made a noise and so were challenged to a game. In the underworld they were subjected to deadly tests each night. Each night they were made to stay in different houses, the Dark



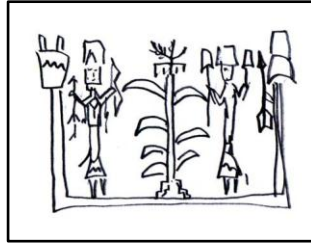
House, the Razor House, the Cold House, the Jaguar House the Fire House and the House of Bats. Every day they played the ball game again with the lords of Xibalba. They survived all the tests but the last, in the house of Bats, Hunahpu had his head bitten off, but Xbalangue made a wooden head for Hunahpu. So, they played with Hunahpu's head as the ball. Xbalangue hit it right out of the court, but a rabbit brought it back to him. While the lords of Xibalba were looking for the ball, Xbalangue stuck his brother's head back on, they continued with a new ball and beat the lords of Xibalba.

Angry with their defeat the lords of Xibalba caught and burnt the twins, ground their bones and threw them into a river. After six days the twins reappeared telling the lords of Xibalba, they had discovered how to bring the dead back to life. The lords of Xibalba wanted proof, so Xbalangue cut off his brother's head then brought him back to life. Impressed The lords of Xibalba wanted to experience being brought back to life, so the brothers cut out their hearts, but they didn't bring them back to life, thus conquering death. They returned to Earth and became the Sun and Moon, thus making the Earth free from eternal death and fit for humans.



The Aztec god Quetzalcoatl, the Plumed Serpent, half bird half snake, was a creator god, showed how to grow maize, measure time, and was also the god of the wind.





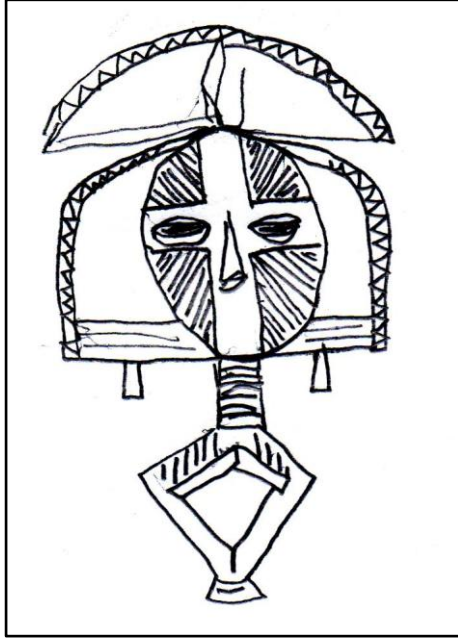
In the Navajo myth of creation, the First World or the Black World existed, it had four corners each with a cloud, black, white, blue and yellow. The black and white clouds formed First Man, the blue and yellow First Woman. A white wind blowing over two ears of corn breathed life into them. Their descendants were the Air People, being dissatisfied they climbed upwards and reached the Second World, or Blue World.

They were still dissatisfied so First Man using a wand he had made, took them to the Third World, or Yellow World. Here they lived sinful and unhappy lives, and then a great flood came. The First Man built a tall mountain to save them, planted a cedar tree, a pine tree, and a male reed, but these were not tall enough so he planted a female reed which the people could climb up to the Forth World, or Glittering World.

In the Fourth world they performed a Blessingway ceremony and built the first sweat lodge for meditation and healing. They built mountains with soil from the third world. First Man built houses for them and put the sun and the moon in the sky. He was helped by Black God and Coyote. Black God tried to arrange the stars in the sky, but Coyote became impatient



and scattered all the stars. Finally, the people could live happily and prosper.

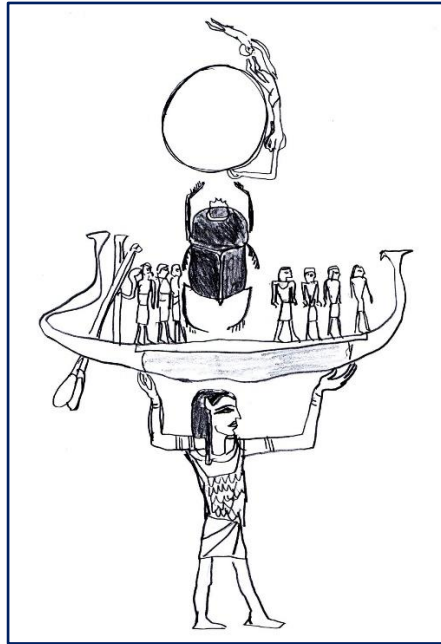


The creation of the Fon people of Dahomey begins with the male serpent Aido-Hwedo and the female goddess Mawu who gave birth to gods and goddesses. She had many children, too many to name. They included the Earth deities ruled by Da Zodzi, her first son, thunder deities ruled by Sogbo her second son, and sea deities ruled by Agbè. Once she had made all the deities, Mawu made the human race from clay. She decided to make the Earth for them to live on. Riding on Aido-Hwedo she made a bowl shape, the undulating snake making the hills and valleys. After the earth journey Aido-Hwedo stopped to rest.



His excrement built up creating the high mountains, this solidified into rock which inside had precious metals.

The Earth they had made floated on a vast sea, but its weight made it too heavy, so Aido-Hwedo coiled around it to hold it up. He did not mind, he enjoyed the cool sea, but when he fidgeted it caused earthquakes.

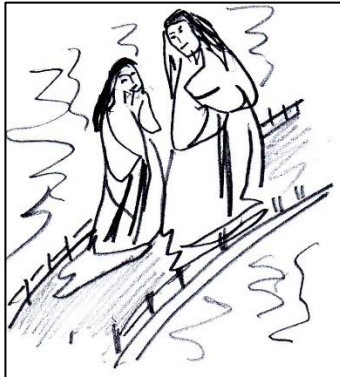


The creator God Ra rose out of Nun, the primal sea of non-being. When Ra sneezed Shu, the god of dry air emerged from his nostrils. Then he spat out Tefnut, the goddess of moist air from his mouth, he sent them across the sea.



He called all the primal elements into being, and the goddess of universal harmony, Ma'at. Needing a dry place to stand he made Nun recede revealing a rock. He summoned forth plants, animals and birds. Next, he told his eye Hathor, to look for Shu and Tefnut, on return Hathor noticed another eye had replaced her, and she wept. The first people were born from her tears. Ra returned her to his brow in the form of a cobra.

Shu and Tefnut had two children, Geb, the Earth, and Nut, the sky. They gave birth to the stars. Shu separated them and forbade Nut to give birth, but she won five extra days while gambling with the god Thoth and so gave birth to Osiris, Set, Nephthys and Isis.



In the Japanese creation myth at the beginning of time there existed three invisible deities, The Heavenly Centre Lord, the High Generative Force, and the Divine Generative Force. They were followed by several generations of deities. In the seventh generation Izanagi and Izanami representing the

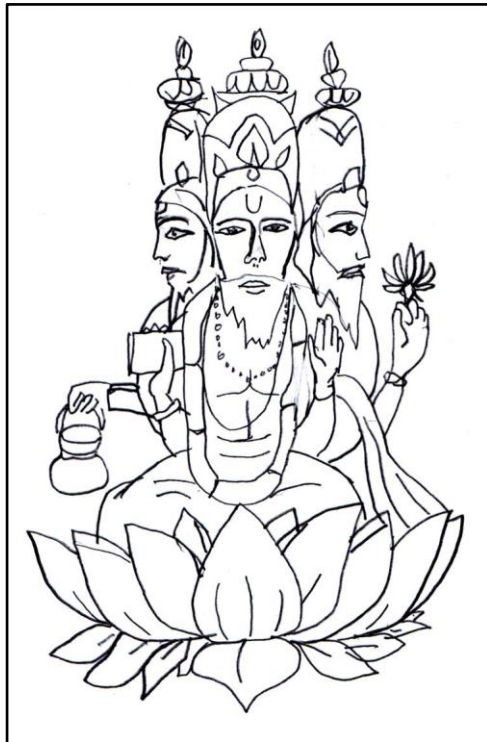
masculine and feminine, stood on the rainbow bridge in heaven and churned the waters until an island was formed. They descended and decided to marry but Izanami spoke first, so the union was flawed, and they produced Hiruko the leech child. They repeated the ceremony correctly, and Izanami gave birth to the gods of the oceans, rivers, wind, and land. But her final god was Kagusuchi the fire god who consumed her. She descended into the underworld and Izanagi followed but too late, her body was already decaying, so he left but with Izanami following. Warriors of the Underworld pursued Izanagi who had not noticed Izanami. He placed a stone over the entrance to the underworld trapping Izanami inside forever.



The Chinese creation myth, Pan Gu creates the universe. Pan Gu slept gaining strength for the creation, when he awoke, he saw only chaos which made him angry. He struck at the chaos in all different directions. The heavier settled below as the

Earth, he stood holding up the sky, pushing them apart, and then he slept. As he slept, he changed, his eyes became the sun and moon, his hair the stars, his body the land, mountains and hills, his blood formed the rivers and seas.

The goddess Nü Wa appeared and looked at how beautiful the cosmos was but grew lonely. So, she took clay and made the first people, but she noticed they grew old and died. So, she gave them the ability to have children saving her having to make new humans. She was pleased with what she had made.



In the Beginning Brahma Lord of Creation, spread his light around the universe and became the essence of all things. He contemplated what the universe would be like but in his ignorance created night. Night created children which became demons, so Brahma began creation again, he created the sun and stars, and thousands of gods to balance the demons. He created Vak, or Word, in one version his female partner in others his daughter. From there he created all living things, and as his form changes so he is within all living things. His home is on Mount Meru the source of the river Ganges.

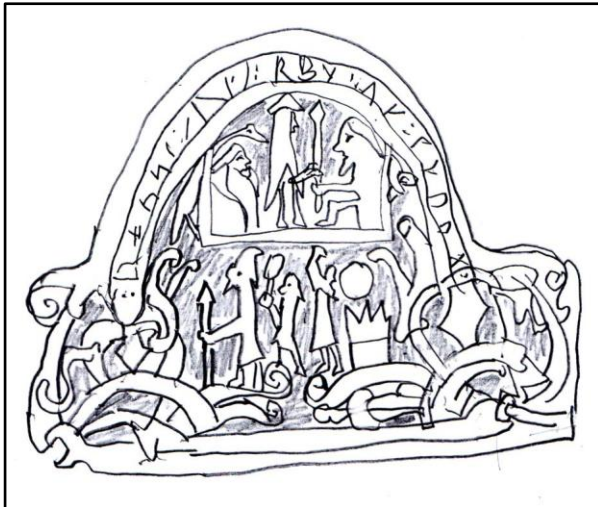


In the beginning there were only the god of fresh water Apsu, and the goddess of saltwater Tiamat. The pair produced generations of deities culminating in the god of heaven Anu and Ea the god of the Earth and waters. The noise of the young gods annoyed Apsu and Tiamat, so Apsu started killing



them, Ea saw this so killed Apsu and set himself up as the god of the waters.

Eau and Damkina produced a son, the mighty god Marduk. Tiamat fought with Marduk, first ordering Kingu to attack, and he defeated her, he made the heavens from one half of her body and the Earth from the other. He ordered the building of Babylon and created the first man Lullu from the blood of Kingu, he and his descendants built canals to fertilise the land.



In Norse mythology in the beginning there was nothing but a void called Ginnungagap, gradually two realms appeared either side, Muspelheim, a region of heat and fire, and Niflhiem a place of cold and ice. At the centre of these two

realms the ice began to melt into a frost giant called Ymir. He slept and in the warm air began to sweat from which other giants emerged. Meanwhile the ice began to melt into the shape of a giant cow called Audhumla, her milk feeding the frost giants. As she licked the ice a giant appeared. The first giant she had freed from the ice had a son named Bor who married Bestla, daughter of Bölthorn. They had three sons, Odin, Vili and Ve, the Norse gods, whose leader was Odin. They were sky gods who lived in Asgard. They fought a long war with the other gods, the Vanir.

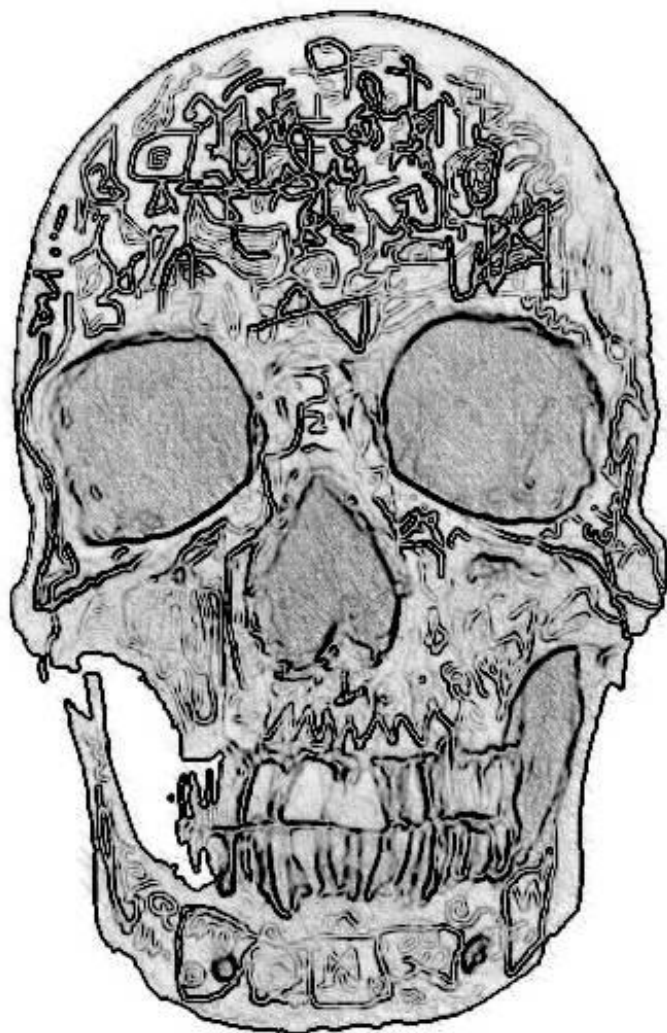
Odin, Vili and Ve were walking along a beach when they came across two trees, they created Ask from the ash tree and Embla from the elm. Male and female, Odin breathed life into them, Vili gave them thoughts and feelings and Ve sight and hearing, they were the ancestors of all humans. They lived in Midgard, Middle Earth.



In Classical mythology one creation story begins with Chaos out of which the creative force emerged, Eurynome who with the primal serpent Orphion began the process of creation.

Eventually Uranus and Gaia produced a race of giants, and Cronos who in turn produced Zeus and the Gods of Olympus.





CHAPTER FIFTY-FIVE: MR SMITH

Billy opened the front door of 46 Inglefield Road and walked into the hallway followed by Kate. Directly on their right was still the large Singer sowing machine, a treadle operated one, then the stairs. To the left a door was ajar to the living room. They could see a sofa and chairs, an old black and white television and the sideboard, above this a water colour of The Queen Mary Ocean liner.

‘Strange,’ Kate said, ‘that wooden model warship is missing, everything else is exactly as it was before.’

‘The ship?’ he remembering, ‘Very strange, and why, interesting.’ Billy agreed.

Kate walked down the hall, following Billy, and then they turned left into the dining room. Immediately on the left was the well polished upright piano, to the right the dining table. But no young boy sat at this large table.

In front of the windows with a view of the back garden of apple trees and flower beds of purple lupins was sat Mr Smith. On the table were three large books on top of which was the wooden model warship, only now with several nails partly knocked into it making it look like some sort of strange totemic object.

Smith, dressed in his normal Victorian gentlemen’s black frock suit, spoke,

‘I do like this view; I find it so relaxing watching the gentle movement of the branches of the apple trees.’



His eyes focused on the trees, he turned and continued as if snapping out of a dream,

He said raising his eyebrows. ‘Let me show you, but please sit.’

His eyes moved to two chairs, all three now sitting around the table. Billy having a slight frown.

‘Oh, why isn’t the boy here?’ said Smith answering the frown, ‘Well maybe it’s not Sunday, but that won’t do, there is a deal of explanation, and, well he regards me I think as an uncle of sorts, so I’m doing the talking, he is quite happy with this and is now I think down at the end of the garden playing with some bricks. But let us begin.’

‘The wooden warship is from the sideboard.’

he said picking it up,

‘As you know it was incomplete, it needed guns, so the boy gave the best solution he could in the time and gave it these guns.’ Smith coughed, pointing to the nails, ‘The best he could do, but though I say this from a technical point of view, it has given it something of the uncanny. So, he has made something that you, Billy, might call a totem.’

He paused, and then continued,

‘And then the boy handed this totemic device over to the aeon, Sophia, your Christine, and the solution to all our problems. Those higher orders of war, gods of destruction needing sacrifice, all brought low by this in the hands of the Aeon Sophia, Achamōth, Chokmah, Barbelo, Prunikos.’



He put the warship down, giving it a long look, then continued,

‘And the three books, the first of the nihilism of the desert, the second of the gods and myths and the third the solution. The books, Book 1 produced drawings but in unknown languages and the drawings were indecipherable but stopped all the wars and bloodshed across all realities. However, the solution was the desert of nihilism we all found ourselves in. Book 2, fascinating, the analysis of the problem. Just from a naïve picture book of some human myths, and of course the skull.’

He held up the warship again, showing it to Billy, now it was far more sinister with its protruding nails.

‘We know of this and it’s power, do we not?’

He said clearly addressing Billy, Kate looked puzzled.

‘In another series of incidents involving the Smiths the warship seemed to have some special powers.’ Billy said in explanation to Kate.

‘A trifle understated but it will do.’ added Smith, continuing, ‘And the last book shows how this came about,’ he waved the ship in the air, ‘and the consequences, might I say, a good life or a better life?’

‘I don’t follow you?’ said Kate, ‘Or do I?’ said Billy.

He put the model warship on one side, slid out the middle book. It was like the other two almost certainly made from an

old large atlas, but this one was in a cardboard sleeve. Smith removed the sleeve and flicked through its pages.

‘Look, see the drawings of the myths but ones also of the battles and wars, Battles and Wars,’ said Smith, ‘no different to that universal struggle for perfection. And from this, finally a drawing of a human skull, and obviously not just any, but The Skull that was found underneath the Gravelly Hill interchange. In my humble opinion a truly wonderful analysis of the problem. That is the problem and cause of all this fatal strife was seeking ever more powerful hierarchies! Many hierarchies and not one. Different and competing within themselves and from each other.’

Kate’s expression was puzzled, Billy was obviously not happy, he muttered, ‘And one ring to rule them all and in darkness bind them?’ and gave an ironic smile.

Smith put the second book back in its sleeve and returned it to the table.

‘And then this, Book 3 the solution to the nothingness of the desert, one of a more peaceful perfect existence for everyone.’

He paused then said, ‘Perhaps Book 1 is the Book of the desert, The Book of Nihil? Book 2 The book of The Gods, and Book 3, The Book of Arcadia, no that won’t do, I think The Book of Eden, and yes, names not numbers...’

He was about to continue,

‘What drawings?’ exclaimed Kate, interrupting Smith.

‘The drawings of your world’s mythical creation stories, of its gods, and great hierarchies of power in the second book, I showed you.’ came the answer.

‘You showed the second book, but the few drawings were like those of the first? The drawings were indecipherable.’ she replied.

Smith was about to select the third book, but at this he picked up the second book again, removed the sleeve and opened it. It revealed twelve pages like the first book, pages of Indecipherable languages, symbols and drawings, no pictures of any recognisable kind, and then blank or rather black pages, page after page.

‘I don’t understand.’ he stammered, which was very unusual for Smith. He put the book down and picked up the third.

‘And now in this third book is an account of sorts of what took place, and what is taking place, and is I’m sure what will continue to take place. It shows how the Aeon, Sophia, Achamōth, Chokmah, Barbelo, Prunikos the daughter of Elohim, the formatrix of heaven and earth has now defeated all those who struggle for power, all those who abuse power. And finally, She creates a new Eden.’

He was shaking his head,

‘Here he, the boy, in these books has illustrated what occurred.’

He tapped on the cover then opened the last book.



He flipped through the pages looking shocked, it revealed page after page of what seemed to have been an Atlas, but every page covered in black ink. No pictures, or sigils.

He went back to the first and second books, but nothing was in these books other than the drawings of sigils which were indecipherable or black ink covered pages.



CHAPTER FIFTY-SIX: THE OCEANIA WAR

Sophia, now holding the object, a wooden model ship with nails partly hammered in to it, entered a world.

Sophia's first encounter was with Tāwhirimātea, Tangaroa, and other Māori and Polynesian war gods. These gods had fought with each other and in the process destroyed land, vegetation and people. They represent the reification, of uncontrolled cosmic forces of violent nature, common in animistic religion where these forces become persons and so can be dealt with by humans in human terms, albeit as supremely powerful and fearful gods. And dealt with by worship and sacrifice, of animals and humans to placate their anger.

She, Sophia called out their names and spoke in their language.

'Powerful gods of the cosmos, of the forces of nature and destruction, who wage war on each other and each other's land and peoples, I declare a war on you.'

Tāwhirimātea, Tangaroa, and the other gods of war stopped their battles and without prior warning hurled the cosmic forces at Sophia. Storm and lightnings of infinite magnitude enveloped her in a raging noise of the hurricanes as the gods together screamed and laughed.

After some time, perhaps uncountable, the raging storms ceased, to reveal a completely unscathed Sophia, still holding the warship. The gods looked somewhat puzzled, all but Tāwhirimātea, for Sophia, daughter of Elohim, the formatrix

of heaven and earth had approached the god, and holding up the ship placed it against his face, the nails, the heads of the nails touching his skin. The other gods watched as the spirit of the god was sucked out of its body and through the nail heads into the ship. The body of the god now devoid of spirit, so like an empty bag, collapsed into nothingness.

There was a short pause, then the daughter of Elohim, the formatrix of heaven and earth held up the ship, letting it go it flew to the faces of every god, gods so terrified they could not move, and each of the god's spirit's was in horror sucked from their skins, and then the skins in turn sucked into the ship. Hine-nui-te-po, the Great Goddess of Darkness was the last to have this fate.

Maui the great trickster who had been consumed by Hine-nui-te-po, the Great Goddess of Darkness in his attempt at immortality was now freed, stood in front of the Aeon laughing.

'But they are Gods,' he said, 'and they will eventually return or worse will come and they will punish humanity for this.'

'They will return,' said the Aeon Sophia, Achamōth, Chokmah, Barbelo, Prunikos the daughter of Elohim, the formatrix of heaven and earth, 'and I will return and do battle and war with them again so mankind will not fear to be overwhelmed by cosmic forces beyond their control. Or will humans strive to overcome these gods.'

Maui briefly looked glum, then his face lit up, 'I like you!' he said.

‘And I like you too.’ said the Aeon.

The spirits and deities of Australia were different, they often took the form of animals, and like the humans loved the land. They were of the land, but Ngalyod the rainbow snake ate humans and Kurrichalpongo another snake who had destroyed tribes with a flood looked threateningly at Sophia. She put down the ship, and quickly tied their tails together. Maui who was still watching, roared with laughter, as did the other spirits of the land.

CHAPTER FIFTY-SEVEN: THE AMERICA WAR

The Toltec and Mayan civilizations had many Gods, requiring worship and sacrifice, notably human sacrifice.

Sacrifice by decapitation after the victim was tortured, being variously beaten, scalped, burnt or disembowelled as well as the removal of the still-beating heart was practised by the Aztec.

This began with bloodletting from the mouth, nose, ears, fingers, or penis, then the removal of the heart via the diaphragm. The offering of the heart would take place with either special positioning or through burning. At this time, blood would also be collected from the victim. The ritual will end with mutilation of the body, through dismemberment.

Some rituals involved the sacrifice being killed with bow and arrows. The victim was stripped and painted blue and made to wear a peaked cap. The victim was bound to a stake during a ritual dance, and blood was drawn from the genitals and smeared onto the image of the presiding deity. A white symbol was painted over the victim's heart, which served as a target for the archers. The dancers then passed in front of the sacrificial victim, shooting arrows in turn at the target until the whole chest was filled with arrows.

A feature of ritualistic practices that rose into prevalence were skull racks.

The Aztecs were particularly noted for practicing human sacrifice on a large scale, such as offerings to Huitzilopochtli. The priest would cut through the abdomen with a blade. The

heart would be torn out still beating and held towards the sky in honour to the Sun-God. The body would then be pushed down the pyramid where the Coyolxauhqui stone could be found. The priest would either cut the body in pieces and send them to important people as an offering or use the pieces for ritual cannibalism. Periodically children were sacrificed as it was believed that the rain god, Tláloc, required the tears of children.

The Incas worshipped many gods, and polytheism was common among their beliefs. They also made human sacrifices. As many as 4,000 servants, court officials, favourites, and concubines were killed upon the death of the Inca Huayna Capac.

The Incas also performed child sacrifices during or after important events, or with bad fortune, such as during a famine. These children were physically perfect and healthy, they were the best the people could present to their gods. The victims may be as young as 6 and as old as 15.

Months or even years before the sacrifice pilgrimage, the children were fattened up. Their diets were those of the elite, they were dressed in fine clothing and jewellery and escorted to Cusco to meet the emperor where a feast was held in their honour.

The Incan high priests took the children to high mountaintops for sacrifice. As the journey was extremely long and arduous, so coca leaves were fed to them to aid them in their breathing so as to allow them to reach the sacrificial site alive. At the site, the children were given an intoxicating drink, they were

then killed either by strangulation, a blow to the head, or by leaving them to die of exposure.

The many gods of Mesoamerica and South America gathered to meet Sophia, daughter of Elohim. There seemed to be hundreds, at their head were six.

Quetzalcoatl, the main god of the Toltec, Itzamna, the creator god and god of wisdom of the Maya, Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli head of the pantheon of the Aztec gods, the Morning Star, Venus, and the Inca god Inti, the sun god as well as Viracocha the creator god, and Pachamama the goddess of fertility.

Sophia spoke again in their languages,

‘Powerful gods of the cosmos, of the forces of nature and destruction, who wage war on each other and each other’s land and peoples, I declare a war on you.’

There was a silence, the gods unmoving, then Quetzalcoatl spoke,

‘They give their sacrifices willingly.’

‘That they do or do not is of no consequence for my actions, you are far above them, a dangerous branch that must be pruned, and pruned again when you grow back.’ She replied in a deadly earnest, so much so she noticed some of the gods were crying.

The gods, now standing like statues, for they could not move, faces becoming distorted with terror and fear. From the nails on the ship, as the Aeon Sophia, Achamōth, Chokmah, held it in front of them curled what looked like smoke, thin, twisting

and splitting into hundreds of threads. They entered the nostrils of every god, only to emerge slowly from between their lips, now with the god's spirit. Their bodies becoming like thin tissue paper and then completely dissolving, the smoke returned into the nails on the ship.

Now watching all this was the god Yaya, his wife and his son, Raven the trickster, also Ghede and the elegantly dressed Baron Samedi.

'You seem to live in harmony.' The Aeon said and turning to the Raven and back to Ghede and the elegantly dressed Baron Samedi, continued, 'And so please do so.'

And looking at the smirking raven and Baron said, 'And tricksters can bring life and joy.'

CHAPTER FIFTY-EIGHT: THE GODS OF AFRICA

The gods of Africa were assembled. Those of Egypt, nearly 500 Gods, Goddesses and lesser deities. Chief among them was Amun, the king of the gods, Isis, the mother of the gods, Osiris, The lord of the dead and the god of the afterlife, Horus, a sky god and the divine son of Osiris and Isis, Anubis, the god of embalming and the dead, Thoth, the god of writing, wisdom, and knowledge, Ra, the sun god, and Set, the god of chaos, storms, and the desert.

From West Africa, Aido-Hwedo, the creator serpent, Mawu, Da Zodzi her first son, Ananse the trickster spider. From Central Africa, Funzi the blacksmith another trickster, Lonkundo, teacher of how to hunt, his grandson Itonde the explorer, Mwindo, of invincible strength and a great prophet.

From East Africa Dorobo and Le-eyo of the Masai.

From South Africa the supreme god u Thixo, Tashawe the primal ancestor, Tikoloshe a water spirit, and another trickster Hlakanyana.

And many more gods and deities some now lost to history, all were gathered on a great plain having heard of the Aeon Sophia, Achamōth, and despite their greatness and magnitude were aware of her abilities at destroying the most powerful of gods.

‘Gods and Goddesses of Africa’, she began, ‘you have been wise and kind, tricksters and helpers of humans. You have not enslaved them; you have not demanded terrible sacrifices from people. I shall not harm those who do not abuse power

or force others to or create endless and unnecessary war. And she was gone from their sight.



CHAPTER FIFTY-NINE: EAST ASIA

In Chinese Taoism there are literally thousands of immortals as also in the Chinese pantheon of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. There are primordial emperors, Tian Guan, Di Guan and Shui Guan, Fu Xi who was married to the goddess Nü Wa who taught the Chinese people agriculture and weaving, which is also attributed to Shen Nong. The emperor Shun was a farmer, a Yao Lord of the Golden Age, all were venerated. The emperor of heaven, the Jade Emperor, Shang Di was originally mortal. The Jade Emperor looked after the people of China. The Taoist eight immortals were patrons of music and helped the sick. The queen of Heaven was Xi Wangmu. Finally, there was Monkey, another trickster.

In Japan again we find numerous Buddhas and Bodhisattvas as well as thousands of spirits, or kami who inhabit the land. So, each rock and tree, and creature, has its kami. The higher gods are such as the sun goddess, Amaterasu and her clan, the storm god of summer, Susano-O and his brother Tsukuyomi, the god of the Moon. Susano-O was troublesome when young and banned from heaven, though he reformed. His son, Okuninushi was the god of abundance, medicine, sorcery and happy marriages, a powerful Shinto deity, the most powerful being Amaterasu the sun god. Hachiman was the protector of Japan, Inari a god of craftsmen, rice, and prosperity. Yomi was the land of the dead whose demons punished the wicked. Kintaro was a boy hero, the Golden Boy, he grew up to be a heroic samurai who defeated monsters.

Like the gods of Africa these were on the whole benevolent of those mortals less powerful than themselves and seemed

to preside of a fairly stable creation. So, the Aeon Sophia, Achamōth, Chokmah, Barbelo had no truck with them.



CHAPTER SIXTY: THE GODS OF SOUTH ASIA

Though the gods of the Hindu pantheon seem at times creative forces they are also destructive, in their dealings with demons and each other, often involving humanity. There is warfare, and a cosmic hierarchy of striving.

The god Durga, embodying all cosmic forces, is essentially a destroyer. She can take the form of Kali, the goddess who is the ultimate form of Brahman, and the devourer of time. She is Mahadevi, the supreme goddess, creator of Manidvipa the highest world.

This world is superior to Goloka, the realm of Krishna and Radha, Vaikuntha, the realm of Vishnu and Lakshmi, Kailasa, the realm of Shiva and Parvati. Superior to Brahmaloaka, the realm of Brahma and Saraswati.

Shiva, known as the destroyer, Mahadeva, Great God, Kaala, Death, truth and destruction. The birth of which is as follows. Brahma and Vishnu were talking about who should be the supreme deity when a pillar of fire in the form of an infinite phallus appeared in front of them. Brahma in the form of a goose flew high into the air, but failed to find the summit, and Vishnu in the form of a boar could not dig to its foundation. The phallus opened revealing Shiva, Brahma and Vishnu recognising the God's greatness agreed that the three should rule the universe.

The two great Indian epics, The Ramayana and The Mahabharata are epics of cosmic warfare echoed in humanity on Earth.

The Ramayana epic follows Rama's fourteen-year exile to the forest urged by his father King Dasharatha at the request of Rama's stepmother Kaikeyi. His travels across forests in the Indian subcontinent with his wife Sita and brother Lakshmana. The kidnapping of Sita by Ravana, the king of Lanka, which resulted in war, and Rama's eventual return to Ayodhya along with Sita to be crowned king amidst jubilation and celebration.

The Mahābhārata narrates the events and aftermath of the Kurukshetra War, a war of succession between two groups of princely cousins, the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas. A dynastic struggle for the throne of Hastinapura, the kingdom ruled by the Kuru clan. The two branches of the family that participate in the struggle are the Kaurava and the Pandava. Although the Kaurava is the senior branch of the family, Duryodhana, the eldest Kaurava, is younger than Yudhishtira, the eldest Pandava. Both Duryodhana and Yudhishtira claim to be first in line to inherit the throne.

The struggle culminates in the Kurukshetra War, in which the Pandavas are ultimately victorious. The battle produces complex conflicts of kinship and friendship, instances of family loyalty and duty taking precedence over what is right, as well as the converse.

The Mahābhārata itself ends with the death of Krishna, and the subsequent end of his dynasty and ascent of the Pandava brothers to heaven. It also marks the beginning of the Hindu age of Kali Yuga, the fourth and final age of humankind, in which great values and noble ideas have crumbled, and people are heading towards the complete dissolution of right

action, morality, and virtue. This is the present age, which is full of conflict and sin. Kali Yuga, the fourth age in the cosmic cycle, starting in 3102 BCE, the time of the events of the Mahabharata and lasts for 432,000 years so ends in the year 428,899 CE. That is in 426,875 years' time.

It was obvious that the Aeon Sophia, Achamōth, Chokmah, Barbelo, Prunikos the daughter of Elohim, the formatrix of heaven and earth should act here. Appearing in front of the great pantheon of the gods of South Asia, they all were present on the great plain of existence, standing silently and waiting. They who are wise enough to know of their fate, yet she did nothing.

CHAPTER SIXTY-ONE: THE GODS OF WEST & CENTRAL ASIA

The Babylonian pantheon begins with Apsu and Tiamat who produced numerous gods, including Anu and Ea. Apsu was prevented from killing these gods by Ea, who killed him, who with his consort Damkina produced Marduk. There then followed war between Tiamat and Marduk in which he destroyed her, making the land from her body. Having founded Babylon and a priestly class of worshipers.

Included in the pantheon were Ishtar, keeper of cosmic laws and Gilgamesh, a ruthless cruel ruler. In the epic he fights with the wild man Enkidu sent by the gods, but they eventually become friends and rule together terrorizing the people of Urk. More attempts by the gods result in the sun god Shamash who helped the two by killing the monster Humbaba. More deaths followed after the spurring of Ishtar sent to seduce Gilgamesh.

Baal, son of the god El, quarrelled with his brother Ya, who he fought eventually tearing him to pieces so becoming the supreme leader. He created further havoc in challenging Mot the god of death. Anat his sister massacred the inhabitants of cities and committed other acts of violence.

The great god Alalu the ruler of the universe after nine years was replaced by his son, Anu. Again, after nine years there was conflict between Anu and his son Kumarbi. Kumarbi winning by biting off his father's genitals. He swallowed his father sperm and in spitting it out crated a host of other gods including the storm god Teshub who remained undefeated.



Qormusta a Tengri, a god of the Mongols and Turkic, the personification of the universe, gave Sakyamuni, the Buddha, some yellow earth, which he threw into the ocean in order to create land, but a giant tortoise appeared. Sakyamuni realised that he must kill the tortoise for the land to be created but was reluctant due to his passivism. However, with assurance from Qormusta he did.

Zurvan, time, the first god created two sons, Ahura Mazda, the wise lord, and Ahriman, born out of uncertainty. The former sweet smelling, the latter foul smelling. Ahura Mazda set about creation with the help of gods he made but was attacked by his brother with demons. Ahura Mazda casting Ahriman into darkness, who on returning brought conflict into the world which would be resolved by Ahura Mazda at the end of time.

Other deities presented themselves, and humans who became such, Rustum of Persia, a hero, yet by mistake killed his son, and the Tibetan and Mongol legends of Gesar Khan who battled for justice. Also, the Goddess Al-Lat of Mecca.

And so, these and more joined the others on the great plain, now in tens of thousands, millions or possibly uncountable. All stood in silence, as did the Aeon Sophia, Achamöth, Chokmah, Barbelo, Prunikos the daughter of Elohim, the formatrix of heaven and earth, deep deep in thought.

CHAPTER SIXTY-TWO: GODS OF NORTHERN AND CENTRAL
EUROPE

Here the Norse gods including Odin, Vili and Ve assembled.

And the god Taranis of the Celts, a god of war often demanded sacrifices, humans burned alive in wooden boats or left to die in peat bogs.

Koschei the Slavic immortal was the deathless, who like the witch Baba Yaga were evil beings, the latter feeding on children. As mythic characters they reify realities as do many forms within the supernatural world such as vampires and werewolves. The Slavs lived in fear of Veles the god of the underworld and they looked to Perun the god of thunder and lightning to protect them, even if he was terrifying.

They too joined those waiting on the great plain.

CHAPTER SIXTY-THREE: THE GODS OF CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY

Perhaps the gods of classical antiquity epitomised more than other gods, human traits not only of hatred, violence, greed and jealousy, but also of love, fidelity, bravery and friendship.

The Titans and other primal beings produced lesser deities such as the fates, from which no human could escape.

The background to the establishment of the classical pantheon was war. War with the titans, such as Cronos, or Saturn his Roman name, and his son Zeus, Jupiter, who escaped the fate of being eaten by his father unlike his other siblings. And Gaia and giants, Typhon and others all took part in these wars. Atlas' empire was destroyed by the gods, which caused more war, his punishment to uphold the sky forever.

Zeus the eventual ruler was infamous for his rape of women, creating demigods, and heroes in the offspring that followed, such as Hermes, Athena, Apollo and Artemis, the Muses, the Fates, Perseus and Heracles.

Some gods helped humanity, Prometheus giving fire, and was punished for doing this by having his liver eaten by an eagle each day for eternity, only for it to grow back. Similar eternal punishment befall Sisyphus and Tantalus, only in the former case it was justified. Further mankind was punished by Pandora via Zeus, who unleashed plagues and disasters on mankind from opening a jar, all evil things with the exception of hope.

Apollo flayed alive Msrsyyas in a musical contest he won by craft rather than skill, Midas consumed by greed turned

everything he touched to gold, was freed by Dionysius. Midas also judged Pan the better musician than Apollo, so was given ears of an Ass, which when discovered by others made him commit suicide.

In competition with Athena and Poseidon the latter caused a great flood. His enmity with Athena causing him to give grief to Odysseus.

Dionysus, god of wine, was worshiped by women who in wild frenzies would eat animal and even human flesh.

The kidnapping of Persephone, the goddess of vegetation and growth by Hades ruler of the underworld almost caused the extinction of mankind for want of food. This was mitigated by Zeus to allow the goddess freedom during spring and summer when she is with her mother Deeter goddess of the Earth, and would bring forth new growth.

The characters of the gods and demigods is reflected in the many legends, for instance the great hero Heracles in some stories kills his own children, in another is a comic drunkard.

King Minos was punished for not sacrificing to Poseidon which resulted in his wife having union with the bull, the sacrifice which produced the Minotaur which had a monstrous appetite for human flesh. As a result of another war King Minos received 14 young people a year from the Athenians to feed the beast. The beast was killed by Theseus in the labyrinth. In a terrible mistake his father committed suicide thinking his son was dead.

In the hierarchy of the gods, humans often died because of not regarding their place, such as the death of Bellerophon, a great warrior who rode on Pegasus the winged horse, was killed by Zeus, or Icarus who flew too near the sun, or even the lesser gods like Phaeton who lost control of Helios, the sun god's horses.

Ixion, Tantalus, Midas all behaved selfishly, though were punished. Phaedra cause the death of Hippolytus, and so then killed herself, Clytemnestra killed her husband and was in turn killed by her son. Ino tried to kill her stepchildren, in the process causing herself and husband to be made mad by the Furies. Oedipus was doomed by the fates to kill his father and marry his mother, who on finding out hung herself and so Oedipus blinded himself. The Trojan wars are a complex set of stories of war, death, and betrayal, as is the journey home by Odysseus, himself deceitful.

The Aeon Sophia, Achamôth, Chokmah, Barbelo, Prunikos the daughter of Elohim, the formatrix of heaven and earth pondered the complexity of the Greek myths. It was more than mere explanations of events and power struggles, forces of nature, but seemed also to show complex insights into the human psyche. Their thinking, but more their complex changing emotions, at times contradictory. And was this echoed in their god's or visa versa? It seemed more than explanations using archetypes, but it was how the hierarchies' boundaries were continually broken in these events, and for sometimes contradictory reasons, if reasons at all. And fate, if this was true why bother with any seeming empty choices, none of it made sense. This troubled the Aeon.

Now all of these myriad waited on the plain for judgement.

The aeon contemplated the other religions of humanity, and human history. And then the struggles and conflicts in every aspect of humanity, and those in nature. She knew well the demiurge of her creation, the creator of physical worlds, but this complex history in which thoughts, emotions and desires were reified in so many different forms didn't seem to make sense. And this was just in humanity, and this universe.

She could explain a botched creation and those hierarchies of technology, of thought and ideologies. And deaths from famine and disease, from the forces of nature.

The 65 million deaths in World War two, the 22 million deaths in World War one, those who died as a result of politics, Stalin, Mao and Hitler, maybe a hundred million. Yet people, in the main, despite all this suffering still wanted life.

And such complexity from a botched creation and the forces involved, made no sense throughout the universe and all the civilizations which these gods waiting on the plain was a mere fraction. And her solution, to remove these structures for just one.

They, not only now the gods and powers of The Earth or even this Universe, but many more. Even the dispersed Übermenschen. All waited on the plain for judgement, but now for those waiting no time passed anymore.

Her, the Aeon Sophia, Achamôth, Chokmah, Barbelo, Prunikos the daughter of Elohim, the formatrix of heaven and earth, the last of the emanation from the One, what or who in the

Greek pantheon was she, her desire had been to unite with the One, and in failure created the demiurge. Or was she the One herself, the origin?

And then The One became her, and she it. Or she realised this was the case, and then the Mahler symphony came back to her, and overwhelmed with a sea of infinite emotions she was gone.

CHAPTER SIXTY-FOUR: BACK TO ARCADIA

Billy was sitting in the garden of his house in Woodbridge, Suffolk, which he shared with Catharine Mulberry, and now also with Emily Clarke. It was a warm early September evening. A large book lay on his lap. It was around 16 by 12 inches and 1 inch thick and in a box sleeve. He thought he recognised it as he had a similar book in his library, *The Times World Atlas*. But this was different, the box had drawn shapes and symbols in black and red on a gold background. But the whole thing was obviously hand drawn and painted. He slid the book out, he could see it had been an old atlas, now the cover painted gold with the same kind of sigils, none he recognised from his knowledge of religions, but he did recognise it as *The book of The Gods*, the second book that Smith had shown Kate and himself.

He opened the book, he could make out it was an atlas, but every page had been painted over in black ink. Then he flipped to what he thought was the front. The first two pages were black with four large sigils written in silver, the next page had seven or eight sigils written in black ink with multicoloured backgrounds. The next silver sigils on pink, the following similar, some pages had many sigils others just one or two, others were covered in what looked like writing in an unknown language. He could see that all the maps had been covered with black ink, but only the first 12 pages had drawings, the rest of the book was just black ink. It was as if the person had stopped drawing at 12. Looking closer he noticed that small rectangles of paper had been pasted down underneath the sigils on the first pages.



‘What’s that?’ said Catherine Mulberry as she and Emily Clarke approached with trays containing a jug of Pims, glasses and dishes.

Not sure? Billy replied, putting the book back in its sleeve and lying it on his lap.

‘Oh, I’ve had a sudden feeling of déjà vu!’ Catherine said,

‘And me too...’ commented Emily,

‘And me...’ began Billy.

‘What’s that?’ said Catherine Mulberry as she and Emily Clarke approached with trays containing a jug of Pims, glasses and dishes.

Not sure? Billy replied, putting the book back in its sleeve and lying it on his lap.

‘Oh, I’ve had a sudden feeling of déjà vu!’ Catherine said,

‘And me too...’ commented Emily,

‘And me...’ began Billy.

And then all three were in the familiar hall of the palace of Arcadia, as were Sarah Cooper, Jay Chandana, DI Benjamin Washington, Kate Moore, Nigel Summers and Mr Smith, who was the only one seated at the large round table.

‘Sit?’ said Smith, ‘and I see you have a book, actually *The Book*, interesting?’ he continued.

Billy was holding the book, the others were silent, Smith continued.



‘You have no doubt all been having what you thought were bouts of déjà vu.’

Ben was first to reply, ‘Yes, but over and over the same few seconds, until it was like a nightmare, what’s happening?’

‘Sit please.’ said Smith.

Ben and the others sat at the table, Billy placing the book in front of him.

‘Not of déjà vu,’ Smith was talking, ‘an actual time loop, a time loop of about 5 or so seconds, this being short term memory.’ He continued despite the obvious wish for others to speak, ‘You all were in a time loop, in fact the time loop was, or should I say is universal, well maybe larger than any universe.’

There was a long pause, then he went on,

‘But not here as this is not inside time,’ he waved his hand to represent the hall and palace. ‘And why a loop, and how a loop. I suspect the answer lies in that book. Let me see please?’

Billy rose, picked up the book, and took it to Smith, he then returned to his seat. Smith was examining its case then slid the book out, looked at the covers, then slowly turned the pages. The book was lying flat on the table so the others could see the pages, the first 12 then after these few the rest all blank or rather black pages.

Smith turned the 12 pages again looking closely at each, then the first page. He spoke,



‘This was The Book of the Gods, but have you noticed on these first 12 pages there are what looks like rectangles of paper that have been pasted down underneath the sigils. So maybe it should now be called The Book of the Ungods?’

Some of the others rose to see more clearly this was the case, then Ben spoke, rather excited, frustrated and nervous,

‘So, what’s the significance? How is it, what is it, the time loop thing, please explain.’

‘Well,’ began Smith, ‘time is a very complex and yet simple thing, but let’s think in terms of the idea of Aeons and such where time is reified, made into some kind of being, spirit or god, in your case, human like, so you humans can relate to it and deal with it...’

‘Animism,’ Kate said, ‘as being animated, having agency and free will, or in the case of the Greek gods strong personalities.’

‘Sorry you’ve lost me?’ Ben said.

‘Well time becomes a person and so we can deal with time in human terms,’ Kate answered, ‘in religions, but even now in our so called civilized scientific world we have the old year, and we represent it as an old man, and the new year as a baby, with the hope in new life.’

‘The pasted paper?’ interrupted Billy, ‘what is it? Can you see what it is?’

‘A drawing on paper, in this one of a monstrous face,’ Smith flipped the page, ‘this a doll? Then a snake, faces, animals...’



‘Drawings from my book we lent the boy!’ exclaimed Kate, ‘the first one we saw him drawing in a sketchbook, of Hine-nui-te-po, the Sleeping Mother Death! These are the boy’s drawings from the book I lent him of myths and gods. But why are they now pasted in this book and covered with these sigils?’

She paused and then answered her question,

‘Oh, I think I see?’

‘See what?’ said Ben.

‘See that the desert stopped the clamour of being, of violent forces, but replaced it with nothingness.’ Kate replied, ‘But we wanted our lives back but without the destructive forces, forces we pictured in these images of gods.’

‘So?’ Ben asked.

‘What if one of these drawings is time, is the god of time, and that altering this god, or the drawing alters time.’ Kate said.

Ben thought, then said in an excited voice,

‘Oh, I see, like in Voodoo, like the doll figure of a person, you hurt the doll with a needle, the person feels the pain, a magic.’

He paused, ‘Well I wouldn’t have believed it once, but do now, so...’ he was thinking, ‘If the image of time is removed, the god of time painted over, then time is removed.’

‘So, no time, the force of time.’ said Billy, ‘No time, just a loop of short-term memory. And you say everywhere?’

Billy addressed Smith who replied,

‘As far as we can know yes, although these are human images, the forces are those throughout all possible worlds, and maybe impossible ones also.’

‘Then what?’ asked Ben.

‘What is the last drawing?’ asked Billy.

‘A human skull with lines all over it?’ said Smith.

‘Not from the book I lent the boy.’ said Kate.

‘The skull found underneath the motorway!’ Emily said.

‘Yes, I think it’s a picture of the aeon Sophia.’ said Billy.

Emily looked confused, then uttered quietly, ‘Oh, that explains it.’

‘And then, what’s after that picture?’ asked Kate.

‘Then nothing. I don’t understand, nothing, yet once there was ...’ said Smith, flipping the blank pages.

There was more silence.

‘12 pages, why not more, new pages, new drawings?’ Billy was talking to himself. ‘Somehow for some reason the boy stopped, wouldn’t or couldn’t continue...’

‘Maybe we have it wrong, the 12 pages control or limit the gods and time is missing as in the other blank black pages. Not a limited time by the sigils, but no time at all, or the 5 or so seconds we experience.’ Kate said.

‘Brilliant!’ Billy was saying loudly, but even if he was shouting, his words were drowned by the noise of an aircraft flying low overhead.

‘Impossible for that to happen here.’ shouted Mr Smith, Billy looking puzzled, ‘Impossible in this world of yours.’ he continued. Nigel was now turning from the window to which he had ran on hearing the noise and was now also speaking loudly,

‘A Vickers Viscount from around 1960! So noisy, a turbo prop. It’s the boy or a message from him, a Vickers Viscount like the model aircraft I helped him paint.’

‘So?’ Sarah asked Nigel.

‘I think we need to get into a Vickers Viscount.’ was the reply.

‘How do we get to fly on a Vickers Viscount?’ Sarah asked in a very authoritative tone.

‘Tricky,’ Billy said, ‘I’d say it’s no longer a commercial aircraft but anyway in a world where time is five or so seconds absolutely impossible.’

‘Well not if we could get back to the early 1960s.’ Nigel said.

‘You have it,’ said Smith, ‘via the houses in which we find the boy, they can lead us to an airport where there will be aircraft of this type.’

‘Birmingham airport in 1960.’ said Ben, ‘Then let’s all go.’

‘Well in 5 seconds only 3 or 4 could safely move across from a present into that past before the time loop.’ Smith said.

There was a silence, then Catherine Mulberry spoke, in an even more authoritative tone.

‘It will be Billy, Kate, Nigel and Mr Smith.’ A pause, ‘Obvious reasons, expertise and abilities.’

Emily Clarke, Ben and Jay nodded agreement.

Sarah obviously went through the alternatives, the qualities of each then said, ‘We wait here then.’

‘Where from?’ asked Nigel, ‘Which house?’

‘Inglefield Road in Stechford is the nearest to the airport.’ said Ben.

‘Inglefield.’ then.

Whoever said this the words were lost as the four disappeared.



CHAPTER SIXTY-FIVE: A VICKERS VISCOUNT

The four found themselves outside 46 Inglefield Road, in Stechford, the dilapidated semi-detached house that had been converted into a maisonette, they quickly stepped through the gate and into sometime in the late 50s, 1960s and a neat garden with its large pampas grass. They walked through the door and into the house.

‘So how do we get to the airport without going back out and into the present?’ Kate asked.

‘Well, we did something similar in Colonial Road, we leave via another route.’ replied Nigel.

Billy wasn’t listening, but said,

‘If we go down the garden, we can get onto the railway line which runs directly past the airport. I know this area from when I was a kid.’

So, the four walked through the hallway and into a small kitchen, much smaller than the other kitchen in Colonial Road, but like it, it had painted brick walls, except in one place some pencil marks and dates. From this kitchen there was a door to the back garden. A path led between the apple trees and on to the end of the garden where the railway line was at the bottom of a cutting. They managed to get through a broken fence and bushes, Smith not at all happy, and scrambled down the railway embankment to the London Midland railway line below.

‘Not far.’ Billy said, Kate was looking at the embankment which had whole areas of burnt grass.

‘Why did they burn the grass?’ she asked.

‘They didn’t,’ replied Billy, ‘the steam engines occasionally throw out sparks which set alight the dry grass. This is before the line was electrified.’

‘Trains, are there trains running here.’ Kate asked.

‘No humans here, I think. So, no trains running.’ replied Billy.

They walked along the narrow path beside the tracks, and through Lea Hall station.

‘How far did you say?’ asked Smith.

‘I didn’t,’ replied Billy, ‘but I guess a couple of miles, so now a mile and a half to the airport.’

They saw little either side of the railway line for there were trees on both sides, though the cutting was rising, levelling at the station then rising onto an embankment. Now they could see to their right old abandoned factories, on the left fields, and a group of trees, Allcot wood and a small stream, Hatchford brook.

‘Fields before they built the new housing estates in the 1960s,’ Billy was saying, ‘and the factories are from the war, they made spitfires here.’

Smith ignored this, finding it all rather squalid. Then ahead they saw another station, Billy continued,

‘That’s Marsten Green, and the airport, the end of the runway, we can get down onto it and walk to the old terminal buildings.’



‘So, no trains, planes?’ asked Nigel.

‘There.’ Billy pointed to what was a 1930s building in the distance and in front two aircraft, silver and white.

‘Viscounts’ cried Nigel.

They walked across the runway towards the aircraft apron, no people, some birds and rabbits, and a slight breeze.

‘How are we going to fly without a pilot?’ asked Nigel.

‘I can fly the primitive machine,’ said Smith, ‘I’ve all the material I need, and the details of every part, a very primitive device.’

‘He has the internet and more in his head.’ Nigel said answering Kate’s look.

Smith marched up to the nearest aircraft, he walked around looking at each of the four engines,

‘We need to start all four engines using a compressor,’ he pointed to a machine on a trolley, ‘bring it over to the port outside engine first.’ He walked around the aircraft opening small flaps on each engine, then stood by the steps which gained access to the cockpit, he continued,

‘Nigel you can be co-pilot, Kate give Billy the OK, and Billy handle the compressor, after each engine starts close the flap and go to the next.’

Smith climbed the steps followed by Nigel and Kate, Kate standing in the doorway. Smith sat at the controls and was joined by a nervous looking Nigel. Meanwhile Billy had moved



the compressor to the first engine. Smith was throwing switches and looking at dials, then shouted to Kate,

‘Tell Billy to start the compressor.’

Which she did, there was a noise of the compressor then the loud roar of the turboprop starting.

Smith tried to speak but the noise was too great, so he reluctantly gave a thumbs up, and Billy moved to the next engine and so on until all four were running with a deafening scream. Billy climbed the stairs, now standing behind Smith and Nigel in the cockpit. Smith rose,

‘I had better close the door properly; these are pressurised aircraft.’

Which he did, then folding out two seats for Billy and Kate. He regained his seat and began moving levers calling out what he was doing, not that anyone understood. The noise of the engines growing louder and the aircraft shaking a little.

‘Nothing to worry about.’ shouted Smith as the aircraft began to taxi. The plane taxied to the end of the runway ready for take-off, Billy anticipated the others question,

‘Where to fly to? We will see once airborne.’ he said.

The plane stopped at the end of the runway and turned, Smith pushing all four throttles fully open, it began to accelerate and then as he pulled on the joystick it rose into the air. Nigel thought he detected a slight smile on Smith’s face.



The plane rose higher, and they could see late 1950s Birmingham below, with no motorway, no spaghetti junction, none of the 1960s housing estates, and lots of factories, and the massive cooling towers of Hams Hall power station. Upwards they climbed. Upwards and upwards.

‘It’s climbing and I can’t seem to stop it?’ shouted Smith.

‘Expected!’ Billy replied.

‘Our max ceiling is twenty-five thousand feet!’ Smith was saying,

‘I doubt it very much.’ was Billy’s reply.

‘Why?’ said Smith.

‘Oh, Andromeda.’ said Billy.

Smith looked puzzled, Kate had no expression, Nigel was beaming.

The Vickers Viscount rose as the altimeter spun round and round then stopped, the sky first becoming purple then black.

‘Are we in space?’ asked Kate.

‘Impossible.’ Smith said, noticing the engines were now silent and the props stationary, Nigel still beaming. Billy leaned over and pointed to a bright dot above them to the right, below them they could see the Earth, Europe partly covered in clouds, the Alps and Africa.

Kate was now watching open mouthed.

‘What is it?’ asked Smith,

‘I guess we would call it a starship.’ Billy replied, ‘And I imagine a big one. Nothing recent like from Star Trek or Star Wars, more like something from Dan Dare.’

Nigel was now laughing openly.

The object grew larger and soon a discernible shape with features began to emerge.

‘It looks like a ship,’ said Kate, ‘like one of those old battleships, not like the one in the house, this is much longer with towers and it’s like reflected, towers, what I suppose would be underneath if it has a right side up, more like many of those ships kind of brought together.’

‘From the boys imagination.’ Nigel said.

‘Or for his imagination.’ said Billy.

They approached ever closer.

‘It’s nothing like a ship,’ Smith was saying, ‘it is far bigger, hard to judge scale for you I expect, but I can, we are about ten of your miles away, and it is precisely two miles long.’

‘Two miles!’ repeated Nigel.

The size grew apparent and what looked like where they were headed, an opening, a landing dock. The Viscount drifted into the massive void of this dock, which was lit with a universal silvery light, quite dim. Smith hadn’t lowered the undercarriage, whether deliberate or an oversight he never said, but the plane gently touched down, and the door opened.



They stepped out into the void of the landing dock, the entrance still open, the crescent of the Earth clearly seen. Slowly the great ship moved, and the Earth slipped out of sight, just a myriad of stars, then a blazing spiral of light. Nigel spoke,

‘I think that’s the Andromeda galaxy?’

‘You are correct.’ Smith replied.

‘B... b.. but, how?’ stammered Kate.

Smith was about to give an answer but Nigel who had been looking around the docking bay now flooded with light spoke first,

‘No exit, no exits from here...’

The light was now dazzling, but then they could see nine figures silhouetted against the bright light.

‘Who...’ Nigel began.

Then he was interrupted by Billy,

‘Something is wrong, something is not quite right, something not right here, seven, not good. But also before, something in the house wasn’t right?’

They all thought, Nigel aloud,

‘We entered as before...’ he described in detail the familiar scene, ‘a clean smelling hallway. Directly on our right was a large Singer sowing machine, a treadle operated one, then stairs. To the left a door was ajar to the living room. In there

was a sofa and chairs, an old black and white television, a sideboard which had a large incomplete wooden model of a warship on it, and above a water colour of The Queen Mary Ocean liner...'

'Stop!' said Kate, Smith got in first, 'Yes, the ship shouldn't have been there, the boy had made it into a weapon for the Aeon. It shouldn't have been there. Well done!'

There was a brief pause then Billy asked,

'What day of the week was it, is it, what day of the week?'

Nigel and Kate thought but Smith replied instantly, 'Tuesday.'

'Tuesday,' said Billy, 'but the boy is only ever there on Sundays.'

'Yes, but the boy needn't be there for the place to exist, surely?' asked Kate.

Nigel responded, 'Well, if the place is for the boy, it won't exist when he is not there, unless something else, or someone else fabricates something similar, so maybe we went to some other place, not the boy's...'

And as he spoke all four were suddenly back in the present and outside 46 Inglefield Road, in Stechford, but only for a few seconds because then they were back in the great hallway in Arcadia. The others who had been left behind gave them anticipated looks.

'Wrong house, wrong day,' said Kate, who explained.

‘I don’t get it, then why if not the boy was needed for the place to exist was a place there at all.’ Sarah asked.

‘Oh, I think I know,’ said Smith, ‘it’s obvious, any intelligent being would do this, it is a trap, a trap we might fall into, which we did, and a trap set by whom? Interesting.’

‘The nine.’ said Billy.

Emily spoke, ‘The nine found in Park Street, now in storage at the lab?’

‘I think you should now say, those that were, in storage.’ said Smith, adding,

‘That are no longer in storage, think, Sophia has been at work with the warship as a weapon, and now has eight other beings with her.’

And continuing, ‘The Andromeda galaxy was not arbitrary, threads of the engagement with the boy, maybe a clue, a warning, Sophia still it seems may have ambitions.’

He whispered so only Billy heard,

‘Time is out of joint.’

‘Shakespeare’s Hamlet.’ thought Billy, ‘and betrayal and murder...’

‘So, what then?’ said Ben.

‘Why, Colonial Road of course, we go to Colonial Road.’ said Kate.

Someone said ‘Yes.’ And they were gone.

CHAPTER SIXTY-SIX: THE SUNDERLAND FLYING BOAT



SHORT SUNDERLAND III

The Short Sunderland was one of the most famous and popular aircraft ever to serve with the Royal Air Force, it has also one of the longest histories, being in use for twenty-one years.

Designed as a long-range open sea reconnaissance flying boat to replace the biplanes then in service, the first Sunderlands were completed in July, 1928. Developed from the Short Empire flying boats, the Sunderland had an exceptional armament for that time, including a four-gun tail turret and a very useful bomb load.

At the outbreak of the Second World War three squadrons of Sunderlands were operational, and were soon in action on patrol and rescue duties. On the 14th of September one Sunderland rescued the entire crew of 14 from the sinking freighter "Kontington Coast" off the Sicily Isles, and the rescued men were all back on land within an hour of being torpedoed.

As the war continued, Sunderlands were used in increasing numbers against U-boats, with great success, and were responsible for the destruction of many submarines, attacking with bombs or depth charges and devastating machine gun fire—some Sunderlands even being armed with an additional four fixed machine guns. Sunderlands proved equally formidable against enemy aircraft; on one occasion a single Sunderland was attacked by eight Ju 88's and shot down three of them, damaged a fourth and drove off the remainder.

Production of the Sunderland ceased in 1945—a total of 740 of all marks having been built—but the Sunderland continued in widespread service with the R.A.F. and other air forces, and also, after conversion, as an airliner.

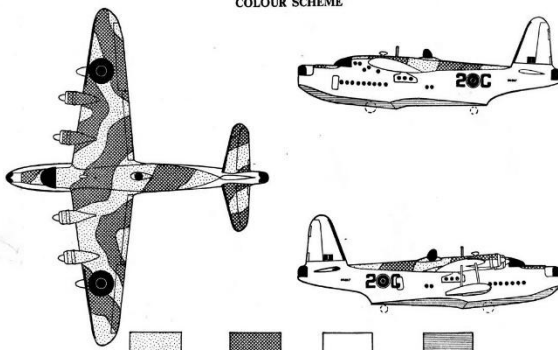
Sunderlands were in use on the Berlin Air Lift, flying between Hamburg and the Havel lake in Berlin, and carrying 4,847 tons of freight. When the Koreans were broke out, Sunderlands were again in action throughout the conflict, and they were also employed in anti-terrorist operations in Malaya, each carrying some 200 fragmentation bombs.

The Sunderland III, of which 518 were built, was powered by four Pegasus XVIII engines, each of 1,000 h.p., giving a maximum speed of 210 m.p.h. and a cruising duration of 12 hours. Armament consisted of up to 4,500 lb. of bombs, mines or depth charges, and the number of machine guns carried between seven and fourteen.

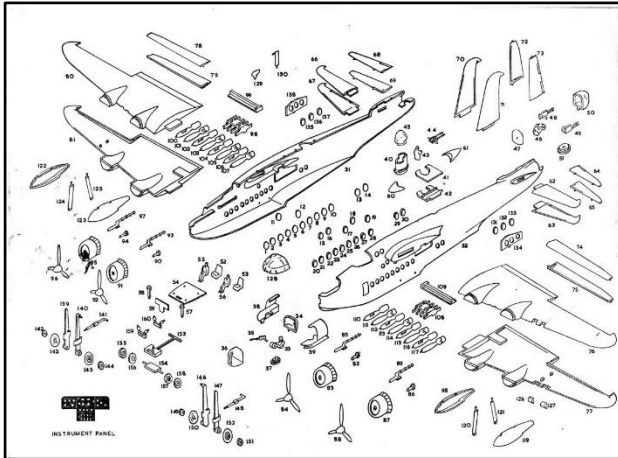
Wing span was 112 ft. 9½ in. and length was 85 ft. 4 in.

ALL AIRFIX AIRCRAFT CONSTRUCTION KITS IN SERIES (1, 2, 3, 4 & 5) ARE MADE TO A CONSTANT 1/72 SCALE. ALL MODELS ARE DESIGNED WITH THE SAME SKILL AND ATTENTION AND DISPLAY THE SAME CARE AND VARIETY OF DETAIL AS CAN BE SEEN IN EACH MODEL. EACH MODEL IS THEN TO SCALE AND REALISTIC IN RELATIONSHIP TO ALL OTHER MODELS. OTHER FINE AIRFIX CONSTRUCTION KITS ARE AVAILABLE IN VARIOUS SERIES, SUCH AS HISTORICAL SHIPS OR TRACKED VEHICLES AND ACCESSORIES, 1:24 VINTAGE CARS AND 1:12 MODEL FIGURES. A LIST OF THE MANY OTHER AIRFIX MODELS WHICH YOU CAN MAKE WILL BE FOUND ON A SLIP IN THIS PACKAGE.

COLOUR SCHEME



PRINTED IN ENGLAND



INSTRUCTIONS

It is recommended that the instructions and exploded view are studied before commencing assembly. If it is wished to paint internal details such as crew, turret or cockpit interiors, this should be done before assembly.

1. Insert the 30 mine windows into the middle of the landing halbs, and cement in place, applying cement to the windows themselves only (11-32).
2. Cement front gunner into turret rear (33 & 34).
3. Press front pin of forward machine gun into gunner's hands but do not cement, insert gun through hole inside of transparency and cement transparent to turret rear (35 & 36).
4. Cement front (control) half on to already assembled turret (17).
5. Place turret in landing ring in one half of forest remaining and cement on other half of mounting. **ENSURING NO CEMENT COMES INTO CONTACT WITH TURBETT (38 & 39).**
6. Front and upper turret base on lower half of landing platform, and cement on upper half, leaving turret free to rotate (40, 41 & 42).
7. Cement gunner into turret, locate front gun unit on top of transparent and cement transparent to gun. **ENSURING NO CEMENT COMES INTO CONTACT WITH MOVING GUNS (43, 44 & 45).**
8. Cement rear gunner into turret rear (46 & 47).
9. Press front pin of starboard gun unit through gunner's hands and cement front pin unit on to transparent gun. **ENSURING NO CEMENT COMES INTO CONTACT WITH MOVING GUNS (48 & 49).**
10. Insert gun through middle of rear transparency and cement transparent to turret rear, locate and cement on top (50) (51 & 52).
11. Locate and cement pilot's seat on cockpit floor (52, 53 & 54).
12. Cement plate on to seat and locate and cement control columns into forward holes of floor (55 & 56).
13. Cut out and cement printed instrument detail to instrument panel, locate and cement panel in floor slot (56).
14. Cement cockpit floor on to landing ring in starboard fuselage half, cement tab of mid turret platform into slot of port fuselage half.
15. Place rear turret into landing ring, and front turret gunner near top slot, and cement other half of fuselage in place. **ENSURING NO CEMENT COMES INTO CONTACT WITH MOVING TURRETS.**
16. Locate and cement front and rear fittings of mid upper turret to top of fuselage, using this procedure (60 & 61).
17. Cement together upper and lower halves of port tailplane, and upper and lower halves of port elevator (62-65).
18. Locate and cement tailplane into fuselage slot, locate elevator pin on tailplane and cement, setting elevator at desired angle.
19. Repeat the above procedure for starboard tail assembly (66-69).
20. Cement together halves of fin, and cement together under halves (70-73).
21. When dry, cement fin into fuselage slot, at the same time locating the pin of the moving motor in the hole of port motor and fin.
22. Cement together upper and lower halves of port aileron, and when dry place in location in landing half, cement upper wing half in place. **ENSURING NO CEMENT COMES INTO CONTACT WITH MOVING AILERON (74-77).**
23. Repeat the above procedure for other wing (78-81).
24. Insert propeller pin through rear of engine casing and cement into place. **ENSURING NO CEMENT COMES INTO CONTACT WITH MOVING PROPELLER COLOMNS.**

NOTE: Turret, exhaust, gun barrels, propeller blades and de-icing strips on leading edges of wing, tail and fin.

PLEASE NOTE

It is recommended that when using capsule of adhesive the end of the capsule be cut off with a pair of scissors apiece. If from the end. Excessive pressure on the capsule is undesirable as this material is in liquid form, and care should be taken in which direction the capsule is pointed to avoid getting adhesive in the eye or on clothing.



Now outside the entrance to the block paving parking area in front of 85 Colonial Road the four quickly stepped inside to find themselves sometime in the late 1950s very early 60s. Walking down the path towards the front door Nigel remarked,

‘We can go out into the back garden, there is a path that leads back to the road, we’ve used it before, it will be the road in the past, like the house, so from there we can get to the airport.’

No one replied, they entered the house and walked down the hallway and into the living room, this was where the French windows led to the garden, Nigel continued towards the door followed by Smith.

‘Wait!’ said Kate, ‘I think there is someone in the kitchen?’

She turned into the kitchen through the open door, there was the boy sat at the large pine table, on it was a box, an Airfix plastic model kit of the Sunderland flying boat as was used in the second world war. The boy was looking at the instructions with a puzzled expression. Also on the table was the completed model of the Vickers Viscount aeroplane on its stand that Nigel had helped the boy paint.

‘The plane,’ Kate said as she saw the table, ‘it’s the plane.’

She entered the kitchen followed by Billy. Nigel and Smith turned and joined them, all four looking at the scene.

The boy looked up at them, ‘It’s too hard.’ he said, showing the instructions for assembling the plastic kit. It consisted of a

It drew Nigel and Smith closer, looking,

‘Phew, it does look difficult.’ Nigel said.

‘Not at all,’ said Smith, ‘quite simple, and obvious.’

‘Would you like help?’ asked Nigel, ‘Yes please was the reply.’

To which Nigel sat next to the boy, examining the instructions and looking at the parts, parts of the flying boat attached to plastic sprues.

Smith joined them, obviously checking the parts on the sprues with the diagram.

Kate spoke, ‘What of the airport and the plane.’

Nigel and Smith were not listening, but Billy replied.

‘A red herring or rather that was the plane.’ he pointed to the model on the table,

‘The cause of the plane we saw flying over us, and its cause is the boy’s problem with the kit.’

‘You mean the boy sent it for help.’ she replied.

‘I very much doubt it,’ said Billy, ‘I suspect maybe some feeling in the boy materialized and somehow was animated in the model aeroplane.’

‘Wow,’ said Kate, ‘Like a reification of a feeling, a real hypostatization.’



‘Yes,’ said Billy, ‘and maybe you should help also and stop Smith doing all the thinking and Nigel all the work, I’ll just take a look around.’

‘OK’, said Kate and sat next to Nigel. They were now snapping parts of the model aeroplane from the sprue,

‘We should paint the parts first, especially those which go inside the aircraft.’ Smith was saying.

The boy frowned; Nigel was about to agree.

‘I think we want to just make the model first then paint it.’ Kate said.

The boy gave a smile.

‘So, first then the pilots and the flight deck...’ Nigel was saying as Billy began to stroll around the kitchen and then into the other rooms.

He walked up the stairs and into the boy’s bedroom. There was a small bookcase. It had some dinosaur books, ones on rockets and missiles, some much older books, probably from when the boy was much younger, one a ladybird book Billy recognised, he took it out and flipped through the pages, he had been given one of these books himself, *The Wise Robin*. He put it back smiling, there were the two large books which were beautifully leather bound, *The Books of Truth*. Next to these were two of the books made from old Atlases, the ones he had seen in Inglefield Road, the ones Smith had shown to Billy. But the book which had the card sleeve was not there in the bookcase, that was the one Billy had and it was now in *Arcadia* on the table in the great hallway. The book of the



ungods. He also noticed another two old Atlases, one a Times Atlas, the other from Readers Digest. He looked at them, as yet untouched.

‘So,’ thought Billy, ‘the boy uses old Atlases to make his own large volumes.’

He gave another smile which turned into a frown.

He came back into the kitchen, progress had been made, it looked like the two halves of the fuselage were ready to be joined together, all the model makers were engrossed.

‘You’re missing a book,’ Billy said, ‘the one in the card sleeve?’

None of the model makers noticed.

‘I’ll fetch it for you?’

They still didn’t notice, so he left the kitchen, returned to the garden outside and from there to the street and the present. And quickly to the great hall in Arcadia, surprising Jay, Ben, Sarah, Emily and Catherine Mulberry.

‘On your own?’ Ben asked.

‘Come to fetch and return the book which I think needs completing.’ Billy said.

‘And the others?’ questioned Ben. ‘Where are they?’

‘Making a model kit of the Sunderland flying boat, and I think I’ll wait until they are finished.’

‘Sunderland flying boat?’ asked Ben.



‘No matter, not important... but...’ Billy said faltering at his words, then continuing, ‘ah, tea and biscuits, just what I need.’

He just got a frown from Sarah and a smile from Jay. He then went for a stroll around the formal gardens. Arriving back, he looked at his wristwatch, rather large, a Diesel Mr Daddy DZ7332 which showed no less than four times on four dials, he moved one of these on an hour,

‘They should have finished by now,’ he said, so he picked up the book, and was gone.

In the kitchen of 85 Colonial Road, in the late 1950s or very early 60s sat around the table was Kate, Nigel, Smith and the boy. In front of them was the completed flying boat, white unpainted plastic but with all its RAF markings and insignia from transfers applied using warm water. The boy’s look was difficult to interpret, Nigel and Kate were smiling, Smith’s countenance might be showing just a hint of a strange feeling inside, one of contentment. At that moment Billy entered and the three snapped out of their reverie.

‘Here is your book,’ said Billy,

‘you no doubt need to complete it.’

With that he placed it on the table.

‘We’ll go now and let you get on.’ he said beckoning the three to leave.

The boy spoke,

‘Mr. Smith, Nigel, and Kate, thank you for your help, and Billy for the book.’

He was taking it out of its sleeve.

‘And we will leave you now to finish it.’ Billy said.

CHAPTER SIXTY SEVEN: THE ROSE CROSS

Back in Arcadia they all sat and talked. So, it was decided that the first trip to Andromeda was a trick, but what for?

Smith gave the smug answer, 'For the book, obviously, they needed the book.'

'Why the book?' asked Jay.

'The book seems to control powers, powers of the mythical gods, but also the hierarchies of power throughout all worlds.' said Smith, and continued,

'The rest of the pages would curtail or limit other powers other hierarchies? I called it The Book of the Gods, but then it became The Book of The Ungods. So, this group, we think the nine, would not want this to occur. I think this group, a very select group, who could be in effect absolutely powerful over all the others if they had this book.'

he laughed, but it was strangely foreboding.

'Why Andromeda?' asked Jay.

'Well, the boy had an Andromeda thing.' said Kate.

'That was much later, maybe there is another story here?'

Billy said, he continued,

'It's Sophia who wants the book, but why Andromeda, is it significant?'

'You mean the galaxy,' said Nigel,

‘well, it’s bigger than ours...’

he was about to continue but was stopped by Smith,

‘Was thought so, but is not, almost identical in size and due to collide with this galaxy, what you call the Milky Way, ugh! in 4.3 billion years time.’

‘No help.’ said Kate,

‘let’s start with Sophia, what do we know, last of the emanations in Gnosticism.’

‘All Gnosticism?’ asked Ben.

‘Not all, in fact in a diagram from Rosicrucianism she appears to be supreme.’

This was Catherine Mulberry,

‘Kate, you wrote about this in one of your papers, you were studying Rosicrucianism, you presented this paper at the university, I remember it was good sound work.’

‘Err, yes,’ said Kate blushing a little,

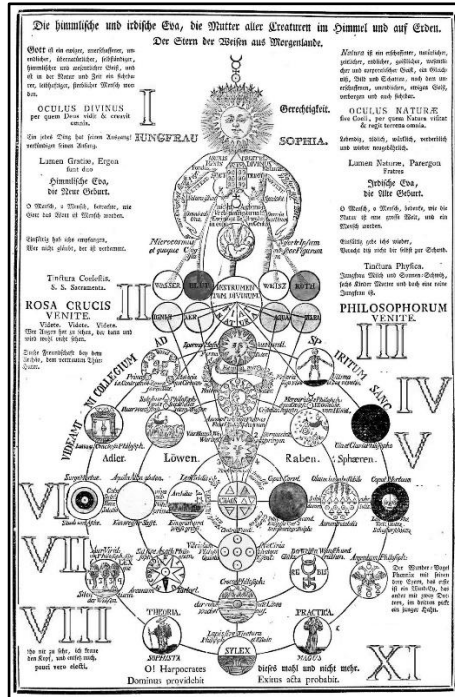
‘it was from a drawing. It was not significant really, an image from another period, not that of my studies.’

‘I think we should see if you can find a copy of the diagram in the library here, and I’ve a strong feeling you will. I’ll come with you.’ said Billy.

‘We’ll all go with you.’ said Sarah taking command as she was wont to do. So, they all left the hall for the library, and soon,



as if the library itself was helping, they found the drawing in a large book from a German treatise on Rosicrucianism of 1785.



‘Sophia is the head, and these others numbered?’ Catherine Mulberry was saying and asking.

‘Give me a second.’ Kate said, she left the room for just one second then returned,

‘I have it now,’ and continued, Billy looking at his watch,



‘This I now recall, these numbered spheres are other aeons emanating from Sophia, they are eight in number, and Sophia herself is number One. Number two is the idea, the Divine instrument, used by Amaterasu in battles, three the physical maker or demiurge, four is matter and energy, Kalunga, five the four elements, Gnomes, six is chaos, seven, vitality, life, Jengu, eight passion, love, the Goddess Anansa, nine is The Golgothian Sylex who carries a massively destructive artifact.’

‘I’m impressed.’ said Billy slightly ironically and looking at his watch again, Catherine smiling, the others silent. After a while Sarah began,

‘So where are these things, these nine...’ she stopped, and then continued, ‘the nine creatures found in the Park Street excavation, why were they there, was it to find something, this book...?’

She was interrupted by Emily Clarke,

‘Or The skull, one of the things. One of the creatures from Park Street, it had a head, a beautiful face, but when we examined it, fantastically it had no skull. A missing skull is obviously impossible, so it was never recorded.’

She gave a knowing look at Billy, then continued,

‘But that was before I learnt that these creatures were not of this world.’

‘The skull that was found underneath the motorway?’ Ben asked.

There was again silence.

Sarah spoke,

‘So can I speculate the skull is that of Sophia, and she and the other eight came to retrieve it. Given their power why did they not?’

‘More complicated, first I suspect the skull is no longer in Birmingham.’ said Billy, ‘or at least not where they can find it, so they are waiting. And there is the physical form of Christine, she was at one time instantiated as a physical being, must have been, so she had a skull, at least I think so, but she is the one who found the skull of the aeon Sophia. Found her own skull?’

Billy paused thinking,

‘But when she found it,’

He paused,

‘The sigils, she wasn’t expecting the sigils on the skull!’

He paused again,

‘Of course, that caused her to collapse as if dead!’

‘And has a connection with the boy, the future Andromeda from another galaxy or plane of existence. That’s where the Andromeda thing fits in, is Sophia Andromeda? The boy’s avatar of Sophia, the one that the boy produced, or will produce?’

And the sigils on the skull, who put them there?’



‘The boy.’ said Ben, he had an image in his head of an African mask, a Voudon.

The others looked amazed, all but Billy who replied,

‘Yes, I think so and your protector the Voudon told you. Your protector, and if so there is great danger for you, and the rest of us. I don’t think the nine will remain peaceful. I think they are waiting for something.’

‘Sounds ominous.’ Sarah said, and continued, ‘Do we need to know something of Rosicrucianism?’

‘Well, the short answer is no.’ said Billy.

‘There’s much more to it than that, as Billy knows, historically it’s relatively late, not part of Gnosticism or Neo-Platonism as such, but influenced by their ideas. A 17th century phenomenon which is still around today in various forms, such as the Masons. But it did pick up on some very old themes, as in this drawing, both Cabbalistic and Gnostic, and we could if we tweak the ten essences in Jewish Kabbalah, the last being material existence, we could get a nine.’

Catherine Mulberry added.

‘I’ll go for Billy’s no in that case,’ said Sarah, ‘and so?’

Ben frowned, and finally spoke, ‘Well things are getting mixed up, I can’t follow it all, but these nine waiting, they might get spooked, ha! odd word, by all this.’

‘You’re on the nail DCI, I think they are, hence the Andromeda trap. I think these nine are now very active.’ said Billy.



‘Active doesn’t sound good.’ said Kate.

‘It’s not good,’ said Smith, ‘their power remember is awesome, I do not use the word lightly, and they have Sophia, and we know of her power.’

‘What’s their likely move?’ asked Jay.

‘The boy seems a vulnerability and his incomplete book of the gods or ungod, and we are in the way of them getting to him and the book. So, I’d say their likely move is to destroy us then get the book from the boy or worse.’ said Billy.

‘Why if they are so awesome, and that the Aeon Sophia could conquer all the gods of earth is the boy a threat?’ asked Ben.

Smith gave a sigh, a very human expression, Billy was about to speak, but Smith had developed another human trait,

‘Because,’ he said, as if talking to a child, ‘the Aeons weapon was what?’

‘The ship with the nail, the weapon the boy made.’ said Kate, Smith nodding, ‘And?’ he said waiting.

‘She, Sophia is using the boy’s weapon, and he is drawing in the book of the ungod, all the gods?’

There was silence, Smith was nodding a YES.

‘And get maybe something else from the boy?’ Billy added.

Before anyone could ask what, the room was lit up in a bright red light.

Jay rushed to the window,

‘The woods are on fire!’

Then she ran out of the hall through its two great doors and outside, standing at the top of the steps, she was looking around,

‘Fire, all of the woods are on fire, I think we are surrounded by fire.’ she shouted, running back into the hall and closing the doors.

The palace was surrounded by a ring of fire out from which came the Golgothian Sylex brandishing Surtur the Twilight Sword, also known as the Sword of Doom, reforged by the Fire Giant Surtur using the “Burning Galaxy”.

CHAPTER SIXTY-EIGHT: OVIS

Ovis came to the privet hedge of 85 Colonial Road, walked through the gate, and down the path as he had before when he confronted the boy in his anger and frustration. He had been one of the twelve who had sort the destruction of all worlds. He had insulted the boy, and they had fought a war across the kitchen table with armies and weapons created from their imaginations. The war of the kitchen table in which he, Ovis, had been totally defeated, and from which he gained great respect for the boy. And it was he and Nymphaeaceae another of the twelve that the boy had shown how to think by drawing. Where Ovis had learnt to play with infinities by drawing his thoughts. And this had brought purpose to his life where before he had none.

He opened the front door of number 85, walked down the hallway, through the room with French windows and into the kitchen. There sat at the table as he expected was the boy, he spoke,

‘This time I’ve come not to show you my drawings. So, no time for talk and tea my friend, your other friends are in trouble, in great danger. Threatened by a powerful aeon with the most powerful of all swords, an infinitely powerful sword. I need a sword to fight, else they all might come to an end.’

There was a pause then the boy rose and went into the larder, to reappear holding a sword, a sword he had made, carved in wood, he offered it to Ovis who laughed,

‘But it’s of wood! How can a sword of wood be of any use against the fire sword of doom?’



Then he laughed even louder,

‘I was forgetting my battles with you,’ he took the sword still laughing and was gone.

And so, from somewhere in the palace of Arcadia a door to the great hallway opened and in walked Ovis to the puzzlement of all those gathered there.

‘Hello, I’m Ovis, a long story but I know the boy, and I can think by drawing, he taught me, and I drew a palace surrounded by fire and an aeon with the fire sword of doom, so I visited the boy, and he gave me this,’

He held up the wooden sword, and laughed,

‘Let’s see what it will do.’

With that he walked to the door opposite, out of the palace to greet the Golgothian Sylex and the sword of doom. The others followed; they noticed already the far parts of the building were now on fire.

Ovis was not tall, his dress casual, short chinos and a t-shirt, he had closely shaven hair, which could have been ginger, and a short beard. On one arm a tattoo of a Mobius strip. In his hand he held the boy’s sword, crudely carved in wood, the shape of a pre-Roman sword, a falcata of about eighteen inches in length, the blade wide and slightly curved.

The Golgothian Sylex was massive, about seven feet tall, in full armour, a helmet in the shape of a ram’s skull, dark greenish skin where it could be seen, holding a shield which shone gold in the flames around them. He held Surtur the Twilight Sword,

the Sword of Doom, reforged by the Fire Giant Surtur using the “Burning Galaxy”. A sword whose blade was of burning fire at least five feet long.

‘An unfair match.’ said Billy, by now the group were aware of the error of the obvious with what they had seen, Emily was the only one to speak,

‘I wonder if that monster has any realization?’

Sylex raised the sword Surtur to make his blow, to bring it down on Ovis and destroy him. Ovis raised the falcata in defence, the two blades were about to meet, a cry came from the flames, more a scream,

‘The boy! Stop, stop, it’s the boy’s sword.’ It was the cry of the Aeon Sophia, Achamōth, Chokmah, Barbelo, Prunikos the daughter of Elohim.



CHAPTER SIXTY-NINE: THE BATTLE OF THE TABLE

The boy looked at Ovis, still holding the falcata, then at a chair to the side of the pine kitchen table, opposite the boy was another empty chair.

‘You want me to sit, thank you, I will of course illustrate what occurs.’ said Ovis.

The first to enter the kitchen was the Golgothian. He stood; he was obviously very confused by what had just occurred. He was just moments ago standing in front of a burning palace about to smite a weak individual, the individual sitting at this table which was now in front of him. A table in a room he did not recognise as a kitchen, and another figure sitting at this table, a boy. He was now looking around the kitchen. He recalled he had just been about to strike a fatal blow at the weak creature.

‘I think you should sit there,’ Ovis said pointing to the empty chair, ‘and put your sword on the table.’

Which the Golgothian did. The flaming sword was not burning the table at all, but something else had caught the Golgothian’s eye.

In the centre of the table which he hadn’t noticed before, he couldn’t recognise it at all, it seemed to him like a small strange white boat, it was the Airfix plastic model kit of the Sunderland Mk III flying boat of World War two. It was the kit that Kate, Nigel, and Smith had helped the boy make.

The boy spoke,



'It's the Sunderland Mk III flying boat, in the war it had bombs, and machine guns in the nose and tail, on top and the sides.'

He leaned over and picked up the model showing the bombs on racks underneath the wings, and the machine gun turrets front and rear and on top. He continued,

'It was used in the war to rescue airmen from the sea, and to attack German submarines. Because of all its guns the German aircraft found it hard to attack, they called it the Flying Porcupine.'

He put the model back down on the table. Nothing happened at first, then the Golgothian grabbed his chest, then his right arm, then the left, his head, groaning as if being pierced by invisible spines, his legs, his back which he could not reach, so he fell off the chair writhing in pain. He convulsed, then before the life force drained away, he seemed to fade. Ovis' face remained fixed like stone.

The succession of the other seven aeons entered the room one at a time, the Goddess Anansa, the aeon of vitality, life, Jengu, the unnamed, unnameable aeon of chaos, the aeon of the four elements, Gnomes, the aeon of matter and energy, Kalunga, the aeon of the physical matter or demiurge, the aeon Amaterasu with the idea in physical form, the Divine instrument. Each had the same fate as the Golgothian, they laid their weapons on the table noticing the flying boat, the boy gave the same description, and they all suffered the same fate, dissolving just before annihilation. All the time Ovis was watching expressionless. As the last of the eight aeons

dissolved, the boy rose and picked up the flying boat, left the room to return a little later, he sat and waited.

The Great Aeon Sophia, Achamöth, Chokmah, Barbelo, Prunikos the daughter of Elohim, the formatrix of heaven and earth entered the kitchen and sat facing the boy. The aeon was shifting her appearance from image to image of the eight, of Christine, of the boy.

The boy rose and went into the pantry, and returned with a box made from cardboard, the size of which was around nine inches square. He carefully placed it in the centre of the table and lifted the lid. It was empty. He placed the lid next to it. He waited.

The changing face of the aeon showed puzzlement, and drifted over the tabletop to see inside, it hung over the empty box. Slowly the skull of the aeon appeared from out of the face, no longer changing but the face of the beautiful aeon Sophia. The skull slid into the box. The boy leaned across and replaced the lid, then took some crayons from the draw in the table and began drawing strange shapes on the box, sigils, on all six sides. The sound of a scream came from inside the box, as if the drawings were also being etched on the skull. The beautiful face of the watching aeon, Sophia, showed a silent scream. As the boy finished drawing on the last side of the box the screams stopped, and the aeon Sophia seemed to dissolve.

The fires had stopped, the palace of Arcadia part destroyed, the woodland completely burnt. Billy, Smith and the others stood on the steps looking at the scene of devastation.

‘What next?’ asked Kate.

She was about to continue but Smith interrupted,

‘Could we not go to a place a tad more comfortable while this place mends itself?’

Nigel gave a knowing smile.



CHAPTER SEVENTY: ONCE AGAIN IN THE HALL OF THE
MOUNTAIN KING

They were now in what he, Nigel, had nick named The Hall of the Mountain King.

Another creation of Billy's, made prior to the Palace of Arcadia, this was a more modest creation. A large room, a great hall, with heavy Rococo gold decoration, elaborate furniture, and a massive candelabra. There were bookcases, beautiful wood panelling and mirrors in the walls. It could have been from a Russian palace or something from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Windows looked onto formal gardens with a fountain, and beyond to hills then in the distance snow-capped mountains, a very un-English landscape. A log fire burnt in a large fireplace, it was dusk, the room illuminated by candles and the huge candelabra. They were all now sitting in elaborate gold chairs with side tables which had drinks and vol-au-vents on them. All were now familiar with The Hall's over ostentatious decoration. Nigel and Smith seemed very content.

There was one empty chair, and before anyone could ask why, the great doors opened and Ovis walked in clutching sheets of paper with drawings on them. He sat in the empty chair.

'I will recount,' he said, 'I have drawn all the events of the second battle of the table', he emphasized 'second', and so he recounted the events of the kitchen using the drawings he had made. He finished, there was a silence from the nine, they seemed to be waiting.



Ovis took a swig of the drink that was on his side table, a fine sherry, and popped a vol-au-vent into his mouth, then smiled,

‘So now what? What is the plan?’

The silence continued broken eventually by a slightly exasperated Smith,

‘We need rhizomes not hierarchies, and we have a place, a vast plain, somewhere with literally an infinite number of hypostatized beings in limbo, some extremely dangerous, we need to deal with these.’

‘Hmm, tricky?’ said Ovis.

‘The sort of place that is absolute?’ mused Nigel, ‘and infinite, that’s a problem?’

‘Oh, that boy knew a thing or two about infinity, I created one, he created another bigger one, it had to be shown to me, but he did know, and did make one that was bigger, that’s how he beat me.’ Ovis was saying this, and it seemed no one was listening.

‘A perfect and beautiful garden, a garden of Eden to keep them in, like you had in your Arcadia, now sadly ruined.’ said Smith addressing Billy.

‘Thank you, and not ruined, it will sort itself out, rebuild itself. But perfect, perhaps, yes, we need the perfect solution, a universal solution, an absolute solution?’

‘But aren’t you into hierarchies again.’ said Kate.

This struck Billy like a thunderbolt,

‘We are!’ he shouted, and continued in an excited voice,
‘I am, of course I am, I’m not thinking laterally, how stupid of me, how really really stupid,’
he was thinking, then continued,
‘An imperfect garden? though one that can contain all powerful Aeons, impossible...’ Billy was saying,
‘The boy overpowered all powerful aeons’, Smith said.
‘Yes, that’s true.’ said Billy,
‘But can he or his garden contain an infinity? He has a garden, far from perfect, but an infinity?’
‘You haven’t been listening,’ Smith said, ‘to Ovis here, the boy can create infinities, ever larger ones.’
Another pause, Billy closed his eyes then bit his lip.
‘Dam! I should have known of the place all along, the garden, the garden of Eden, of everything, and I’ve been there, you have been there,’ said Billy, he was looking at Nigel.
Nigel looked blank and puzzled.
‘The garden...,’ said Billy. He rose from his chair and strode grim faced purposefully out of the hall, only seconds later to re-enter with a casual stroll, smiling,
‘It’s done, not a perfect garden of Eden at all, but it’s all done?’ he laughed.



‘How?’ Ben was first to ask, but Catherine Mulberry was smiling, and saying to Billy,

‘I think I know how, but you can tell the story...’

And he did.

And when he had finished, as Billy now knew Smith well, Smith said,

‘I really must go and see, and of course that Flying boat we built.’

CHAPTER SEVENTY-ONE: THE GARDEN OF ~~EDEN~~

So, Billy once again walked down the all too familiar path of 85 Colonial Road. He found the boy in the kitchen, sat at the large pine table still working on the book of the ungod, now nearly completed. Next to him was the third book, still of blank, black pages.

‘Hi,’ Billy said, ‘could you show me around the garden?’

The boy looked puzzled, ‘The back garden?’ Billy added.

The boy led Billy into the living room, through the French windows and onto a small, paved area. In front of this was a rose trellis, dilapidated with a few poor looking roses. There were small flower beds either side of the windows with daffodils in flower,

‘I once spent all morning watching one of the buds open.’ the boy said, and then led Billy to the left. Facing them was an old clothes mangle underneath a shed missing its front. To the left was the house and the kitchen windows.

All this time the boy had been talking, like a guide on a tour,

‘Roses, the shed with the mangle...’ and was watching as Billy drew in his Moleskine notebook a plan of the garden.

‘... these strange plants, like in the dinosaur book...’

‘Horsetails,’ said Billy, then thinking, perhaps the boy knew this and was pointing out their significance?

‘They are rhizomic.’ Billy added, again being unsure of the boy’s knowledge.

‘Oh,’ said the boy, ‘like mint?’

‘Yes, like mint.’ Billy replied.

‘Not then like the Rhubarb?’ the boy asked, pointing to a large clump in the flower or vegetable bed next to the clothes mangle.

‘No, I don’t think so.’ was his reply.

‘What about those?’ the boy was pointing to a large group of purple Irises in the centre bed. ‘They have tubers.’ he added.

‘I think they might be,’ said Billy, ‘do they spread?’

‘Not sure,’ said the boy, ‘I think they might, but things stay much the same here.’

Billy held back a smile, and a ‘YES!’, and much more, he could have danced a jig, composing himself he asked,

‘Is it OK here, do you like it?’

The boy looked thoughtful, then said, ‘Well I’ve never really thought about it, but I suppose so?’

‘Are you on your own?’ Billy asked.

‘Well, it depends on what you mean, there are things here, like armies, dinosaurs and stuff, but people? Not most of the time, which is OK,’ he added, ‘my nan is sometimes here, and of course you and others often visit.’

Billy wondered who else apart from those he knew of, certainly Smith, and of course this Ovis person and the others of the twelve. He knew of the twelve from his encounter with

The Tiles of Truth. How many others? And what of these 'armies' and 'dinosaurs', where are they? His thoughts were broken, for the boy spoke,

'They all have their places, let's continue the tour.'

Now Billy was thinking, does he know?

'Not much in this flower bed, or the others, there's a wild sweet pea in that fence,' he pointed, 'from when this was farmland, and those tall trees.' He pointed to three tall sycamore trees. Billy continued to draw in his notebook.

'Then there's the apple tree, and the gooseberry bush,' again he pointed, 'and there behind the bonfire the path to the road, it's used by the dustmen to empty the bin. Well, that is what it was used for.'

They walked down the path alongside the empty vegetable beds and onto a rough lawn where a very old apple tree was. Past this the lawn continued ending in a fence and the three tall sycamores.

'That's where we built those machines with the tiles.' Billy was now talking and pointing to where the boy, Nigel and himself had built strange devices with the tiles of truth. Now no longer there.

'I can show you around the front garden,' the boy said 'but you already know that very well from the time before. It's more sunny and would suit things that like the sunlight, and of course the two air raid shelters, that would suit those who like the dark.'

And we have rhizomes and trees, but the trees never grow so big as they need cutting down, so I think this will do. No doubt Mr Smith will want to see.'

They walked back into the house.

'I'll get back and finish that book, then they can all come.' the boy said and walked into the kitchen. Billy stood scratching his head, smiling, then made to leave, he called back,

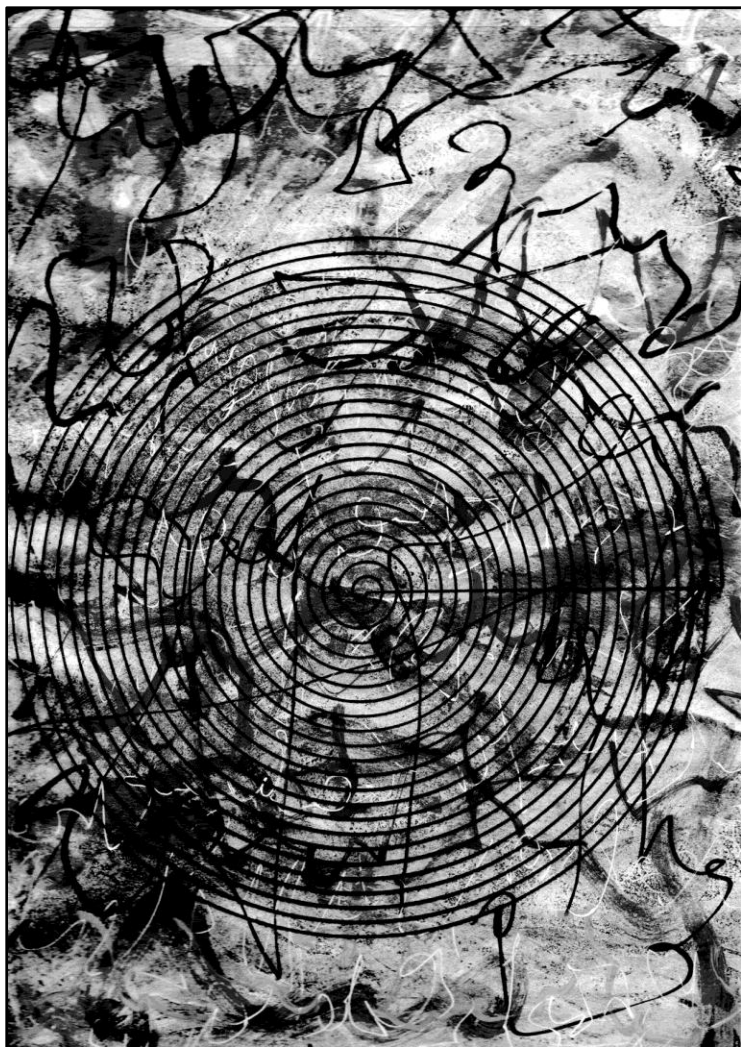
'See you!'

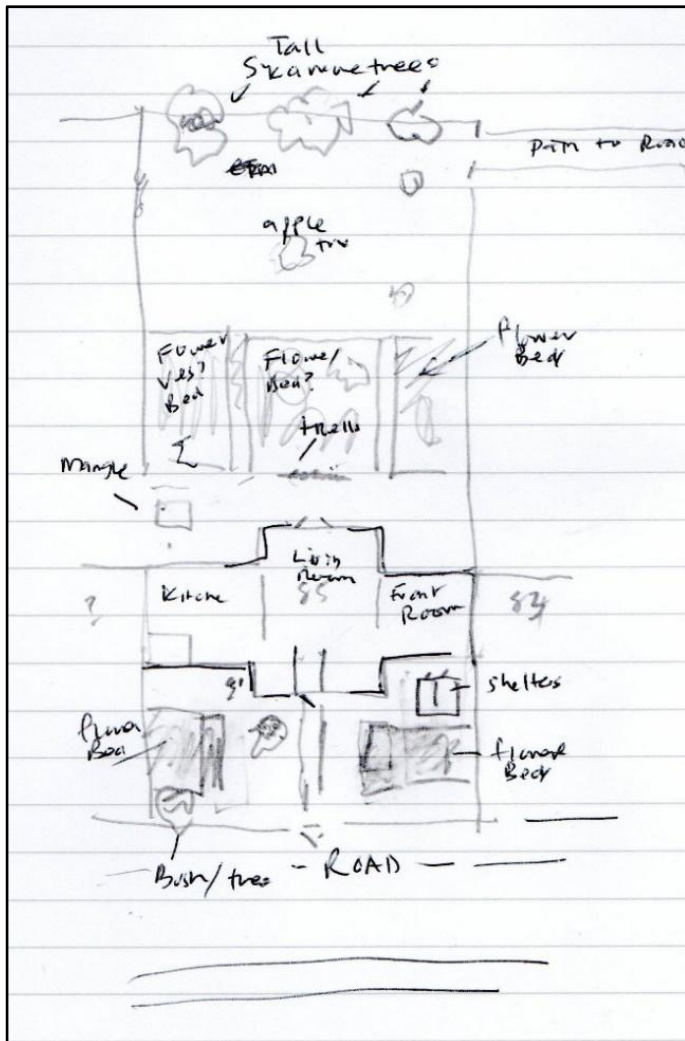
And got the same reply.

Creations of the Rhizome, no but not one, many rhizomes, small and even arboreal structures the same, particular, and the garden of the gods, with a small 'g'. – even the bad gods. There forces mitigated, the forces of nature likewise, times and tides... all mitigated into a steady state.

The boy was drawing on the last page of the book of the un gods.







CHAPTER: SEVENTY-TWO WORK ON THE GARDEN

The boy now took out the third book from his bookcase in his bedroom, the old world atlas, it already had all the pages painted over in black ink. He would use his 'special' pencils given to him from Mr Smith, those he had used for the other two books. These could draw in silver and gold and other colours. He kept these in the draw of the kitchen table. He took the book with the second book, the one of the ungod, downstairs and placed them on the kitchen table. Then he took the second book out of its sleeve and opened it at its first page, then he opened the third book, what would become 'The Book of ~~Eden~~', at its first blank pages. He thought for a while, the image of Billy drawing in his Moleskine notebook came into his mind.

He looked again at the first drawing in the second book of the ungod, the overpainted drawing of the Mauri god Hine-nui-te-po. He rose and first walked around the back garden, he frowned, then re-entered the house.

'Then the front garden?' he thought, here it was obvious, he opened the rusty iron door of the first air-raid shelter, it had been used after the war as a coal store. Inside was blackness.

'Perfect.' he thought. Going back to the blank page of the third book he drew. He drew lines in different colours, some dotted, circles and shapes.

Mr Smith entered and stood by the table watching the boy drawing, he was transfixed. Despite his vast memory and intellect, he could not make out what the boy was drawing. Or could he anticipate anything. This was for him what we call an

epiphany. He had never had such a feeling of ‘not knowing’, it was he thought delightfully annoying, then even exciting. The pages were covered now with these lines, in gold and silver, and colours, some dotted, others dashes.

The boy looked up and spoke,

‘It’s a map of the garden,’ he said, ‘and of how the thing in the drawing can get out from the drawing, the lines, and find its way into the front garden and from this to the shelter. It will be OK there.’

Smith was smiling, he thought the drawing was delightful, though he couldn’t see this map at all in the drawings, he felt sure the Mauri god Hine-nui-te-po would do so, escape from the sigils of the second book and find its way into the shelter in the garden using the map.

And so it was that Smith would sit for hours watching this process. A blank page, the trapped god or spirit. The boy finding a place for it, those of Babylonia the place of the horsetails, those of the Inca, Aztec and Maya the tall trees. Some gods and spirits inside the lilac trees, some in the wild sweet pea, and so on.

And a quote came to Smith, from his vast knowledge, something a human had written...

“We have art in order not to die of the truth.”

CHAPTER SEVENTY-THREE: THE BURIAL

Worlds continued and continued to grow like budding rhizomes. Now perhaps in what was nearer to Arcadia, the Greek: *Ἀρκαδία* which referred to a vision of pastoralism and harmony with nature. The scale of violence was much reduced and continual escalation ceased. There was striving, but not for any universal dominance of power or truth. The underlying phenomena of the cosmos altered; the universe, all universes, became a steady state as a result of changes in these underlying structures. A version of Fred Hoyle's cosmology better described reality. No longer did particles recede in an infinity of ever more esoteric objects and virtualities. Atoms became stable. The downside was a reduced radioactivity, power could be generated using radioactive elements but the half-lives were much reduced, and weapons grade material was no longer possible. The slow change of the world at these levels was imperceptible at first for most. But science and scientists had work to do, to re map all their theories and possibly explain why things in the physical world had changed such that their existing models no longer worked. As if nature had decided not to obey its human given laws.

Emily Clarke now had a new interest, in Gnosticism. She left Birmingham and Carla Drive to join Billy and Catherine in Woodbridge, sharing the house and living in the guest cottage.

DI Benjamin Washington, now a DCI was still in the West Midlands Police and remained in Coleshill, though now lived with his family in a large, detached house.

Jay Chandana continued her career in pathology, gained promotion and moved to the USA. Though this complex and stressful work was mitigated by her frequent visits to the village where life was far more simple.

Sarah Cooper left the unknown government department. She took up writing and illustrating Manga comics, stories often featured her wild creations of evil demigods and alien intelligences. When her few close friends asked her why, she always answered,

‘No good reason, an absurd thing to do.’

The reply was often met with misunderstanding, at which she would smile, and find a sense of approval coming from another world.

Nigel’s home was still his Victorian mansion in Edgbaston, but sharing it with his partner, Kate Moore, now a senior lecturer in The University of Birmingham’s Department of Comparative Religions. Doctor Catherine Mulberry an honouree director. Kate’s fame for her depth of knowledge within this esoteric academic world was well known, what wasn’t were her resources. Though she lived with Nigel in Edgbaston much of their time was spent in the other mansion, Billy’s palace, Arcadia. Now restored. There she could study for days and weeks outside of time. And the weather matched their moods, of course Nigel and even the cat would join her. And no cooking or housework.

Nigel returned briefly to his old subject of physics and branched into cosmology. The theory was simple yet complex. Beginning with Fred Hoyle’s steady state theory to



account for the change in the seeming structure of the macro and micro scales. Atoms returned to their origin, as the 'idea' of that which was indivisible. The cosmos was no longer teleological but was a steady state of a continuum. The laws of thermodynamics and entropy had to be rewritten, for which Nigel won his fourth Nobel prize.

How all this was accounted for was the idea that reality is like a simulation, or emulation, an information processing system but one that is self-sustaining, and that somehow this had momentarily altered, a brief moment in now what was an infinite steady state.

This dealt with the cause of the prior historical rush towards destruction. The theory was that in the self-emulating system at some point a glitch occurred, dated to around the time of the philosopher Aristotle, in which the steady state achieved a teleology, ceased being a rhizome and became arboreal, tree like, of competing hierarchies which universally was catastrophic. How the glitch was removed was unknown to most. That it was removed became obvious. It was of course the subject of the third Book, *The Book of Eden*.

Kate had asked Nigel why these other realms, such as those of the Smiths, all seemed involved.

'Tricky,' he said, 'but let's imagine the universal glitch is the idea of the glitch occurring in a single self-sustaining algorithm and is one that allows it to jump to others, that would do it. Like a computer virus spreading through a network.'

'Or as I might say, a being from the Pleroma descending into what is all below and messing with Hylē.' Kate mused.

‘That would do it.’ he replied.

‘And the nine Aeons found at Park Street looking for the skull.’ she asked.

‘Yes, the nine looking for the skull.’ he said.

‘And the skull?’

Interesting, he said, ‘Not sure?’

‘I know,’ Kate said, remembering, ‘Smith said the last image in the boy’s sketches was the skull.’

She thought awhile, then said,

‘Instructions, the answer, the instructions for the last book, the closure of these bridges. So, the extent was more than here, the bridging was more even than universal, it was transcendental. And the markings on the skull gave the answer to the closure, we need to take good care of it I think?’

So it was that Chief Constable White via Billy arranged for all those involved, including Dr Paul Wybew-Bond from The Home Office, and Jane Smith at Billy’s request, to travel to Birmingham and to meet underneath the M6 motorway at Gravelly Hill. It was Kate who had spoken to Billy, not his idea then, but it seemed the correct thing to do. The Chief Constable, who seemed to be in contact with Billy, and so arranged for the security of the burial, with help from contacts from Sarah Cooper. She was after all no longer in that line of work.

Billy chose the site, no argument, it was recognised by all involved to be a very special place. Jay flew over from the



states and was asked to pick up the skull from the path lab at The University of Birmingham. When the vault was opened there was nothing. The others were informed, none were surprised when Billy explained,

‘The skull was immediately removed from the vault once it was placed in it. Removed to Colonial Road in 1961. There the aeons could not acquire it.’

However, he visited the boy on the following day and returned with a box inside of which was the skull. Someone asked would it not then be dangerous if the aeons returned? Billy showed the box, it was covered in sigils.

‘See,’ he said, ‘they cannot touch it. But I’ve a feeling they might need to know of it somehow. And this place, the motorway at Gravelly Hill, is one of powerful containment, we know of that of old.’

The event of the burial took place underneath the motorway, by the Fazeley canal where it had all begun. A very powerful and significant place as Billy had noted.

Neither clandestine nor at night, but carefully screened from the public. The skull was buried deep underneath where it was found. How deep and by what means this very deep shaft of precisely one mile was made and subsequently filled in was not known directly. However, one figure at this event was a Mr Smith, dressed in his Victorian frock coat. He was maybe the source of the technology to do this.

As the group walked back to their cars from the towpath Kate casually said,



‘I know the skull and its sigils were more than just a message from the boy.’

‘Oh! Yes, you are right it was more than just that.’ Billy replied.

‘More than the curtailment of the Aeon Sophia, Achamöth, Chokmah, Barbelo, Prunikos the daughter of Elohim’s venture.’ she said.

He gave a nod, a firm ‘yes’.

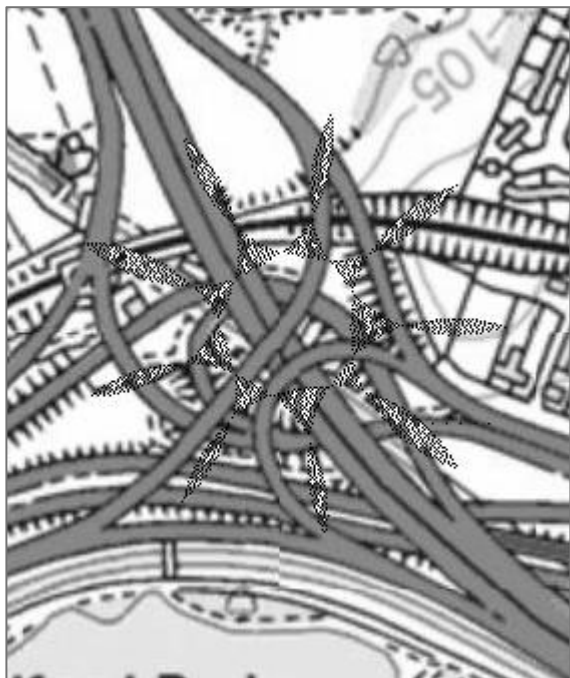
Some others in the group, notably the Chief Constable, paused and all looked at him with great anticipation. He gave them all one of his looks, the one that said plainly ‘isn’t it obvious’, as there was no reply to his look it was Kate who spoke.

‘The skull is that of Christine, the Aeon Sophia, Achamöth, Chokmah, Barbelo, Prunikos the daughter of Elohim, the formatrix of heaven and earth, The One, somehow the boy obtained it, and drew the sigils. But also, the means of overcoming and setting things aright.’

Billy took time to suggest to Jane that she should maybe take a holiday, she should visit Australia, and especially Ayers Rock, or to give it its proper name, Uluru.

It was not noticed by perhaps anyone, but maybe one or two, but by the following day nine figures somehow were buried in a star pattern around the site of the skull.

THE NINE SLEEPERS



‘There’s one thing I don’t understand,’ said Nigel, ‘I wish I could ask Billy, I’m sure he would have an explanation.’

‘Ask me.’ said Kate.

‘Well, if the boy had the skull back in 1961, how did it get to be underneath the motorway just now, and the sequence seems all wrong?’ he asked.

‘You don’t think the 1961 in Inglefield Road or Colonial Road is our 1961 do you? Or in a rhizome there is always a progressive flow of cause and effect, do you?’ she said.

‘Oh, I see.’ He paused then said, ‘I guess not. Should never have asked.’ And in his mind, he thought, ‘Of course Lorenz transformations.’

‘What are you smiling at?’ asked Kate.

‘Nothing really,’ Nigel replied, ‘just Lorenz transformations and Billy’s strange watch.’

‘Would you like one like his?’ asked Kate.

‘You bet!’ said Nigel.





THE OVERCOMING OF
BYTHOS, DEPTH OR
PROFUNDITY, ARKH,
OR THE BEGINNING,
PROARKHE.

THE AEON SOPHIA,
ACHAMŌTH,
CHOKMAH, BARBELO,
PRUNIKOS THE
DAUGHTER OF
ELOHIM, THE
FORMATRIX OF
HEAVEN AND EARTH
MET THE DEMIURGE
AND SPOKE AND
COMMANDED.

'YOU WILL RETURN TO
THE PLEROMA WITH
THE DIVINE SPARK
WHICH IS
ANTAGONISTIC TO
MATTER.'

THE SPHERES SHOULD
BE MAINTAINED IN
WHAT THEY ARE,
MATTER IN MATTER
SPIRIT IN SPIRIT, TO
ASCEND OR DESCEND

WILL NO LONGER BE
THE CASE. FOR THE
MIXING OF POWERS IS
CHAOS ATTEMPTING
PERFECTION, WHICH
IS NOT PERFECT
CHAOS, IT IS A
CHAOSMOS.

AND THUS IT WAS.
FOR THE MIXING OF
OPPOSITES DOES, WE

NOW KNOW, DOES
NOT CREATE
ANNIHILATION BUT
THE AUFHEBUNG.
AND SO THE MANY
WORLDS CREATED
NEW WORLDS NO
LONGER LIKE
BRANCHES BUT AS
WORLD-SEEDS AND
MANY SPHERES.

THE PLANES OF
IMMANENCE BROKE
APART LIKE ISLAND
CHAINS WITHOUT A
SEA. THE GODS
REMAINED IN THEIR
HEAVENS AND THE
PROFANE WERE NO
LONGER JEALOUS OR
DID THE GODS DESIRE
THE PROFANE.

BUT THE NINE
SLEEPERS REMAINED
NOW GUARDING
WHAT WAS MOST
PRECIOUS TO THEM.