



The Book of David

Peter the Celt

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When Two Worlds Collide

David Champion stood at the gate and could not believe the vista in front of him. A genuine Tudor house stood before him set in a wild wood like garden. It was timeless in its beauty and even the noise of the traffic behind him could not shake him out of this reality blip. It seemed stuck in the 15 century and it had taken him with it. As he walked towards the house he found his mind drifting towards the top left hand leaded window though he did not know why. A shadow seemed to fleet across it and this stopped him in his tracks. He quickly put it down to a trick of the light and carried on his way.

“Thank you Silas Mandleson, whoever you are.” he said as he opened the door and took in the small though very ornate hallway. It was indeed a strange house and as he surveyed the carvings on the oak paneled wall it truly captured his imagination.

A cold shudder rushed past him and taking it for a draught he shut the door behind him. Although the hall way was pretty light at the moment he knew that is was going to be dark later and the absence of lighting was going to make for quite a drawback. He was generally quite self-reliant though so this added to its appeal. He had it in his mind to write a book and he wanted to get away from it all so he could be lost in his imagination and be free from the everyday hassle of living.

First things first though he wanted to look around and generally soak in the musty atmosphere. He climbed the creaking stairs as he was to visit the room that had first caught his attention. Much to his disappointment it looked quite ordinary although it left a mild state of *déjà vu*. The whole house was quickly covered and he soon found himself relaxing in an old arm chair by an empty log fireplace. His mind drifted back to the strange events that had caused his pleasant change. It was quite by chance that he saw the newspaper inquiring to his whereabouts but the conversation from the advert seemed more like fate

He found himself in the renowned offices of Goodley and Smythe and in the company of Geoffrey Smythe himself. “Mr. Champion,” he said in an officious manner, “It appears you are a victim of circumstances.”

“Sorry?” David said not understanding.

“Well that's the only real way of explaining it,” he said and passed Dave an old letter which was remarkably well kept. “This is the will of Silas Mandleson,” he continued, “It is 400 years old yet it was only opened last year as stipulated.”

David read the letter with mixed emotions

I, Silas Mandleson being of sound mind, good health and humour bequeath my house 'The Rosemary' at Winton in the Clay to David Arthur Champion born 14th July 1963 in the town of Hopping, Staffordshire.

“So, this Silas fellow, what's he got to do with me?”

“I'm afraid that's all I know myself, I'm as much in the dark as you are.”

“So why did he leave me this house?” David said aloud and looked around the room he was sitting in. He was none the wiser as he found himself falling to sleep.

“So Silas,” a large well dressed man said capturing his attention, “How fare thee with that book of yours, am I expected to see a burning?”

“Only candles at night,” David found himself saying, “And quite a few I think.”

“A tricky subject re-incarnation, danger notwithstanding it would take a better man than me to prove it.”

“And me I have thought on frequent occasions,” Silas said with a loud laugh, “But time will tell on that one.”

David was awakened by a car's horn then so was still confused as to what was happening. The room was quite a lot darker now so it was time to go to bed he reasoned and got up forgetting the dream. He made his way to the first room he had visited and claimed it as his own for it seemed the natural thing to do. A strange tiredness came over him and he found himself being dragged unconscious almost straight away.

David found himself in his room and though still dark outside the room itself was lit by candles. He was stunned as in front of him stood what could only be described as a fairy. Tall and slender she had the attraction well above the beauty found in the land of time. Dark black hair that fell around her shoulders and an olive hue to her complexion that David could not quite locate. She spoke to him and her voice in its warmth and friendliness held him captive for it was truly spell binding. "Time has certainly changed you Silas, an improvement you don't deserve."

"What?" David said, confusion breaking his spell.

"Time will tell," she said and smiled as she approached him, "Or maybe I should reacquaint myself I am Rosemary."

"Rosemary, that's the name of the house."

"That's right, now Silas, do you know me?"

"I'm not Silas; I don't know anything about him except that he left me this house."

"You left you this house Silas and me to look after it for you. You promised to return and now you have. All you have to do it write a book."

"What, but that's what I've come here to do."

"Then you are halfway there," Rosemary said with a laugh.

The implication of it all sank in and David said, "No, no, this is not happening."

With that the figure started to haze, "Wait," David said "Don't go."

"Your choice Silas, you only have to believe."

"So what's it all about, you said I have to write a book?"

"That's right Silas."

"David, just call me David."

"Well for the time being then, you will find it where you left it," and with that she disappeared and David awoke to find out it was morning. He did not remember the dream as he rarely did. To him it was just another uneventful night. He quickly dressed and thought that he might take a look around once more to see if he could find out clues as to who this Silas Mandleson was. He knew that he could never get down to the business of writing until that was clear in his mind so the book would have to keep. The actual idea of writing a book had come quite independent to him for he had harboured the urge ever since he was a child though it was only in the last couple of months it had resurfaced with a vengeance. Everything just seemed to fall right, though as he was going blindly through it he never really saw it in that light. He lost his job and found himself evicted from his flat looking for a home and employment in the local newspaper where he found the advert that started the adventure.

David went down and had a look in the library in the hope of finding clues but that idea fell from favour when he came across an old green book. It was actually the symbol on the book that caught his attention for he remembered seeing it etched into one of the oak panels in the hall way. It was a dove and in its beak was a four leaf clover. He opened the book and browsed through it not really knowing what he was looking for and did not find anything until the very last page. It was a hand written verse and it left him confused.

"Stop stranger, stop as you pass by

As you are now so once was I

As I am now so you will be

So pray, prepare to follow me."

Something inside him told him to draw the symbol and write the verse down so he duly obliged. He studied it awhile and recognized the verse as an old epitaph though could not see the connection with the dove. A knocking door made him forget about it for a while. On answering he found an elderly lady on the other side, "Mr. Campion," she said in a friendly manner.

"Yes," David said not knowing her.

"I'm Elaine Smith, up until you moved in I used to clean the place. I was wondering if you would like me to continue with my services."

“Oh, er, I'm not sure. To tell you the truth all this hasn't really sank in.”

“Sorry?” Elaine said so David told her the story.

“Really,” She said after he had finished, “That's strange that, I never knew, and you say this man is not related to you, well, well.”

“So you see I'm going to need a little time to come to terms with it. What about leaving me your phone number and I'll get back to you about it?”

“Sure, I'll leave it with you.”

Something inside David told him to invite her in for a cup of tea so he said, “Look, I'll tell you what come in and have a cup of tea. It's the least I can do seeing as you were good enough to come round.”

“Sure,” She said and followed him in. As they sat drinking Elaine said, “You know I used to like cleaning here, it's such an unusual house. I've often thought the place was haunted though.”

“Really,” David said and thought awhile, “I haven't noticed anything; mind you I only arrived yesterday. So what makes you think that?”

“It's hard to explain really, I sort of sense it.”

“Sense it?”

“Yes, sudden draughts and I always get the feeling that I'm being watched. I've never actually seen anything though I've often felt that I was about to.”

“That sounds quite frightening.”

“No, not really, it doesn't seem to be a harmful sensation. I've heard tell that the house was built over an ancient well so maybe it's just the fairies.”

“Fairies,” David repeated and looked at her strangely.

“Well it's only a story,” she said getting quite defensive, “You know what us country folk are like with our superstitions.”

“Oh,” David said with a laugh, “So there's not much chance of seeing Tinker-bell then.”

“Who knows? I know one thing though, there's something not quite right. They say that Silas was a cunning man.”

“A cunning man, what do you mean sly?”

“No,” Elaine said with a laugh, “He had the old knowledge; I don't really know what you would call them, sort of a wizardry sage. Yes, I bet he could make for quite a story.”

“A story,” David said, “Now that is strange,” and went deep into thought.

“Strange,” Elaine repeated and wondered about his silence.

“Yes,” David said thinking aloud, “Maybe it might work.”

“Sorry?”

“Oh sorry,” David said coming around, “I was thinking of writing a book but was a little short of ideas.”

“Are you a writer then?”

“Oh no, well not at the moment anyway. I just have this urge to see myself in print. I don't really know why, maybe its knowing that your name will live on after your death.”

“Right,” Elaine said thinking it strange though not saying anything about it, “Well anyway, thanks for the tea and good luck with the book. Here's my phone number I'd better be making tracks.”

Elaine left and David went back to the verse and symbol though for the life of him he could not fathom out what it all meant. The house seemed to have a very draining influence on David as tiredness drew him once again.

“Ah Sil.er, David,” Rosemary said, “So you are back amongst the living.”

“The living?”

“Don't worry about it. Now I believe that you have found a little verse.”

“Er, yes that's right,” David said wondering how she knew though not mentioning it, “Though I don't know what to do with it.”

“Why not work it out and see if you can equate the two. Who knows what you might uncover.”

“Well it's just an old epitaph; it's saying that one day you too will be dead. I can't see that fitting in with the dove, I thought that was peace.”

“Rest in peace then, well if you are lucky.”

“Sorry?”

“You forgot about the four leaf clover. The symbol stands for peace of mind and the luck it seems to bring you. Now if it's any help it's symbolic of love and the Holy Spirit though that excess information might actually be a hindrance.”

“Not to me, I still haven't a clue so it all means nothing.” With that the scene changed and David found himself back in the form of Silas Mandleson talking to a captive audience.

“Reality as a perception has been distorted beyond belief. Ignorance walks where once truth stood tall. People have no meaning in their life only a vain hope of getting to a place called Heaven.”

“Careful Silas,” Jeremiah said, “Some might say that that is tantamount to blasphemy.”

“Ignorant people maybe,” Silas said still in his flow, “Deluded by external power and wanting to keep their place in their perception of truth.”

“But what is truth?” another man of similar appearance to Jeremiah said, “Surely it's only a perception and varies to the man.”

“On a shallow level Eli, but the truth I am talking about is the higher truth, the power behind the power.”

“The higher truth,” Eli said, “What is that?”

“The purpose of our being, the reason for our existence.”

“The meaning of life,” Jeremiah said, “You have found it?”

“No,” Silas admitted, “Though I know it has some bearing with re-incarnation.”

“Re-incarnation,” Eli said in disgust and stood up, “You go too far Silas Mandleson. I will not be an accomplice to such heresy. The elders will hear of this,” and stormed out.

“Me thinks that you might have trouble from that quarter,” Jeremiah said, “Perhaps it was not wise to mention re-incarnation.”

“Truth will stand any test, what say you Jacob?”

“Well I'm still here, though I must admit you are sailing close to the wind. Re-incarnation is a bold statement Silas and will take some upholding, how fare you in that?”

“I'm afraid my logic is not water tight.”

“Then maybe you are a little premature with your premise,” Jacob said and stood up, “I am afraid I can stay no longer for I fear guilt by association.”

“You too Jacob,” Silas said with a heavy air of disappointment, “I thought that you had an open mind.”

“But you have nothing tangible to put in it. I cannot defend myself to the elders with what I have to go on. If you find something then get back to me,” and left.

“It appears you have both a Thomas and a Judas,” Jeremiah said, “And an obsession with re-incarnation. These are dangerous times Silas, a little discretion might be in order.”

“Et tu Brutus?”

“I'll stand with you; you know that, I'm just advocating a little caution that's all.”

“I'm sorry Jeremiah; my last remark was uncalled for. I fear I may have overstepped the mark for my theory is not developed enough to defend in public.”

“That may prove your undoing. You have already made a lot of enemies and I fear they crave to see your demise. Any progress with the book?”

“Thread bare, it does not seem to want to be written.”

“I think time is now your foe and haste is your primary concern. I wish you well Silas and bid you fare well.” With that Jeremiah left and Silas remained seated with his thoughts for company. It was not long before he was interrupted though.

“Ah Silas, Silas,” Rosemary said, “When will your mortal pride stop getting you into trouble. Have you not learned by your mistakes?”

"I have no fear for I have the truth."

"That's your pride talking again. God's understanding is His purpose and its knowing is His life, His insight is His wisdom and its essence is His love."

"Sorry?"

"You still have a lot to learn Silas. When you can truly grasp the truth of that you will know that mortal pride has no place in your heart."

"God's understanding is His purpose," Silas repeated, "That sounds like a riddle to me unless you are saying that to understand that is to know His purpose."

"Close, but to truly grasp the truth to understand God is to understand His purpose for His purpose is also yours just as His understanding is also yours."

"What, are you saying what I think you are?"

"Not whilst you have mortal pride. While you have that handicap you will only know His purpose you will never understand it so you will never truly grasp it through experience."

"Sorry?"

"Knowing and understanding are two different parts of your consciousness. Knowing is to intellect as understanding is to intuition."

"You know I think I understand that but I fail to see how that fits in with mortal pride."

"Not this lifetime, I am afraid that your pride has got the better of you and has already caused your demise. Your words will be rationalised into heresy and your burning is now imminent."

"Then all is lost. I don't see the point."

"You shall return Silas, of that have no doubt."

"Maybe, though it will not be me."

"In essence it will," Rosemary said and by way of comfort, "You have already provided for your future so at least you know that that is sorted."

"Ah yes, David Arthur Campion, I hope he fares better than me."

With the mentioning of his name David was shook into semi consciousness and found himself back with Rosemary.

Chapter 2

"Well David, the dove and the verse, was that any help?"

"Not really," David said and then as if by inspiration, "Unless the verse has something to do with re-incarnation."

"Go on."

"Well the verse could fit it as well as death, sort of a rebirth thing."

"Good, and the symbol?"

"The peace of mind from knowing it is not a mental death and only a physical one although I don't see how a four leaf clover would fit in."

"A state of mind and the luck that seems to go with it, it's all to do with perceptions of reality. Without that state of mind you tend to dwell on the negative and forget the positive."

"And with it you do the opposite," David said seeing the logic, "So what was all that about God?"

"Ah the higher truths. God's understanding is His purpose and its knowing is His life. His insight is His wisdom and its essence is His love. Let's see how you've come on."

"Well I remember you saying that to understand God was to understand His purpose."

"Right," Rosemary said with a laugh, "We'll start at the beginning then. There are seven spirits that make God. The lord of all these are the spirit of purpose and all the others should work for it. Now to understand God is to understand His purpose you have already mentioned but I had better expand it."

"Yes that might be a good idea I was only going on what you said earlier, I don't really know it."

"You do, it's just that you don't understand it."

"Oh, er right."

“Understanding comes from the Soul, the God within some might say. Now as I said earlier the lord God is the spirit of purpose, do you know what that purpose is?”

“To be served?”

“No, it's actually to serve, to tend the Earth and the needs of its fellow man.”

“Sorry? So what actually is God?”

“An enlightened Soul with a purpose to serve.”

“What, is that it? I thought it was, well I didn't really give it much thought.”

“Don't worry about it not a lot of people do. They've been told He's unknowable and so they leave it at that. Now God's understanding is the feminine force and the virtue of faith it is personified by the archangel Zadkiel which stands for mind of God transformed to work (blessed through God's purpose). Now its negative aspect is Asmodus or lechery which as we live in God's reflected light comes out as understanding loving transformation (seeing life understanding God).”

“Would a mind of God transformed be the same as understanding loving transformation?”

“Excellent you've grasped it well; we'll go onto purpose, any ideas?”

“Not really, it's all new to me.”

“You'll pick it up in time. Right God's purpose is the masculine force and the virtue of humility. It is personified by the archangel Gabriel which stands for will of God's self (knowing blessed through God's purpose). Its negative aspect is Lucifer of pride which reflected means knowing through the word blessing will of love, God's purpose. So God's understanding is His purpose any ideas?”

“Different aspects of the same?” David said clutching at straws.

“That will do. The masculine and feminine force on one level, Soul and ego on the other, well once you have got rid of your mortal pride that is.”

“Would that be the belief that God is to be served as opposed to serve?” David said thinking into it.

“Good, could you elaborate though as I want to make sure you have fully grasped it?”

“Well it's all to do with power I suppose for it seems to me that if you believe that God is to be served it tends to rub off on you as you want to be served.”

“That's right, self conscious power.”

“So why should that be then?”

“Gratification through ignorance to the self centred spirit of purpose. The ego gets its power through milking others on one level and its perceived place in society on another.”

“Is that what Silas meant by external power?”

“Yes that's right it's the ego's staple diet. Now true power comes through the Holy Spirit as symbolised by the dove and through it your understanding grows and you get more Soul conscious.”

“Sorry?” David said as he was up with her until then.

“You start to perceive rebirth as opposed to death and with that understanding your perceptions of life change.”

“Right, you don't dwell on the negative.”

“Well yes but not just that, the things that you thought important quickly lose their appeal and you get less materialistic. You realise that there is more to life than hoarding wealth and you get pleasure from the simplest of things and as your understanding grows you get pleasure from your purpose.”

“What, you mean that you actually get pleasure from serving people, not being funny but how can that be?”

“It's knowing is His life. Knowing that you are doing His work brings the God within to life and from that you get pleasure. Now God's knowing is the Soul.”

“I thought that was His understanding?”

“On another level, think of it as an inner knowing after the shift in consciousness from ego to Soul. Now its virtue is hope as personified by the archangel Uriel or loving knowing (Blessed through

God's purpose), its negative aspect is Leviathan or envy which reflected means light of God's spiritual wisdom, God's blessed love through God's purpose. Now God's life is the spirit and the virtue is temperance. It is personified by the archangel Michael or life blessed with the Spiritual Will of God through God's purpose. Its negative aspect is Beelzebub or gluttony which reflected means self of love, self through mind of God's purpose and through self. Right David over to you."

"What, I wouldn't know where to start."

"Well in the beginning is as good a place as any. It's knowing is His life."

"Would life be a spiritual life?" David said going deep into thought.

"Could be, so what would that make it?"

"God's purpose is a spiritual life so to know it is to actually follow it."

"Excellent, now on another level it's talking about the spirit and Soul where before it was masculine and feminine forces, masculine being spirit and feminine being Soul or from purpose you get life and from understanding you get knowing."

"Right," David said taking it all in.

"His insight is His wisdom, any thoughts on that?"

"Er no, not really."

"Well I'll take you through it, God's insight is intuition and its virtue is charity personified by the archangel Japhiel or blessed with God's spiritual word (blessed through God's purpose). Its negative aspect is Mammon or avarice which reflected means light seeing life, life of God's life."

"Alright," David said none the wiser.

"It will all come to light," Rosemary said on seeing him, "So anyway God's wisdom is intellect and its virtue is fortitude personified by the archangel Raphael or knowing God's spiritual word (God through God's purpose). Its negative aspect is Belphegor or sloth which reflected stands for knowing seeing will through the spiritual word (God's purpose through self). Now what His insight is His wisdom is saying is as above so below, intellect and intuition, so put them together?"

"Intellect is the spirit's wisdom and intuition is the Soul's insight," David found himself saying.

"Good, now from the masculine power comes the spirit and from this comes the intellect, leaving?"

"From the feminine power comes the Soul and from this comes intuition."

"Very good, now just to tie things up the feminine is the mother and the masculine is the father."

"And what about His essence is His love?"

"Well God's love is His essence; its virtue is patience personified by the archangel Samael or understanding God's life, God through God's purpose. Its negative aspect is Satan or anger which reflected means light of God's wisdom, God's understanding, speaks for itself really."

"Right, so what now?"

"Well that was just a grounding to give you something to contemplate."

"Sorry?"

"The answers work on many levels, as your understanding grows they will mean different things."

"What, is that some sort of riddle?"

"No," Rosemary said with a laugh, "A re-awakening," and then disappeared.

David woke up feeling strange though not remembering the dream. He looked at the verse once more and said, "Re-awakening." This left him feeling quite paranoid as thoughts of Silas came back to haunt him. The cleaning woman had told him he was some sort of wizard and this seemed to take on a heavy menace as it opened up a lot of irrational possibilities to his ignorant mind. He knew little about reincarnation so he was pretty open to anything that chose to settle. He had thoughts that he was just put there to be taken over so that Silas could reclaim his house and the knocking door even gave the thought that Silas had returned. David shook off his madness and got up to see who it was. An elderly man with a walking stick stood outside and greeting David with a smile he said,

"Mr. Campion?"

"That's right."

"I believe you have expressed an interest in the history of the house."

“Well yes,” David said wondering how he knew that.

“Geoffrey Smythe,” the man said as if he was telepathic, “My name is John Edwards and I guess you could say that I was a local historian, I might be able to help you.”

“Well come in. Yes you might be able to clear up some things, would you like a cup of tea?”

“If it's not too much trouble.”

“Not at all,” David said and went in the kitchen to put the kettle on the gas cooker. He came in after a few seconds and said, “So can you shed any light on why he would leave me this house?”

“Well not really, I'm afraid that's a mystery well beyond me.”

“Oh, so what about the man himself, I've heard he was a wizard.”

“Well he was known to be an occultist who had some very strange views, well for the time I mean. He got burned as a heretic in the end just because he believed in reincarnation, can you imagine that?”

“Re-incarnation?” David said his paranoia to the fore.

“Yes, it didn't go down too well, strange that. Well he must have foreseen his death as he made out a will when he was still youngish.”

“The one in the law office.”

“That's right; he left the house in trust to his family through the female line.”

“The female line?”

“Yes the eldest daughter as opposed to the eldest son. That was quite unusual in its day.”

“The whole will was,” David said and then a sudden thought came into his mind, “Was anybody living here before I moved in?”

“No, the last one Marie Peterson died six months ago, not long before the letter was due to be opened as a matter of fact. She was the one who started to try and modernise it.”

“To try and modernise it.”

“Well I don't know if you know this but the house has a bit of a reputation for being haunted.”

“Go on,” David said his interest picking up.

“It seems that the ghost does not like electricity, everything was going alright until she tried to have it installed.”

“Really,” David said, his interest well aroused.

“Yes, first things started to go missing.”

“Things?”

“Yes, you know tools and stuff. As she persisted though things got worse and accidents started to happen. In the end she just gave up.”

“I've heard this place was built over a spring and the locals think it was fairies.”

“Well yes, native superstition I suppose. The house has definitely got history though. I've got a few books that mention it in the car if you would like to borrow them.”

“Yes thanks that would be good,” with that the kettle whistled and David went into the kitchen. He returned after a few minutes and gave John his cup saying, “Help yourself to the milk and sugar.” John duly obliged.

“So the house is haunted then,” David said retaking his seat, “By Silas Mandleson?”

“No it seems to be a woman though not many people have seen her. The locals call her the white lady and not a lot is known about her except for the fact that she has been around for a very long time. She was supposed to have been seen for centuries. Some say she might have been a temple priestess as they say that the house was built over one. I suppose that's where the locals get the idea of a fairy from.”

“Oh, could be. I've not noticed anything strange though so perhaps that will give me something to look forward to.”

“I wouldn't worry about it it's probably something and nothing. I'm sure there is a rational explanation for everything.”

“I'm not sure about that one, I mean how would you rationalise me being left the house for a start?”

“Well an explanation for most things anyway, I'm afraid that letter defies logic, well mine anyway.” They talked awhile longer about nothing in particular and after a quarter of an hour John said his goodbyes and left David the books to read. David browsed through them and found that the books were more about the white lady than the house itself. John had been right about her age as some of the stories actually predated the house and went back to the ninth century. David took little notice of the stories as he did not really believe in ghosts, in fact he put them on the same wavelength as fairies. A draught came passed him and disturbed his thought train and on seeing it was getting dark he got up and lit some candles. The candles gave the room an eerie feel which David quite liked so he retook his chair and watched the shadows flicker along with the flames. The calming effect of the actions seemed to give him a strange sense of peace and with it clarity of thought. He found himself contemplating higher truths though he did not know how he came to know them.

“The act of service brings God to life for that is His purpose. This knowing is understanding His wisdom and its insight is love. The act of service brings self confidence for that is humility. Self reliance is faith and fortitude and patience is God's charity. Understanding and purpose give self confidence as feminine and masculine make spiritual. Wisdom and understanding and purpose and insight give life and knowing through love, love is the essence of our being.”

With that David got the impression he was being watched. He turned around but saw nothing only the dancing shadows. He turned back but the feeling persisted and a strange coldness seemed to enter the room. It was eerie and yet it had a fascination to him so he did not perceive it as frightening. The coldness seemed to settle in one corner and David fully expected a manifestation and was quite disappointed when it did not happen. He sensed, “Not yet, soon,” and this seemed to put his mind at peace. He settled back and his eyes never left the corner as he tried to work out what it might be. As mentioned earlier David was rather skeptical about the supernatural believing that if he could not see it, it did not exist but what with the previous stories, the letter and the recent happenings his mind was getting a little more pliable. Was it the white lady or was it a fairy, could it even be Silas trying to make a return? Thoughts on each clattered for attention and left him confused and a little frightened in case the third option proved right. The presence lifted from the corner and the room returned to normal leaving David confused until he eventually put it down to his imagination, reasoning that all the recent upheaval was bound to take its toll. He took peace from this and got up and made himself a cup of tea in the kitchen and his thoughts returned to writing a book. He decided that he would try and write a story about reincarnation although he knew very little on the subject. He reasoned that he could read up about it so it wouldn't be too difficult. He thought there might be some books in the library so after making his tea he went back to check. David's attention was quickly taken by a book with a symbol on it. He remembered seeing it in the hall way next to the dove. It was a funeral pyre and from it a large bird was emerging. He opened the book but could not see the relevance of the book to the symbol. He scanned it to make sure and getting to the last page he saw a phrase written in ink. It said the spiritual word seen through light blessed with insight. He did not understand it so he wrote it down next to the other one and drinking his tea thought more about the book. Time marched on and he made little progress before he retired and went to bed.

Chapter 3

David found himself in the form of Silas sitting in a bleak room with three self important men questioning him. “It appears there have been heretical allegations about you Silas,” a tall gangly one with a slightly crooked nose said. David remained silent so another man picked up his gauntlet, “Now Silas we know you are a man of faith and honour so I am sure there must be some sort of misunderstanding.”

“Yes,” Silas said taking over, “Though not on my part.”

“We are trying to help,” the second man carried on, “You don't make things easy for yourself Silas. I have heard said you have a will made out far into the future, or maybe that is another

misunderstanding?"

Silas went quiet for awhile before saying, "What is the charge that you bring me here with?"

"Oh no charge Silas," the man with the crooked nose said, "We are just trying to put you back on path. You are a man of authority and have influence in the community. It is in all our interests that we have a united face. Now you have been talking about re-incarnation. That would negate hell which is quite a dent. I would like to know the basis of your belief and then maybe we could show you where you have strayed."

"I believe that I am on the right path for I believe that Our Lord's teaching included reincarnation."

"What," the man said losing his patronising manner, "And what makes you say that?"

"I have heard rumour that they were changed in the fifth century and with my reading of scripture I can add to it."

"Rumours," the man with the crooked nose mocked, "Like the rumour of the female Pope."

"That's no concern of mine and it takes us well of path."

"You said your reading of scripture?" the third man who up until then had been silent said.

"Two points Martin but first I need to build my case."

"Your funeral pyre," the man with the crooked nose said

"Whatever John," Silas said then Martin said, "Go on."

"Right, I believe that the scriptures were tampered with but two clues were inadvertently left."

"Are we to listen to these lies," John said erupting in temper, "You may have power Silas but you'll burn just the same."

"Are you charging me, for I thought this was just a quiet word."

"It could go either way," Martin said, "These are serious charges Silas but you have intrigued me for I too, have heard the rumour, carry on."

"Two clues I mentioned. The first is found in the Book of Revelation which I believe was left alone because of the curse which was put on it and the other was in the Gospel according to St. Mathew. Revelation chapter 3 verse 12 him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God and he shall no more go out, and I will write upon him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God which is the new Jerusalem which cometh down out of heaven from my God and I will write upon him my new name, the second is the fact that St. Mathew used the expression Father in Heaven as separate identities."

"What?" John snapped.

"When speaking to others Jesus would say your Father in Heaven and when speaking about himself he would say my Father in Heaven."

"And how does this equate with reincarnation," Martin said in a confused tone.

"The second one is slightly beyond my understanding except to say that we all have a Father in Heaven. The first point is significant in the fact that a new name means a new life."

"But he was the son of God," John said, "He could do that sort of thing."

"I thought that we were all God's children," Silas said but instantly regretted it.

"Are you saying that you are the same as Jesus Christ?" John said jumping in, "Or perhaps you think that you are Our Lord, maybe that would explain the letter."

"Are we not all God's children, made in His image," Silas said adding fat to the fire unintentionally.

"How dare you, Our Lord died to save us."

"No," Silas protested, his temper getting the better of him, "He died trying to save us from the fear of death though judging by your attitude he failed."

"And what is that supposed to mean?"

"All I've had from you are threats of burning and mocks. My understanding might not be fully developed but my faith is strong enough not to fear death."

"Now Silas," the third man said trying to placate him, "It need not come to that."

"Look Richard," Silas said, "I don't need his self righteousness my views are personal to me and my business alone."

“Normally,” Martin said, “But if they are of a heretical nature then they are dangerous.”

“And you perceive them to be?” Silas said putting the ball back in Martin's court.

“At the moment I can see no justification for reincarnation. To me you sound like a man in madness who may quickly come to his senses but in the present state of mind you are in your views are heretical and I would strongly advise you to recant them.”

“I cannot do it.”

“Then I am afraid you will burn. What madness has become you Silas?”

“I cannot say, but I cannot recant.”

“Then all is over,” were the last words David heard before drifting back to Rosemary.

“A head strong man,” Rosemary said, “But I guess some might say brave. So David you have found another symbol.”

“Was that you earlier?”

“Not now, soon.”

“It was,” David said with more than a hint of relief, “I had thoughts of Silas.”

“Silas?”

“Come to take his house back, come to take me over.”

Rosemary laughed at that and said, “It's a merger not a takeover bid. That's why I'm building up your imagination.”

“Sorry?”

“The symbols, they are there to build up your imagination so you can merge without losing your identity.”

“To what purpose, the mergence I mean?”

“To see me of course, when you can see me in the land of time the mergence is complete.”

“I thought I was going to see you earlier.”

“You're getting close take comfort from it. So the bird rising from the ashes of the fire, what was it?”

David thought for a while but came up with nothing.

“Have you never heard of the phoenix rising from the ashes?”

“Er, yes.”

“The spiritual word seen through light blessed with insight, so what is the spiritual word?”

“Light blessed with insight,” David said just guessing.

Much to his surprise Rosemary said, “Good, light being knowledge and insight being the ability to look deeper so we are talking about a deeper level of understanding. Now what was the fire symbolic of?”

“Purification?”

“Good, so a deeper understanding brought about by a baptism of fire you could say. That wasn't too bad was it?”

“You mentioned baptism of fire,” David said sounding frightened, “What's all that about?”

“Nothing to worry about its talking about putting your old views in a new light. You did not really have any old views as such so it won't really affect you.”

“Oh,” David said with a slight hint of relief.

“So that's love and light sorted, I guess that just leaves power.”

David found himself back in Silas' form and on trial for his life. He could sense Silas' terror as the full extent of his predicament started to sink in.

“Silas Mandleson you stand charged with trying to poison the minds of our community,” John said, “What have you to say in your defence or you shall burn as the heretic that you are.”

Silas looked around the council of elders and knew that he was finished. The stern looks on his one time friends and fellow elders told him that. He knew that he could not defend his views on reincarnation for they would pick them apart so desperation made him try a different tact. “The charge of heresy is an abomination in the eyes of the Lord and has no place in a free thinking

society.”

“I do not believe you have grasped the seriousness of the charge,” John said, “You stand in trial for your life.”

“I know but my conscience is clear and my mind is at peace. Surely God would not sanction His children to be burned just for going against conventional opinion. That is the action of man and has no place in Our Lord's teaching.”

“You presume too much Silas Mandleson or are you parley with Our Lord's thoughts,” with that the court lit up with laughter and gave Silas a glimmer of hope, “Why yes, he left them in the Gospels, haven't you read them recently.”

The hushed tone of the court told Silas that the verdict was pretty much recorded and the trial a formality.

“Now you don't want to be adding to your woes with blasphemy,” John said putting on a self righteous tone.

“I was not aware that I had blasphemed, perhaps you could enlighten me?”

“I refer to our earlier conversation,” John said springing his trap, “When in front of two witnesses, Martin Johnson and Richard Perry you said that you were equal to Jesus Christ.”

A menacing murmur crossed the court room and Silas guessed that he was close to being cornered but had no choice left but carry on, “I said we were all God's children and made in His image. Surely that is not blasphemy; it is mentioned in the scriptures.”

The idea of talking to a brick wall came to David's mind as Silas said this and looking at the mood of the crowd it was quite an apt description.

“You can quote the scriptures to say anything as any heretic would know,” John said with a contemptible sneer, “And adding to the fact that you mocked Our Lord's death I would definitely say that we have a good case.”

Silas could not remember what he had said as it had been in temper so remained silent as he tried to think.

“Your silence tells me of your guilt.”

“My silence tells me that I can't remember what I said but I can quite assure you I would never mock the death of Our Lord.”

“Well let me remind you then. You said and in front of the same two people I mentioned earlier that Our Lord died trying to save us but he failed.”

The court murmured again and Silas started to panic. He remembered saying the words but he did not know in what context nor could he remember the middle section that would have aided his case. It was with half a heart that he answered, “I never said those words,” and was quickly jumped on for his trouble.

“Are you calling the said two witnesses liars?” John bellowed more for show than out of temper.

“What sort of man are you Silas Mandleson, you spit venom when you speak and desecrate the air around you. Now I have two independent witnesses, men of good faith and honour who would swear on Our Lord's Holy testimony that you said that. I ask you again Silas Mandleson, did you say those words?”

Silas hung his head in shame and said, “I did but I think you are taking them out of context.”

“They seem pretty straight forward to me. Now what with your outburst earlier that tells this court that you treat everything that we hold dear to with contempt.” Loud murmurs came from the court room and Silas saw his doom. “Your heretical views and your contempt for society around you are no longer welcome in this community Silas Mandleson. I put it to the court that you be burned for heresy.”

“But wait,” Silas said as it was moving too quickly for him, “What about the trial?”

“Do you really think that we would allow you to spurt such poison? We have already seen the contempt that you hold for us.”

The crowd was getting restless as John's impression of a demagogue had gone down well. They

edge forward and David found himself back with Rosemary. “That was close; I thought they were going to lynch me.”

“Power, sure isn't it amazing what it can do to a man.”

“Sorry?”

“Power what we were just talking about.”

“But what about the courtroom, what was that all about?”

“Just reliving old memories and then putting them in a new light.”

“What?”

“Scenes from your previous life, it will become clear in the end so don't worry about it.”

“No,” David said, his paranoia coming forward, “What is this all about? You show me past lives, well you say that they are and then fob me off.”

“Now David,” Rosemary said soothingly, “Don't let your temper get the better of you for that was Silas' downfall.”

With that something strange happened, well relatively strange. It was like a cloud had been lifted from David's head and with its going it seemed to take a huge weight from his shoulders. With its disappearance David felt very elated and he lay there just taking in the sensation.

“Power,” Rosemary said, “Take strength from its being,” and disappeared.

David woke up and saw it was still quite dark. He still had the feeling of elation though he did not remember how he got it. He looked at his watch and saw that it was 6.30 so he thought he would get up and try and make a start on his book. He remembered the bird rising from the flame and now knew it as a phoenix whilst the word reinterpretation stuck in his mind. He wondered if he could work around the symbols and maybe knit some kind of story with them. He made a note of it and got dressed, went downstairs to make himself a cup of tea. He felt that he was being watched again but it was not sinister in fact he seemed to find it quite protecting so he carried on unperturbed. As the kettle boiled David's thoughts turned back to the book and the two symbols he had found. He wondered if there were anymore and remembered that there was another one in the hall way so decided to check it out after he had his tea. He thought he would also include the letter as it would make for interesting reading even though he did not know how to explain it. Maybe he could also make it out as a ghost story as the house was supposed to be haunted by some white lady. He also remembered Elaine talking about fairies so he had quite a lot of avenues he could cover. “Yes,” he said aloud as he got up to go to the hall way, “There certainly must be a story in there somewhere.”

The hall was fairly light and the symbol did not take much finding. It was a triangle and perched on top was an owl. David has never seen the symbol before and he studied it for a while. His thoughts turned to the library and he wondered if it had a book to accompany it. David went back into the living room and started to check through the books one by one but could not find the book anywhere. He sat down a while and thought that the symbol might not have an accompanying book but that did not seem right and quickly fell from grace. He thought back to the symbol and could not make headway there either so that too fell from grace. He sat awhile longer thinking of nothing in particular quite content to watch the darkness turn to light and then got up to make himself a cup of tea.

As the kettle boiled he had a strong urge to go back to the hall way and though he did not know why he quickly followed it. He studied the symbol once again and then the other two around it. A sudden thought about secret panels came to mind so he ended up tapping the wall and sure enough one of the panels had a hollow echo to it. It was the panel with the dove carrying the four leaf clover. When he tapped the symbol the holding spring released and the panel sprang open and there he found his book.

Chapter 4

David took out the dark blue book that lay in the secret compartment and went back into the living room. He opened it and checked it through. It was on the last page that he found his phrase. It was written in ink and said 'the word sees love through knowing'. He could not see how it fitted in with the symbol but he wrote it down anyway reasoning that he could come back to it later. His thoughts drifted back to the book he intended to write. He took to it with gusto and very soon he had formulated a loose plot. By the end of the morning significant progress had been made and he had even decided to start it the following day. He decided to write a short story as it was his first attempt and maybe write another one at a later date for the idea of writing more than one book had started to take hold. Late afternoon saw David drift off and found himself back in Rosemary's company.

"So David, the pyramid and the owl, any thoughts about it?"

"Is it something to do with power," He said remembering their earlier conversation.

"Well remembered and well rationalised but what about power?"

"Eh, the power of the mind," David said clutching at straws.

"We'll take it one step at a time," Rosemary said seeing this, "So what about the owl?"

"Isn't that something to do with wisdom, the wise owl type of thing."

"Yes, and what does wisdom give you?"

David thought awhile and said, "Strength of mind?"

"Good, power to you mind. Now the next part of the symbol is the pyramid, any ideas?"

"Weren't they the burial tombs of the Pharaoh's?"

"Yes, but I was talking about its original meaning. It was symbolic of the Soul."

"The Soul, really?"

"Yes, it works on many levels so you might find it a little demanding for a while. Now do you remember what spirit I said it was?"

"Was it the spirit of knowing?"

"Good, pyramid means the word blessed with knowing God's life (blessed transformation), so that's one level. It is also a spiritual transformer as is the Soul."

"Sorry?"

"The Holy Spirit, a mergence of the spirits of love, understanding and purpose."

"Is that why it's a triangle?"

"Balance, now the pyramid at Gaza is guarded by a sphinx or understanding the spiritual word (blessed light) insight. So what is insight?"

"The ability to look within?"

"Good, so you could say that to find yourself you have to look within but that's another story. Right anyway the owl is wisdom and the pyramid stands for balance and the Soul and the fact that the owl is perched on top of it means it had conquered it and found its balance."

"The Soul's evolution through wisdom," David said as if inspired.

"Good," Rosemary said 'I see the reawakening has started' she thought to herself before carrying on.

"So that's the symbol what about the phrase?"

"The word sees love through knowing, I don't really know but I'm guessing the knowing is the Soul."

"Good, love, now what would that be?"

"The Holy Spirit though I don't quite know how it fits in."

"Three aspects of love, purpose or to serve, understanding and love the essence of your being. This is what the Soul feeds and grows strong on. So the word sees the Holy Spirit through the Soul.

What do you think the word is?"

"Enlightenment?"

"Spiritual wisdom through love seeing knowing transformation, very good so what is it actually saying?"

"David thought awhile and said, "Enlightenment is the Holy Spirit through the Soul, no that doesn't

sound right.”

“Why not, the Holy Spirit transformed through knowing sounds good to me.”

“Sorry?”

“The spiritual energy is transformed to knowledge and by knowledge as it works both ways.”

“Power,” David said upon realisation.

“Good, power to the Soul and power to the mind.”

“The pyramid and the owl,” David said and with that felt a burning sensation. He found himself tied to a funeral pyre though the smoke around him clouded his vision so he did not know this. He struggled to try and get away from the heat and smoke but found that his hands and legs were firmly fixed. He heard the noise of a crowd and thought at first that he was in a burning building but that soon fell to ground when he heard their taunts. The smoke thickened even more and David felt himself slip away and enter another reality.

David woke up with a strange sensation in his head. To explain it fully I suppose you could say it was like his mind had been singed. It was not an uncomfortable feeling as you would expect from a singed arm it was more of an over warming sensation. He did not remember his dream so he had no idea how it came to be. He sat awhile longer trying to rationalise it but was interrupted by a knock on the door. David got up quickly and went to see who it was. John Edwards stood outside, “Ah David, I was just rooting around some things and I found some stuff about the house. Well more to do with Silas Mandleson really.”

“Oh right,” David said picking up as he thought he might be able to use it in the book, “Come in I'll put the kettle on.”

“Well just five minutes, I've got to get off to work soon; in fact I called in on the way.”

“I wouldn't want you to be late, but you're very welcome.”

“Yes, I've got five minutes,” and followed him in. David put the kettle on and soon they were drinking tea and John was telling him what he found. “Look at this,” He said passing some papers over to David, “Transcripts of the trial, I didn't even know they took notes in those days, makes for quite some reading.”

“Amazing, you know these could come in handy.”

“They could?”

“Yes, I'm going to write a story and I think he'd make a good character.”

“Oh a writer, something I wouldn't mind giving a try.”

“I wouldn't say writer just a story to see if I can write.”

“Well good luck,” John said and checked the time, “Duty calls.” he said getting up, “Thanks for the tea. Now that I know that I'll hunt some more stuff out. Never know it might come in handy.”

“Thanks,” David said as he let him out. They said goodbye and David went back to the living room. He started to read through and for some strange reason it captured his attention. A cold shiver went down his spine when he came to the part he saw in the dream and he remembered actually dreaming it. This shook him up considerably and his imagination took over. Why should he get left the house? Unanswerable questions floated in his mind vying for attention and the nearest thing he got as an answer was he was going to be taken over. After he had calmed down slightly he reasoned that it was just a draught and the dream a premonition.

This settled him down slightly though not enough to want to continue with the transcript and his mind drifted back to the book. He spent hours formulating and reformulating the plot and trying to weave refinement into his plans. The day had turned to dusk and David had been too enrapt in the book to notice its passing. The house took on a new aura in twilight and he just lay back for a while to let it sink in. After a couple of minutes he decided to light some candles and the place in candle light looked straight out of time. He settled down once more and casually looked at his legs. It was then that it happened. A flash of light and David found himself in a flashback. He saw that his clothes were different and he felt that he was different. It only happened for a fraction of a second but its impression cut deeply into his psyche. Before he had time to even contemplate it the feeling

of being watched came back. It had a more menacing edge to it or so it seemed to David's paranoid mind. He quickly turned around but saw nothing. The feeling never left him and at one stage he even said, "Whose there?" though he felt foolish afterwards. He went into the kitchen reasoning that a cup of tea might calm him down and put the kettle on. Whilst he waited for it to boil he convinced himself that it was his imagination though made a mental note he wouldn't be putting electricity in that year.

David made the tea and went back into the living room where the rest of the evening passed by relatively peacefully. He decided on an early night so he would be nice and refreshed in the morning so before the clock reached ten he retired.

David found himself on a large branchy tree. One of the branches was pinned to his forehead and he found that he could not move. The pressure of the branch made him feel uncomfortable though it was not painful. He lay there awhile and felt himself transcend his physical body and become his aura. It was a strange feeling of awareness, one that gave him a strong sensation of peace and he just lay there and took it all in. He felt an energy above him. It was in the form of a spirit and it merged into his aura. The shock of this to his system made him wake up though he soon fell back to sleep again. David next found himself back in his bedroom though this time it was candlelit.

Rosemary stood close by and said, "Well Silas how was your baptism of fire?"

"Not something I would like to go through, what a way to die."

"But you did for that dream was once your reality."

"What a way to go."

"Ah well, so where were we? Power, the word seeing love through knowing. Your mergence is complete, light, love and power. You'll soon be at full strength."

"You mean that's it, it's done."

"Yes, just the book to write to bring it down to earth, this end's sorted."

"Sorry, you mean that this depends on me writing a book?"

"No, well not life or death anyway."

"Oh, you had me worried for a moment."

"So how do you like the house, does it bring back any memories?"

"I had some sort of flashback earlier."

"Ah, that was just two worlds colliding, the start of the mergence of memories."

"And that tree thing, what was that about?"

"The tree of life and the final mergence."

"You mean that I am now Silas Mandleston," David said in surprise, "Yet I don't feel any different."

"It's only his knowledge. All his personal memories were burned in the baptism of fire, the phoenix has risen."

"So it doesn't work on the ego's memory," David said on recognition, "I've been worried over nothing."

"Well it passes the time," Rosemary said with a laugh, "But anyway the house."

"Ah," David said remembering his predecessor's plight, "So why don't you like electricity?"

"Oh not electricity, electric light. I prefer candlelight, gives the place its atmosphere."

"Oh, nothing else then?"

"Well natural light is more conducive to me but it's no big deal. You're not thinking about getting it installed are you?"

"No, I wouldn't dare. Not after what I heard, missing tools and accidents, I'd rather go by candlelight."

"Now, now Silas it's your house, I was just looking after it for you."

"I was just teasing. No I like candlelight, beside I wouldn't like to go against your wishes as to me this is your house and I'm just living here."

"Oh," Rosemary said looking at him in a new light, "Well that's very kind of you to say so but it's your house."

“Look I'll tell you what, it's your house I'm just borrowing it awhile. You'll be here long after I've gone so I don't want to do anything to upset the balance.”

“Fair enough, we'll say no more then.”

“Are you the white lady? I'm not sure where I am with all the stories of ghosts and fairies.”

“Yes, that's me,” Rosemary said with a laugh, “I guess it can get pretty confusing.”

“So why white?”

“Symbolic of purity and besides it sort of enhances my eyes.”

“So are you a ghost then?”

“Well I'm a spirit, I'm not a ghost in the traditional sense. I guess a fairy would be a more appropriate name as I'm a spirit of nature.”

“So not the Enid Blyton type then?”

“Well I'm not Tinker-bell if that's what you mean,” Rosemary said with a laugh.

“Oh,” David said remembering his earlier conversation with Elaine.

“They say that walls have ears,” Rosemary said still laughing.

“So what is a spirit of nature then?” David said thinking it wise to change the subject.

“Well we take various forms and over time we have come to be regarded in different lights and put into different classes even.”

“Sorry?”

“Elementals, Earth and Air, Water and Fire.”

“Er right,” David said not understanding.

“Think of Air as the spirit, Earth as the Soul, Water as the intellect and Fire the imagination. They are all aspects of the self. The Greeks categorized us in that manner. Earth became gnomes, Air sylphs, Water undines and Fire salamanders.”

“Oh,” David said none the wiser.

“It's not important they are man-made interpretations, no if anything you could say I am a guide.”

“A guide?”

“Yes, I'm here to aid your spiritual growth, well that's on a personal level but being an Earth spirit I'm also here for the evolution of the Soul.”

“Really, all for my benefit, so what about the hauntings?”

“Hauntings?” Rosemary said in surprise.

“Yes, all the times you've been seen by others.”

“Oh the visitations, depends on the occasion. Sometimes I might pay a visit to warn them not to be too destructive to the house and other times I might just visit to see if they are up to visiting me.”

“Sorry?”

“If they have evolved enough, test their mettle so to speak.”

“Oh, so what actually is a ghost anyway?”

“Well ghosts are generally lost Souls trapped on the Earth level who can't or won't go back to the light. Or sometimes you might get flash backs to previous times the only difference is you are aloof from the situation.”

“Not like me then, I felt I actually was Silas.”

“Two memories colliding so you were in the situation. No generally speaking people's perceptions of ghosts are pretty blinkered.”

“Oh right well it certainly was an eye opener coming here. How did Silas know that he would be me for that's a puzzle I've long since given up on?”

“It was easy, I told him.”

“What, how?”

“It is only you that lives in the realms of time. You are confined by time but I can transcend it.”

“Oh, well yes that would make sense I suppose. You don't know what a relief that is to hear, I was having all sorts of paranoid thoughts.”

“I'll bet. It seems a shame I put you out your misery. When you can put your paranoia behind you

it's not behind you anymore.”

“Sorry?” David said confused.

“Just a spiritual joke.”

“Oh, so anyway when can I expect to see you?”

“I'm here,” She said teasing him.

“No, I mean when can I expect to see the white lady?”

“Well who knows, not for a while as you'll be too busy writing a book.”

With that David woke up and remembering the symbol said “Resurrection.”

The Key

Dave Preston quickly shut the door behind him and entered into the dim semi-lit room. He saw the dark old desk and stealthily took its direction. Voices in the corridor made him freeze but much to his relief they were just passing. After they had subsided he crept up to the desk and picked up the book that lay on the table. Finally he had found it. Jubilation took over as he read the title, 'The symbol of life-beyond pretension there is only death'. The man in the dream had been right. He had no time to reason into the ins and outs of the situation for the voices returned to haunt him.

"He's in here somewhere, I can feel it in my water." a gruff Irish accent said. It was Edward O' Leary, a fellow follower of fortune that Dave had, had the misfortune of crossing many times in their mutual interest of wealth enhancement.

"No, I reckon he's long gone now," another voice, one that Dave did not recognise said, "If he's got any sense that is."

"Ah, you don't know him like I do, he's like a bull dog, he'll never let go."

"The scrolls safe enough, he'll never find it and besides it's too well guarded."

"Scroll," Dave thought to himself when he heard it, "What scroll?"

"Perhaps you're right O' Hanlon could get nowhere near it," and the voices faded off into the distance leaving Dave more than slightly bemused. What was the scroll? What had Peter O' Hanlon got to do with it? A myriad of questions came out to haunt him but he had no time to answer them as he slipped out of the room and into the corridor and then into the darkened night.

As Dave walked the quiet dark streets he had time to reflect on how he had come to be in this position. Greed had first got him into the game as he saw the profits that could be made from selling ancient artifacts. Over time though he had gradually altered and now the fascination appealed more than their worth and he tended to keep them himself. He reasoned that he was financially secure now so it was no hardship and started to collect ancient books and literature in the hope of broadening his mind. Around the time of this shift in consciousness vivid dreams had started and at first they frightened him but that did not last long. Over time he realised that they were there to help him and from then on he reaped the benefit. Book after book was uncovered as the dreams guided him to them. Mountainous caves or buried deep it did not matter as he could always find them. But why had they neglected to tell him about the scroll? It must have been important the way O' Leary talked about it and by the fact that O' Hanlon was interested only added to its appeal.

"That will have to keep," he said aloud as he opened the door to his temporary lodgings and switched the light on to stop the darkness. He sat down awhile and looked at the title of the book once again.

"Beyond pretension there is only death," he said aloud in the hope that it would help but it was to no avail. He pondered more but got no further forward until sleep grasped him in her arms and he found himself face to face with an old friend. "So," he said by way of greeting, "I suppose that pretension is beyond you."

"What?" Dave said and then, "What's all this about a scroll anyway?"

"Ah the scroll, I'm afraid that you are not quite ready for it yet."

"But what actually is it?"

"Ancient wisdom of the highest degree, priceless in one respect though I dare say your friends won't see it in that sense. It was channeled down in the 14 century by a monk called Benedictus though it drove him mad in the process. A very dangerous thing if you are not ready for it."

"Oh," Dave said taking heed.

"Beyond pretension there is only death, so what is pretension?"

"The symbol of life," Dave said just guessing.

"Correct," the man said much to his surprise, "So pretension typifies life."

"We are talking about the ego here," Dave said upon realisation.

"Yes that's right. Now let's look at death, the death of the ego. Let's see how your memory is working, what does death actually stand for?"

Dave thought awhile and said, "Transformed through God's spiritual wisdom."

"Right, so with the ego's death you get a will of light. Life turns into light or God's purpose blesses the word through and that sorts the title out, you can open the book."

Dave opened the book and with more than a hint of disappointment said, "It's just the story of Helen of Troy."

"Troy was ruled by Priam who married Hecuba and from there union came Paris who was loved by Oenone, a nymph or to put it another way. Wisdom known(seeing blessing)is ruled by the word known(blessed with God's life) married to the spirit and will of love(self of God) which also gives you the word of God knowing blessed understanding which is fed or loved by seeing through light, seeing light through."

"Oh," Dave said going quiet.

"Beyond pretension," them man said laughing, "And now all that's left is to bring it down to Earth."

"Right," Dave said anxious to redeem himself. "So that would make Troy God's blessing, ruled by the word known (blessed with God's life)would be knowledge of the divine (and a life of service) married to the self of God which is a spirit and will of love."

"Putting them together."

"God's blessing is received through knowledge of the divine, a life of service, a will of love and the Holy Spirit."

"Good,"

"Now through knowledge of the divine, a life of service, a will of love and the Holy Spirit you also get to understand God. This is done by understanding His words and seeing Him everywhere or light blessing life."

"Well caught, isn't it surprising what you find when you look a little deeper?"

"It sound like it might be worth reading then," Dave said. At that moment a knocking door aroused him from his sleep. Dave looked at his watch and saw that it was 11.30. "Who the hell is that?" he said aloud as he got up to answer it. On opening the door he had a bigger shock, "O' Hanlon, what do you want here and how did you find me?"

"Bit of business if you're interested. I saw you leave O' Leary's and followed you here. That scroll you got hold off, I know a fellow who will pay good money for it."

"What scroll?" Dave said pleading ignorance.

"Don't play games, that's the only reason you would go there. I'm talking real money."

"I haven't got it. In fact the first time I heard about it was when I overheard O' Leary mention it."

"What, then what the hell were you doing there?"

"Pursuing other business, my own."

"Well you've always kept your cards close to your chest" Peter said and turned to go but changed his mind, "Look there is more than enough for both of us."

"That's not like you to share; it sounds like you have bitten off more than you can chew."

"Maybe but as I said there's more than enough for both of us."

"So what actually is it then, why is it worth so much to your client?"

"I don't know much about it, 14th century, written by an ancestor of my clients."

"Really," Dave said thinking that Peter also kept his cards close to his chest, "Look I'll tell you what I'll give the matter some thought and get back to you. Where can I find you?"

"I'll get in touch don't worry," Peter said reluctant to reveal his address. He left at that and on seeing the time Dave went back to bed. Dave found himself on a misty mountain top face to face with 3 women whose beauty transfixed him. They had the auras of Goddess' and their grace surpassed anything in the realms of time.

"Mortal man," A voice thundered around him, "You have been chosen to choose the fairest of the three."

"I cannot make that choice, how can I choose between them?"

"Very well," the voice said, "Perhaps you need to know a little bit more about them."

With that the nearest spoke, "I am Hera, the Queen of the Goddess', I offer you riches and power beyond your belief."

Then the next, "I am Athene the Goddess of wisdom; I offer you glory and renown in war."

And finally, "I am Aphrodite the Goddess of love, I offer you the fairest woman in the land."

"Then it must be you," Dave found himself saying, "For my purpose is to serve."

With that a flash of light and David found himself back with the old man. "A wise decision."

"I'm not so sure," Dave said, "Didn't that actually start the Trojan War?"

"That's just a story; you'll have to look deeper into it that's all."

"Right."

"So," the man said and waited for Dave to elaborate. As this was not forthcoming he threw him a lifeline, "Let's take them one at a time then. Hera offered power and riches and she stands for spirit through knowing God her Roman counterpart was Juno or blessed with loving light seen, so why did you reject her?"

"I didn't, I had no control over it."

"Oh well, it looks like it's going to be a long night."

"Sorry."

"Hera is the negative spirit of purpose; you could also call her Lucifer I suppose. She is actually pride and so she appealed to his ego by offering power and wealth."

"Yes, can see that. He rejected pride and so got humility."

"Good, so it's your turn with Athene then."

"Oh," Dave said and thought awhile before saying, "She offered glory and renown in war she stands for God's spiritual wisdom and light through, her Roman counterpart was Minerva which stands for a life of blessed light through knowing the love of God."

"Good," the man said and waited for him to continue.

"She is the negative spirit of love and you could also call her Satan. She is anger and so appealed to his ego by offering glory and renown."

"Good finally Aphrodite, God's spiritual word of knowing seeing transformation blessing wisdom through, her Roman counterpart was Venus or love through light, loving understanding. She is the Holy Spirit as you would call her and she offered the fairest woman in the land, which was?"

"Helen."

"Go on."

"Spirit through God's purpose and light or the spirit of purpose."

"Good, so as you can see all is not quite what it seems. Just to elaborate a little Helen was the daughter of King Tyndarus or wisdom blessed with light transforms to God's knowing (loving understanding) so from God's knowing you get His purpose for that is blessed understanding. She was married to Mendaus or life and light though God's purpose (God's loving understanding) or blessed understanding again."

"Alright," Dave said taking it all in.

"Now onto Troy itself and its five leaders. Now what actually is Troy?"

"God's blessing?"

"Good, try lining it up with Eden and you'll be surprised at what you come up with. Now five leaders, one king and an abducted ship launcher make seven."

"The seven spirits of God," Dave said upon realisation.

"Got it and you've already named one if I remember rightly."

"Helen, the spirit of purpose."

"Right, I'll make it a little easier by getting the King out of the equation. Priam or the word known (blessed with God's life)."

"The spirit of life."

"A spiritual life and that is what rules Troy as a state of mind."

"Right, so it's just the leaders then."

“We'll start with Priam's son Hector, he married Andromache so spirit and will of wisdom(seeing knowing) is married to God's light transformed to knowing(seeing life of God's Spiritual Will through). That's on another level but I thought I would throw it in and see if it's any help.”

“Er not really. I thought that it was the spirit of wisdom at first but now I'm not so sure.”

“Well it is but perhaps I confused you a little. The spirit of wisdom is married to a will of light. I thought that you might get it from a will of light.”

“Er right.”

“Anyway Aeneas, God through light and God's understanding, any ideas?”

Dave thought awhile and said, “The spirit of knowing.”

“Good, and how did you get that?”

“Well God's understanding is His knowing as opposed to understanding God which is understanding. So it's saying God through knowledge of the divine and the spirit of knowing.”

“Excellent, glad to see that you are back with us. Next we have Deiphobus or transformed through the blessed spiritual word seeing self of loving understanding. Any thoughts on that one?”

“It's the spirit of discernment. Loving understanding is insight it's also talking about the merge of spirit and Soul.”

“Good, just two left then. First Glaucus or will of God's purpose, God's loving will (Loving understanding).”

Dave thought awhile before saying, “That's tricky; it could be either purpose, love or insight though I guess it must be love as the other two have already gone.”

“Logical though you don't get out of it that easily, you'll have to elaborate I'm afraid.”

Dave thought some more and said, “Well love is God's will and also His purpose and I guess that's loving understood.”

“Alright, last one then. Sarpedon or understanding God (knowing the word) through transformation seeing light. Well you know it's the spirit of understanding as it's the last one.”

“And from understanding God.”

“So there you have your seven spirits, oh well just as you woke up you have to wake up.”

Chapter 2

Dave woke up with only vague recollections of the night before and got up quickly to make himself a cup of tea. His head felt strangely light and his mouth arid as if he had been in intense heat. He settled down with the coffee in the armchair but did not get too comfortable as the door knocked.

“O' Hanlon must be keen,” he said to himself as he got up to answer it. He knew it must be him as he was the only one who knew where he was. Opening the door made him change his mind though, “O' Leary.”

“The man himself, you got the kettle on?”

“What,” Dave said in surprise.

“Sure now a niggard is not a choice to adhere to.”

“You'd better come in I suppose.” Dave said letting him in.

“Very kind,” Edward said as he entered. A big man, he walked heavily with age though he still looked quite agile if he needed to be.

“So what's it all about?” Dave said, “And how did you find me?”

“A mutual friend of ours, O' Hanlon, he was very forthcoming.”

“He always was.” Dave said shrugging his shoulders.

“Well anyway I'm here now; I've a bit of business for you if you are interested.”

“Me,” Dave said in surprise.

“Well sure we've had our differences in the past but I've heard you are out of the game now so we've nothing to compete for.”

“Really, and who said I was out of the game?”

“Common knowledge, your absence from the market and from what I've been told by our clients.

Oh and O' Hanlon said you were reluctant to help him.”

“The scroll and this is what it's all about.”

“Yes, now before we go on I had better mention that O' Hanlon was very forthcoming indeed. He told me that you paid me a visit and it appears you have a book belonging to me.”

“I don't know what you are talking about.”

“Come now, don't play the innocent. Now you have left me in a predicament here. The book itself is worth nothing to me but what about my reputation. I can't have people stealing from me I mean where would it end?”

“Ah,” Dave said expecting the worse.

“So what am I to do? Well I gave the matter a little thought and came up with a solution.”

“You have,” Dave said slightly worried.

“Yes, now I reckon you owe me. The book, I don't want it no more so in my mind I've gave it to you as a favour.”

“Very noble,” Dave said guardedly.

“A favour for a favour, I've got something that might be up your street. I hear that you have a new hobby, ancient literature.”

“Yes,” Dave said with a slight sigh of relief.

“Well that brings us to the scroll. I want you to take a look at it and see what you think.”

“Sorry, you just want me to take a look at a scroll?”

“Well it was only a book I'm not after a pound of flesh.”

“Well not being funny but that's not normally your field.”

“I'm guess I'm wising up. I'm getting on a bit now so I thought that I would take my life in another direction.”

“Er, yes.”

“I don't need money now as I'm well set up. Now this scroll could give me something, it could give me power.”

“Power, how?”

“I don't know as yet, but take it from me.”

“Well I don't know much about power but I'll gladly take a look at it. Do you know anything about its history, O' Hanlon said it was 14th century but that's all I got except it was written by an ancestor of his client.”

“Well it is 14th century but as for the other bit I would take it with a large pinch of salt. It was written around 1347 by a monk called Benedictus. He said that he was told to write it by an angel who said that with its understanding he would get power.”

“So, let me get this right, he said it would give him power and it was given to him by an angel.”

“Sound daft, well I tend to keep an open mind on things like that.”

“Well angels aside I wouldn't mind taking a look at it; it's surprising what men throw up in the grasp of madness.”

“I'm not sure if he was mad when he wrote it,” Edward said and then laughed, “Though they say it drove him mad trying to understand it.”

“Dangerous then, so this scroll, have you got it with you?”

“No, I've got a few things to tie up today. How about I pick you up tomorrow at ten?”

“Sure,” Dave said and Edward got up, “Looks like the coffee with have to keep, tomorrow it is then,” and left Dave on his own.

The rest of the day went quite quickly as Dave got down to reading the story of Helen and soon night time came and he returned to bed.

Dave found himself back with the old man although he looked a little younger, “So the seven spirits of God,” he said by way of greeting, “And what do you think the story of Helen of Troy was all about?”

“The fall of man.” Dave found himself saying.

“Good though we still have to go through it just to make sure.”

“Thought so,” Dave said coming to his senses.

“It's not that bad,” the man said laughing, “Now Helen if you remember rightly was not a free spirit.”

“Sorry?”

“She was married.”

“Ah king Menelaus.”

“Life through light and God's purpose (God's loving understanding) or to put it another way, a spiritual life.”

“So the spirit of purpose is married to a spiritual life, yes I can see that.”

“Good, incidentally Menelaus was the king of Sparta which stands for understanding the word of God, knowing the wisdom of God so a spiritual life rules your understanding.”

“Right, so although man had his purpose he did not follow a spiritual life.”

“Got it, now before Helen's marriage she had numerous suitors who took a pledge that they would defend her from injury and defend her cause if needed.”

“That was at Ulysses suggestion wasn't it?”

“Well remembered.”

“But didn't he try and feign madness to get out of it, what was that all about?”

“We'll have to try and work out what he was first. He married Penelope and had a child called Telemachus, what does that tell you?”

“From love, God's purpose blesses understanding (understanding through understanding) married to the word from light and God's purpose (seeing the word through) you get wisdom through God's purpose and a life of God's Spiritual Will (loving understanding).”

“And that would make Ulysses?”

“Intuition.”

“Right, now the Ox and Ass represent insight and your basic drive.”

“Your basic drive?”

“Yes, the most basic life force, the reflexes. Now these are harnessed by your intuition to plough the field which is your imagination with salt which is either wisdom or attitudes to situations encountered.”

“Perceptions, what about the baby though?”

“Loving understanding, the child within or the inner self depending what salt you use. So put that together and what do you get?”

Dave thought awhile and said, “Your intuition controls your ability to look within and your instinct. It uses this to cultivate your imagination by sowing either wisdom or perceptions. The child I'm not sure about though.”

“That was just the story; the only thing you get out of it was your inner self is found in your imagination.”

“Oh, this could get confusing.”

“You don't know the half of it,” the man said with a laugh.

“Looks like I've got my work cut out I don't really know what's relevant and what's not.”

“Sorting the wheat out from the chaff, you'll soon pick it up. So anyway Ulysses' madness was seen through and he had to uphold his pledge. He took to the undertaking with fervour and helped to bring other reluctant chiefs to the cause.”

“Achilles.”

“That's one, now what does the story of Achilles disguise mean?”

“Good question.”

“Yes, and now all we want is a good answer.”

“I would need to know a little more about him.”

“Very well, he was the offspring of Peleus and Thetis so what does that tell you?”

“From the word and God’s purpose through loving understanding and spiritual wisdom through wisdom blessed with understanding you get God’s Spiritual Will blessed with God’s purpose (God’s purpose through understanding).

“Good, now Thetis being a sea nymph knew that if Achilles went on the expedition to Troy he would be fated to die so she tried to prevent him from going.”

“She sent him to the court of king Lycomedes if I remember rightly.”

“Which stands for?”

“God’s purpose blessing will seeing life through transformation and understanding.”

“Good, are you any wiser as to what Achilles actually is?”

“God’s spiritual wisdom, would that be the God within?”

“Good, sometimes known as the sleeping conscious. Now Lycomedes is actually a state of mind when the will is blessed with a purpose on one level and by the fact Achilles was concealed amongst his daughters it means the sleeping conscious is hidden in the feminine side.”

“Right, and the significance?”

“When Achilles handled the weapons and was told of his purpose he was awoken.”

“Isn’t that a contradiction though, what about the expression he who lives by the sword?”

“Well the sword is symbolic of the intellect, the lance the imagination. It is actually talking about mental attributes.”

“Of course.”

“Right so Achilles is the sleeping conscious and Ulysses the intuition. Now on another level Achilles was the Greeks most illustrious warrior after him you had Ajax so put them together.”

“God’s Spiritual Will blessed with God’s purpose, God’s purpose through understanding God blessed with God’s insight.”

“Speaks for itself. We also had Diomedes who was second only to Achilles in heroism. Ulysses as mentioned earlier and Nestor the oldest of the Grecian chiefs. So put that lot together and you get?”

“Transformation blessed seeing life and transformed through love God’s purpose blesses understanding. Understanding through understanding light and understanding wisdom (seeing knowing).”

“Good so all that's left for tonight is to sum it all up.”

“From wisdom blessed with light transformation to God’s knowing(loving understanding) you get the spirit though God’s purpose and light which is married to a life and light from God’s purpose (God’s loving understanding)

From the word known (blessed with God’s life) you also get transformed through the spiritual word seeing a self of loving understanding and God through light and God’s understanding.

From love, God’s purpose blesses understanding (understanding through understanding) married to the word from light and God’s purpose (seeing the word through) gives you wisdom through God’s purpose and a life of God’s Spiritual Will (loving understanding).

From the word and God’s purpose through loving understanding and spiritual wisdom through wisdom blessing understanding you get God’s Spiritual Will blessed with God’s purpose (God’s purpose through understanding).”

“Good, before I go just a word of warning. Watch out for that O’ Leary there's more to him than meets the eye.”

“Oh yes, I remember him from the old days, don’t worry about it.”

“Oh no, take care this is different.”

“In what way?” Dave said but before he got his answer the hammering door brought him back to reality.

Chapter 3

Dave awoke with a blinding head ache and no recollection of the warning. He looked at the time and saw it was ten o'clock. This was unusual for Dave as he normally got up about seven. He was half asleep as he opened the door.

"Are you fit?" Edward said by way of greeting.

"20 years ago maybe, my mouths as dry as a bone, have we enough time for a coffee?"

"Sure, heavy night?"

"Oh no, I'm on the wagon now."

"Really?" Edward said in surprise for at one time Dave used to be a very heavy drinker.

"Yes, a couple of years now," Dave said as he went into the kitchen to put the kettle on, "The hangovers seemed to last all day in the end so I thought it wise."

"Very commendable, I've never been a drinking man myself, never saw the buzz. So have you got your thinking head on?"

"Sure have," Dave said making the drinks, "We'll see what comes out of the ramblings of a lunatic."

"He was no lunatic," Edward protested angrily much to Dave's surprise as it had only been a flippant remark.

"Well if you say so."

"There is more to reality than meets the eye; I thought you would have known that with your learning."

"I was only joking, what's the matter with you?"

"Nothing," Edward said calming down, "Anyway we'd better get a move on O' Hanlon's expecting us."

"O' Hanlon as well," Dave said quietly to himself as he got up to leave. The journey was quick and quiet and soon Dave found himself face to face with O' Hanlon.

"So he got you as well," Peter said by way of greeting.

"What?" Dave said in surprise, "I'm only here to give the scroll the once over."

"Right," Peter said in a mocking tone.

"What's he talking about?" Dave said turning to Edward.

"Well," Edward said with a roguish grin, "Maybe I was a little economical with the truth. I'll leave you two to catch up with old times. The windows are barred and the doors well guarded so don't think of trying to leave."

After he had gone Dave said, "What is this, all over some book?"

"Oh no, I don't think you quite know what you have got into, I think he's lost it."

"What?"

"He seems to have got himself a messiah complex, well and truly lost it."

"Then why didn't you warn me. And speaking of your visit why did you tell him about it?"

"Well I didn't warn you because at the time I didn't know and as for the other he's a very persuasive man."

Dave said nothing as he knew this to be true. It went quiet for a while until Peter spoke, "God help us if he ever gets the power."

"What is this power anyway? He seemed a little obsessed with it and when I said the man was a lunatic he went up the wall."

"Well I suppose if he thought the man was a nutter it would null the story, and as for the power I reckon it must be the power of the universe."

"Universal energies, he must think he can harness fate."

Peter looked at Dave in a strange manner and said, "You must know more than you let on. You know what the power can do then."

"It's hypothetical, it could never happen."

"I wouldn't be so sceptical it has a long history behind it. Could you imagine all the luck it could

bring you? You could have wealth beyond your wildest dreams and what about the influence you could have with it.”

“Oh I don't dispute the power of the universe but what I'm saying is man could never harness it.”

“But what if he could, imagine it.”

“It's a non starter, it could never happen.”

“Well O' Leary thinks it can and I believe him too. I do know one thing for sure though; we'll never leave this place until he gets it.”

“What, we could be here an eternity then.”

“Not me, I'm going at the first opportunity and I'll tell you this I'm taking that scroll with me.”

“You must be just as mad as him then.”

“Look if we can crack this scroll it will make the Rosetta stone break though look like a two piece jigsaw puzzle in comparison. Imagine all the leaps in progress in the esoteric science and it could have my name on it. The O' Hanlon scroll. You've got to admit it has a certain ring to it. Come with us man there's more than enough to go round.”

“Not me; I just want to get away as soon as possible.”

“Well fair enough, the offers still there if you change your mind.”

Before Dave could say anything else he heard the door unlock and so kept quiet.

“Well,” Edward said on entering, “I think you have had more than enough time to get reacquainted.”

“Look,” Dave said, “What's this all about, you said yourself it was only a book. This isn't just taking the P### it's taking the bladder as well.”

“From now on you'll speak only when spoken to,” Edward snapped, “You are in my power now and subject to my wishes. You will do what you are told when you are told.”

“What is this?” Dave said

“I think that maybe you need a little more time to think,” Edward said, “Perhaps Peter can enlighten you,” and with that he left, locking the door behind him.

“What is he talking about,” Dave said after he had left.

“He's lost it, I told you.”

“Well it looks like we've got a lot of time on our hands, what's the story?”

“I wouldn't know where to start. He seems to think he's some sort of King Arthur figure come to save Britain in her hour of need.”

“What, King Arthur, I didn't think of him as a messiah as such.”

“Well legends say that he will return to Great Britain when she has the greatest need for him.”

“Well I thought he'd have got here long before now. I thought that we are better off now than we have ever been.”

“Not according to O' Leary and to be honest I can see a lot of truth in what he is saying.”

“What?”

“Just look around you. The only direction for a lot of people is drugs; we're a country well in decline. The word vocation seems to have been replaced with vacation for that's what the majority of people look to from it. The whole country seems to be deluded by power in one form or another, society has gone mad.”

“But it always was, take Darwin's theories on nature as an example.”

“What?” Peter said for it was his turn to be confused.

“Evolution,” Dave said, “It doesn't just happen it has to be rationalised and as it is not done by the animal itself it must be some outside influence.”

“Er yes,” Peter said still in ignorance.

“Now anyone with common sense would try and work out what rationalised all that. Instead they used it to try and disprove the existence of God by taking Genesis as literal.”

Peter looked at Dave strangely and said, “Do you believe in the Earth Mother then?”

“What?”

“Mother Nature, the thing that rationalised it all.”
 “I suppose there must be something in it.”
 “Then maybe you might understand what I'm talking about.”
 “Sorry?”
 “He told me how he got to think he was Arthur, it’s a story in itself I can tell you.”
 “Go on.”
 “Well I don't know if you know it but O' Leary has never been a drinking man.”
 “Yes, he told me not long ago in fact.”
 “He was more into Mary Anna.”
 “Oh.”
 “Yes, he said it used to help him contemplate and improve his understanding.”
 “Well,” Dave said impatiently.
 “Well he was stoned one night and he had to pay a visit to the toilet. He had left the light off so it was quite a dimly lit room. He told me that he found himself drawn to the mirror and saying a mantra.”
 “A mantra?”
 “Yes, and then he said he saw an angel.”
 “That would explain it.”
 “Yes, that’s right, he said he said it seven times and each time got a different angel.”
 “Hang on a minute, where did he actually see these angels?”
 “In the mirror,” Peter said it as if it did not need to be said, “Then he said the Our Father and saw King Arthur. He was a big man with a well kept beard and he had the bearings of a saint.”
 “And how did he actually know it was Arthur?” Dave said still in disbelief.
 “He said he sort of sensed it. The name came into his head and he said, ‘My lady I humble myself before your grace, may your pleasure be my purpose and may my service be your smile.’”
 “What,” Dave said, “He came up with all that.”
 “He said it was like something was saying it for him. Anyway he said as he said it, it looked like another mirror was coming to the fore and he could clearly make out a woman's face. She said she was the Earth Mother and the Earth was in need of his services for he was Arthur.”
 “That must have been some trip. And this mantra, what was it?”
 “We surrender our will to the greater will, the will of the divine, I will, to will thy will. Now you see why I wasn't forthcoming with the story.”
 “Well yes, we’re stuck in here with a mad man, you do know that.”
 “Yes, though to listen to him he seems to talk sense.”
 “Maybe its contagious then, so have you actually seen this scroll?”
 “I didn't get that far, he caught me virtually as soon as I got in.”
 The door unlocked once again and Edward entered the room. “I hope there will not be a repeat of the earlier incident and we can get back on a familiar footing,” He said and Dave noticed something strange. It was like he had changed his character; even his accent was quite different. Dave said nothing so Edward continued, “So gentlemen if you would like to follow me the scroll awaits.” Peter and Dave obediently followed him down a long corridor and into a library. Books covered the wall like wall paper and some of them looked pretty rare.
 “Quite a collection,” Dave said with more than a hint of being impressed.
 “Gets me through the day, now the original copy was written in Latin but I have translated it.” A large table and 3 chairs sat in the middle of the room and Edward bid them sit down whilst he got the scroll.
 “The power of the universe lies within these words,” He said as he put the scroll and papers on the table, “So treat it with the respect it deserves.”
 “Look at the lettering,” Peter said in wonder; “It’s a work of art.”
 “A lot of care was taken over it,” Edward said in reverence. The scroll was rolled back up and they

all took a copy of the translation. It read

Once upon a time there was a king who liked to fish and would go down the lake every morning to accommodate this desire. One day he got back home only to find he could not get in because he had lost something. He walked back to the round pond and walked around it before returning retracing his steps in the hope of finding it. When he got back home he found what he was looking for.

Chapter 4

After they had studied it for a few minutes Edward said, "Well gentlemen your views."

Peter spoke first, "I guess it's symbolic but I can't make head nor tail of it."

Dave in truth thought it a waste of time but said nothing only went along with the play, "Well I'm guessing he was looking for the key to get in. The castle might be the power that you are talking about."

"Yes, I like it," Edward said, "I was thinking along the lines of the fisher king though I did not know what direction to take it."

"Castles are generally symbolic of security as well as power," Peter said, "Do you think that we are talking about the key to Heaven?"

"Heaven," Edward said and went deep into thought, "Maybe I suppose that would depend on what your perception of Heaven would be."

"Well I always took it as some form of collective conscious." Peter said, "Its power being the power of the Universe, you know fate and all that."

"Yes, I can go with that," Edward said, "Now how would the pond fit in with all that? He went there every day to fish, do you think there's any relevance in that?"

"Water is generally symbolic of life," Peter said, "And I guess being round reinforces that as it's the circle of life. Maybe this power takes many lifetimes to get."

"I don't know about that," Edward said, "What do you think about it Dave?"

Dave thought awhile and said, "Well I don't know if it's any help but I think he must have had the key all along."

"Maybe it's saying that the key is within then?" Edward said after a moments thought.

"Now that would fit," Peter said, "He went on the circle of life to try and find it so that would make it?"

"The Self," Edward said.

"That would fit," Peter said getting excited. "It would even fit with the fisher king."

"It would," Dave said confused, "How?"

"One of the fishes symbolic meanings is wisdom," Peter said, "Insight is what you hook it with plus you have to look within to find your Self."

"Good," Edward said, "I can see that."

"So you have to find your Self to get the power," Peter said, "Now the angel said that if you understood it you would get the power. I think we've made a mistake."

"You do?" Edward said.

"I think it's actually talking about the power of insight," Peter said.

"No," Edward protested, "It can't be. It's more than that, it has to be."

"That's as far as I can take it, what about you Dave," Peter said.

"I can see the logic in it," Dave said, his attention had come round for he perceived that if the power was insight it was actually obtainable, "And insight is a good gift to have."

"Oh I don't dispute that," Edward said, "But what about the real power. I want to mould events to suit my purpose. It's alright having insight but that won't get you far."

"I don't know about that," Dave said, "If you knew the reasons behind the circumstances surely that would give you the edge?"

"No," Edward said, "The system is too loaded against me I need more, much more."

"I think it's a red herring," Dave said, "You can't actually harness these powers, they harness you."

"No, no," Edward said, "We must have missed something. I'm going to have to go out for a while. I want you to go through it again and make sure that nothing is missed."

With that Edward got up and left the room and Peter said, "I reckon we're wasting our time trying to rationalise it anymore."

"True, where did he nip off to like that anyway? He seemed in a hurry."

"Fresh instruction maybe."

"What?"

"From the mirror, he tends to use it quite a lot."

"Do you mean to tell me that he actually talks to the mirror?"

"Yes, I thought I told you that."

"Well you mentioned once, I thought that it was just a bad trip."

"No, he's pretty regular. Ah well it looks like the scroll was a waste of time."

"I don't know, it proved quite interesting in the end."

"Maybe," Peter said still downhearted, "But when it comes to wealth it's not worth the paper it's written on."

"I don't suppose it would wield much influence either," Dave said with a laugh and then in a more serious tone, "What do you suppose it going to happen now?"

"Well if we can prove to him that it's not what he thinks he might just let us go."

"You think so," Dave said unsure himself.

"It's not worth anything; he's got nothing to lose."

"Could be," Dave said and picked up the translation once more, "So how do you actually get insight by understanding this?"

"It's beyond me and to tell you the truth I don't think it's worth chasing anyway."

With that the door opened and Edward came back, "You may as well go then," he said with a marked tone of disappointment in his voice.

"Is that it then," Dave said, "No more?"

"No, we're evens."

"May I keep a copy?" Dave said.

"Yes, why not, though I don't see what good it will do you?"

Dave took a copy and both he and Peter left together.

"I don't know why you wanted that for," Peter said as they walked off, "It's not worth anything."

"I'm not so sure, we could all do with a little insight. Speaking of which what do you think he'll do now?"

"Without the power just vegetate on what might have been, you can never tell."

"So what was he actually going to do with it, I mean he must have had some kind of aim."

"To take over the country and guide it back on path, well that's what he told me anyway."

"He must have lost it big time and all through just looking at a mirror."

"Oh I wouldn't underestimate it; I wouldn't like to guess what he saw. I got as far as the first face and that was it."

"You mean you've tried it yourself and it actually works," Dave said in surprise.

"Well I've tried it and it does work, it's just a pity I wasn't a little braver."

"So what are your plans then?" Dave said changing the subject.

"Not sure, just go with the flow and see what happens I guess. I'm getting a little too old for all this chasing though so I guess I'll be looking for new interests."

"I bet your client will be disappointed," Dave said just to rub it in.

"Me and him both as we are the same," Peter said and then laughed, "Ah well we live and learn.

Anyway I'm going to make tracks. I'll probably see you around and no doubt we'll be hearing much more from Edward."

Peter left Dave and Dave finished the rest of the journey home. On arrival he made himself a cup of coffee and pondered on the events of the day. He had heard about a Napoleon complex and a God

complex but a King Arthur one was new to him. He had noticed a change in O' Leary's character and this had unnerved him a little as he thought him schizophrenic. He laughed out loud to that and said to himself 'it's just lucky he was not paranoid else I would never have got out' and thought no more about it. He looked at the copy again and studied it some more though by nighttime he was no further forward. As the room darkened his thoughts returned to the mirror and he debated on whether to give it a try. At first he thought it was a bad trip but when Peter had said he had tried it himself he started to look at it in a new light. He knew it had drove O' Leary mad but curiosity was his task master and besides he reasoned that O' Leary had not been too sane at the best of times. He decided that he would give it a go and so got up and walked across to the bathroom. The room itself was too dark so he put the living room light on and half shut the bathroom door to get it just about right.

As he looked at his reflection he started to look through it and felt a strange sensation down his back and on the back of his neck itself. The reflection started to haze a little and he saw what only could be described as energies around his frame and then white smoke around his outline. His head and back tingled as he said the mantra for the first time. He felt the energies build up and he saw the face and frame of a huge looking oriental man transmute over his. The man must have been huge judging by the size of his head and width of his shoulders. He looked back at Dave without emotion and Dave repeated the mantra and another face appeared. With each repetition another face appeared and the energies built more heavily around him. At one point they came that strong that they nearly knocked him over but he was lucky that the door behind him blocked his retreat. As he said the Our Father the figure of a huge knight with a well kept beard appeared and Dave was taken by the vividness of the picture. He looked a strong noble man and Dave could quite easily see how he could be thought of as Arthur.

After Dave finished the Our Father he repeated the pledge and the mirror grew darker. He saw a light in the distance and as it got closer he saw it was revealing a face. At the start he could not make anything out but eventually he saw a nose and then two eyes and some heavily wrinkled cheeks and forehead. It was an old woman but Dave did not hang around long enough to see what she wanted. In his panic he banged his knee twice trying to get out of the room and his initial vow was that he would never look in a mirror again. He had seen nothing like it. The figures before though quite frightening he could rationalise as the spirit is upon us kind of thing but the old woman was different. She was fully formed and around her was daylight. This still played on his mind when he fell to sleep.

Dave found himself in a bright white room standing by a table with a blank piece of paper on it. He did not have to wait too long before a man's voice said "Once upon a time there was a king who liked to fish and would go down the lake every morning to accommodate this desire." With that the outline of a castle appeared in symbol form on the paper. "One day he got home to only find out that he could not get in because he had lost something." With that about 4 inches away from the castle a round circle appeared. "He walked back to the round pond," a line appeared from the castle to the pond, "And walked around it." the line followed the outline of the pond, "Before returning, retracing his steps in the hope of finding it." the line went back to the castle, "When he got back he found what he was looking for." With that Dave saw he had a picture of a key.

He stood there awhile just looking at it until the voice said, "Are you any the wiser?"

"Er no, I thought it was insight but obviously that was wrong."

"Well it does have a part to play, so what actually is the self creating key?"

Dave thought for awhile but could not get anywhere so the voice came to his aid, "The key was what he was looking for and he created it himself."

"Is this a God thing?" Dave said unsure.

"Go on," The voice said wanting elaboration.

"Well the key would be God, you spend a life time looking for Him then you see Him when you die."

The voice laughed and said, "Not bad so what about the next level then?"

"I'm not sure, according to my perceptions of what you've just said man creates God."

"Well it's more to do with man achieving his God-Head. Now when he achieves this he finds the spirit of purpose and thus he finds his power."

"His power?"

"Yes, his power is his understanding," as Dave seemed none the wiser, "The Holy Spirit," the voice said helping him. With that the scene changed.

Chapter 5

Dave found himself face to face with the old man but this time they looked the same age. "Not long now, just mopping up."

"Oh right," Dave said picking up.

"Agamemnon, any ideas?"

"God's will (God's life) through life (light sees light), that sounds to me like a spiritual life."

"Well he was Menelaus' brother."

"Sorry?"

"Life through light and God's purpose (God's loving understanding) is a kin to God's will (God's life) through life (Light sees light). Now he was the commander in chief of the Grecian army reinforcing the importance of a spiritual life and he had a daughter called Iphigenia, so what does that tell you?"

"From God's will (God's life) through life, (light sees light) you get the blessed spiritual word blessing the will through light blessed by God."

"Good, now the first victim to fall was Protesilaus who was married to Laodamia so what does that tell you?"

"The word known (seeing wisdom) through understanding blessed with God's purpose (God's loving understanding) is married to God's purpose, (God seeing transformation to God's life blessed by God.)"

"And putting them together?"

"From God's will (God's life) through life (light sees light) you get the blessed spiritual word blessing the will through light blessed by God.

The word known (seeing wisdom) through understanding blessed with God's purpose (God's loving understanding) is married to God's purpose (God seeing transformation to God's life blessed by God)

"Good, that's that level sorted. There is some more information after the fall of Troy but you can catch that up in your own time."

"Fair enough, so what about the fall of man I can't see how it fits in with what you have said."

"That would be the wooden horse."

"Right," Dave said and waited for some elaboration. He waited in vain though for the man said, "So how is the wooden horse equated with the fall of man?"

Dave was none the wiser so the man said, "A man made idol dedicated to anger, the negative spirit of wisdom."

"Man developed an ego?"

"Go on," The man said and waited for Dave to elaborate, Dave thought for a moment before saying, "No I haven't a clue."

"Well you were pretty close for a guess," the man said with a laugh, "The negative spirit of wisdom is also known as the spirit without purpose. The horse is symbolic of spirit and this is a reinforcement of the first part."

"So the horse is the spirit without purpose and that was when man fell from grace."

"Well man actually fell from grace when he took the spirit of purpose without taking a spiritual life. His final fall was when he developed pride over purpose and from that he got an ego."

“Sorry, I was up with you till pride over purpose.”

“His purpose was to serve but his pride got in the way. This was symbolised by the fact that the horse was full of armed soldiers that took over the city symbolising man was taken over by pride. On another level it's also saying that within anger you'll find pride. The tale should give you plenty to go at but poetic license has entered it quite heavily so be a little discerning.”

“Ah insight,” Dave said remembering the key.

“Oh the scroll”

“I thought you said that it was dangerous, it seemed a bit of a letdown to me.”

“Perhaps you weren't quite ready for it then. These things tend to make more sense as your understanding grows.”

“Well I think I understood it though I don't really understand how knowing that would give me insight. I can't seem to equate the two.”

“You have to have insight to see it,” the man said with a laugh, “Knowing that and understanding it gives you the power in balance.”

“In balance?”

“Yes, to know something and to understand it are two different things and effect two different aspects of your Self.”

“It does?”

“Yes, understanding purifies your Soul and knowing expands your spirit.”

“Really, I did not know that.”

“Let me give you an example, Greek mythology. Knowing it strengthens your intellect thus improving your memory. That works on your rational side. Understanding it however works on your emotional side the more you understand it the stronger your understanding grows. This works not just with Greek Mythology it works with most mythologies and also the scriptures.”

“Yes I think I understand that but how does that fit in with balance?”

“You can expand your spirit without purifying your Soul though this will leave you unbalanced.”

“In what sense?”

“You are still controlled by your negative emotions, pride being the main one. These demons are what your Soul wants purifying from. If you evolve in balance then you lose those demons as you grow. You'll find contemplation good for this. Try meditating on the story awhile and see if it helps.”

“Right, and from that I'll get my understanding?”

“It will help you to build your understanding think of it as the journey looking for the key.”

“Okay, so if the key is God, the journey is your understanding and the journeyman was insight.”

“Good, the pond is life and that just leaves the castle.”

“The collective conscious,” Dave said remembering the earlier conversation.

“The Holy Spirit, the water of your life. It is also the spirit of purpose in one of its aspects, the other two being love and understanding.”

“You make a lot of the spirit of purpose, why is that?”

“Without a purpose you are only half your Self. Your purpose is your divinity it is the lord of the seven spirits of God and all the others work towards it.”

“Oh it's important then.”

“Oh yes, without purpose you are void.”

“True, I guess that's it on the scroll then.”

“And that just leaves the mirror,” the man said laughing.

“How did you know that?”

“I sort of sensed it. You know if you would have stuck around a little longer you wouldn't have had to ask me about it.”

“Yes, well, I had thoughts that I would have ended up like O' Leary with a King Arthur complex.”

“Well you probably would have done. You weren't quite ready for it you didn't have the key.”

“Sorry did the scroll have some bearing on this then? No, that can't be right O' Leary cracked up before he had the scroll.”

“No, it was not long after in fact. Now you understand it your perception of the situation will change.”

“What?”

“When O' Leary looking at the mirror his perception of the scroll was that it would give him power.”

“Yes, he wanted it to try and master fate.”

“Right, now this power he craved was guided by anger and it also guided his interpretation of what he saw. When he saw Arthur he saw the spirit of knowing, one of the seven spirits of God. His perception of Arthur was that of a Richard the lion-heart mixed with a little Bonnie Prince Charlie though so he saw him in a different light.”

“Oh right, I was wondering about that for when I saw him he looked quite a saintly man.”

“Oh you stopped longer than I thought,” the man said laughing.

“Well I lasted longer than O' Hanlon, he ran out after the first one.”

“He was not as evolved as O' Leary his only interest was the money and influence it would bring him. He could barely see past his reflection and so when he saw past it, it scared him.”

“So it goes on how evolved you are then, evolved in what sense?”

“In understanding, when you looked at the mirror you had already assumed that the scrolls power was insight and so you had no emotional leanings on it.”

“Yes, I think I know what you mean. So if I had gone to the mirror earlier the scroll could have been quite dangerous.”

“My liege,” the man said and gave a mock bow. “Knowledge is power for it gives you control over negative emotions. You needed to understand the story of the beauty contest to give you the discernment to make the right choice and for the right reason. If you had wanted the scroll for the wrong reason you would have made the wrong choice.”

“Yes I can understand that, strange really as Peter offered to cut me in.”

“You could even have ended up working for Edward. He can be quite a charismatic character when the spirit is upon him.”

“The spirit of knowing?”

“Close, the negative spirit of knowing. Envy to his friends.”

“Envy, I never took him for an envious person.”

“Spiritual envy, it takes form in anger usually. Though perceiving himself as Arthur I guess he must have envied the powers to be for he must have thought that it was his rightful place in the running of things.”

“True, you know he did seem different at times, I thought that he had turned schizophrenic, quite scary really.”

“Not as scary as that woman though.”

“Alright, alright, I'd thought I had out stayed my welcome that's all.”

“Oh yes I see, I guess it was the gentlemanly thing to do. So who do you think she was?”

“From what I've heard she was the Earth Mother but that came from O' Leary's perceptions so I wouldn't quote me on it.”

“Well he was right; the facts don't change just your perceptions of them.”

“She looked old, I guess that's why I ran, I don't know, there's just something about old people.”

“Probably your fear of growing old. I wouldn't worry about it; in fact if you stop worrying about it you'll lose your fear of it.”

“That sounds like you want me to go back to it.”

“Well you have to face your fears, it's the only way. Besides she's not just the Earth Mother she is also yours.”

“What?”

“Well if your father's up in heaven where do you think your mother is going to be?”

“Oh so I ran out on my mother.”

“That's about the size of it. You'll know next time although you won't remember.”

“What?” Dave said but before he could receive any more information he found himself drifting back to consciousness.

Dave woke up light headed and dry mouthed and quickly got up and went to the kitchen to get himself a glass of water. The time was still night and so it was pretty dark. He had forgotten the dream and only remembered his thirst. He was surprised to see that the clock on the wall in the kitchen said 3o'clock. He quickly drank the water and let his mouth cool down whilst he got his breath.

After he got his breath his thoughts returned to the Earth Mother and he felt strongly drawn to go to the bathroom mirror. In truth he was a little scared but his curiosity got the better of him. The mirror had an eerie appeal to it and as he looked at it he felt the energies around him, 'I surrender my will to the greater will the will of the divine, I will to will thy will'. The energies lifted and the mirror went dark and Dave fell back slightly though caught his balance before he came to harm. As he repeated the mantra he could make out though not very distinctly a large oriental man with a stringed moustache. Next came a large Ethiopian man and then a man who Dave could not even guess at nationality wise and then the man they had took to be Arthur. With every mantra the face changed and the energies built up around him. As Dave went into the Our Father he saw a face that he recognized vaguely. It was the man from the dreams but Dave did not know this. After he had finished he said his pledge and the mirror went dark and looked like it had become a window. The further he got through the pledge the brighter the light got and as it grew in size he could make out the features of a woman. Soon it almost took up the mirror and he was face to face with an old woman who looked at him and said, “That's all folks.”

A Site for Sore Eyes

Skip rat pulled out the last pallet from the skip and stacked it with the others to the left. "Idle gits," he muttered to himself, "I don't know why I bother."

"Because it's your purpose," a voice said knocking him out of his self induced sloth. He turned to see a small man dressed in green with a wide brimmed hat holding a peacock's feather in its sash.

"Kieran Trotter," Skip said, "It's been a long time."

"A lifetime, do they still call you the wood butcher."

"Not for a long time now."

"It is time now," Kieran said mysteriously

"Now," Skip repeated without understanding.

"Your time has come; we are in need of your strength."

The arrival of a new voice caused Kieran's disappearance, "Ah Dave, got a little job for you to do," it was John Innes, the site manager, a small gruff Yorkshire man conditioned by his job and nothing else, "A bit of digging, should be fun."

"Right, a trench wants widening."

"That's right."

"The pipe-fitters told me, 700 deep from the top of the Kerb stone."

"That's not their job," John said as he walked off. Skip found the site spade and wheel barrow and went straight to work. He wished there was a site pick as it would have made the job a lot easier for the ground was heavily laden with stone. As he cut into it his mind drifted back to Kieran Trotter and the numerous times their paths had crossed. He had not always been a leprechaun in fact the first time Skip had seen him he was actually a centaur, a little one though as Skip had been a baby. As Skip grew in size and reason Kieran disappeared but he came back in Skip's teens when he developed a premature liking for barley wine. His education became the bottle and school became a drying out clinic to be avoided at all cost. It was around then that the D. T's became the E.T for the centaur changed to a little green man. This metamorphosis paralleled Skips weaning off the bottle so by the time he was dry Kieran was reborn to his present form. He went back to school and left it with a basic education and got himself a trade. It was around then that Kieran disappeared for a score of years. His reminiscing was interrupted by a voice, "It's nice to see you so entrenched in your work." He looked up to see Kieran leaning up against the wall of the site manager's office, "That should keep your strength up."

"For what, what's all this about?"

"We have need of your service; you must come into our world once again."

"No," Skip dismissed the idea quickly. "I remembered what happened the last time."

"You got over it and besides you can stay this time if you like."

"I can," Skip said picking up, "So what do you actually need my strength for?"

"The magician Otelo has joined the great void; he has taken with him the great Queen Tempest and means to hold her hostage until he is crowned Great King of Zanalón."

"Is he mad, does he not know that she is protected by the purest divinity?"

"I fear that he lost his reason many moons ago. He holds her in the Castle of Despair next to the Twin Moat of Sorrows."

"I know it, Fradley way isn't it?"

"That's right, so what do you say wood butcher, you'll be in good company."

"I will?"

"Cedric of the many arrows and Harry the spider await, soon to be joined by Timmy the weasel."

"Good company indeed, I will come for the nostalgia of it."

"Then follow me." and Skip duly obliged. At the far side of the site was a large concrete soak-away pipe and Skip crawled through it after Kieran and found himself back in Zanalón. They were soon joined by a large spider and an equally large hedge-hog. Greeting of mutual respect were exchanged and the business of rescue soon took centre stage.

“So how are we going to handle it then?” Skip said in an excited tone.

“We will cross the Marsh of Misery trying to avoid the Dragoons of Doubts,” Kieran said, “And this will take us to the Foothills of Despair.”

“And if we meet the Doubts that is when I come out to play, right?”

“We won't meet any for Timmy at this moment is picking his way through the marsh and leaving his track.”

“Oh so what about my strength then?”

“I will tell you when the time is right, now let the quest begin.” They all got up and followed the trail that Timmy had left. All through the night they walked and by morning they were at the Foothills of Despair.

“Now the first problem is to cross the bridge-less moat,” Kieran said but was interrupted by Skip, “I could chop down some trees with the Axe of Destruction and make a raft.”

“Ah,” Kieran said, “I'm afraid it's off hire this week. No, Harry will spin a web to span the chasm.”

“Oh,” Skip said disappointed, “So what about my strength then?”

“I will tell you when the time is right.” Kieran said and Harry got to work. Soon finished they were across and surveying the next moat intently. This one had a rope bridge that spanned it and across it at four feet intervals stood heavily armed dominoes, the size of men.

“Ah the Dominoes of Despair,” Skip said with excitement, “You want me to use the Sword of Retribution and hack into them one by one?”

“No,” Kieran said, “Besides that broke years ago. We got one of those new case hardened ones and since it got blunt no one could sharpen it. Cedric will sort it out.”

As if on cue Cedric rolled into a ball and rolled down the hill knocking into the first one and sending him back into the next one before falling off the bridge. The knock on effect soon cleared the bridge and became known as Cedric feudal force (Or something like that, I think I was on the barley wine when they did it).

“Right,” Skip said after they had crossed the bridge, “You want me to rush in and overpower his guards before rescuing the Great Queen?”

“No Timmy has already taken care of it.”

“Then what do you actually want me to do?” Skip said in despair.

“Er,” Kieran said sheepishly, “Open the door for none of us can reach the handle.”

On the other side of the Castle of Despair there was a cottage and in that cottage there lived three maidens. They were known as the Sisters of Sorrow and anyone who crossed their path generally did not walk much further. Pamerella was the youngest, a waif like Aphrodite that in the normal running of things would be considered quite a doll. I say normally but the cottage had been cursed by Otelo and now beauty and plainness had been reversed so her sisters took all the trophies.

People would travel for miles to court these two girls' favours for Angelina and Concentina's beauty was renowned across all of Zanalon. They had heard of the curse although that did not deter them. Each man that made the journey reasoned that it was just bitterness brought about by the rejection of failed suitors for having seen the sister's portraits they were blinded by their beauty and dismissed any idea of imperfection as impossible. Many came but none returned for it was just a honey trap to provide labour for the castles upkeep. None of this was known to Skip and his merry men as they made their retreat having rescued the queen.

“We'll stop here for shelter if that be to your will?” Kieran said to the Queen.

“I would say that we are far enough away now,” the Queen said, “Yes, it looks like a good place.” They knocked on the door and Pamerella answered it.

“The Queen requires a bed for the night,” Kieran said and at this Angelina rushed past Pamerella and said, “Her gracious highness is more than welcome to stay at our humble abode. Though I'm afraid it might not be enough for her entourage.”

“That's alright,” Kieran said, “We will use the stables. She will require a bodyguard though.”

“By your command,” Angelina said and turning to Pamerella, “See that everything is ready.”

Harry the spider got the job and Skip and the rest were relegated to the stables.

“So what do you think of that Angelina then,” Cedric said, “Looker or what?”

“What?” Skip said as when it came to the curse as he was not a resident he was immune from its power, “Are you kidding, she’s a rancid hound. Now that Pamerella.”

“You must be blind,” Cedric said, “She’s an angel, what do you say Timmy?”

“I wouldn’t say no,” and at that moment Kieran returned from lookout duty, “It’s getting cold out,” he said as he shut the door, “But no sign of Otelo’s men as yet so we must have got away with it.”

“Guess it’s my turn then,” Skip said getting up, “I reckon those other two need glasses so they won’t be up to it,” and left them to keep an eye on the main road.

After around 5 minutes he was joined by Pamerella, “It’s a cold night for this, I was wondering if you wanted some soup.”

“Thank you but I’ve not long since had some. I could use some company though if you have the time.”

“Sure, though I can’t stop long as I have my chores to do.”

“So anyway what’s a beautiful girl like you doing in a place like this?”

“What?” Pamerella said angrily, “You mock me,” and pulled back as it to go.

“Sorry?” Skip said in confusion, “What are you talking about?”

“I am ugly, everybody knows that. People travel for miles to try and wed my sisters but no one comes for me.”

“Then they must be blind for from what I have seen of your sisters they will never get wed.”

“Then what chance have I got,” She said sadly and left Skip on his own. He thought awhile and questioned his sanity and then his eyesight. To him she was beautiful and yet no one, not even she could see it. He could not work out why this should be and spent 20 minutes trying to reconcile it before being interrupted none the wiser.

“Quick, quick, follow me,” Pamerella said and he duly obliged. Much to his horror he found Harry the spider lying dead on the floor.

“My sisters drugged him with alcohol, they got him legless.”

“What a way to go,” Skip said sadly before saying, “The Queen?”

“They are taking her to Otelo thought that I had better warn you.”

“Thanks I’ll get the others,” and soon they were in pursuit with Pamerella leading the way. “They have taken her to the Great Cavern of Emptiness,” she said as they pushed their way through a dense wooded hollow. “It is protected by the Great Fire of Desire and we can only get past it by going on the Path of Treachery which as you can imagine is a very slippery slope.”

The hollow ended and they climbed up onto a large grassed plain that led to a large fronted cliff. In front of the cliff was a large fire and this burned ferociously although it yielded no heat. The entrance of the cave was halfway up the cliff and could only be got to by scrambling up a muddy bank that circled around the fire.

“I shall go,” Cedric said and ran up before anyone could stop him.

“Be careful,” Kieran said afterwards but to no avail for halfway up the track he started to slip and out of instinct rolled into a ball. He rolled down the slope gathering mud as he went and by the time he ended up in the fire he was caked that much that he could not move his limbs. The fire quickly took him.

“A headstrong man,” Kieran said after watching his demise, “But he will be sorely missed.”

“True,” Skip said, “Looks like it’s my turn then.”

“Not at all, Timmy’s the man for the job. He’s more sure footed than anyone; he’ll soon have her back.”

Timmy quickly left and was soon entering the cave. The sound of screams quickly followed and they saw Concertina rush out of the cave and lose her footing. She quickly fell down the steep bank and became a victim of Desire. Angelina came next and her fate was soon assured. Timmy carried the queen on his back and they were soon reunited.

“You have served us well,” the Queen said to Pamerella, “And for that you shall be rewarded. I have need of another lady in waiting for I fear that Princess Madam is a bit of a handful.”

“I am honoured,” Pamerella said and curtsied.

“You must come with us,” the Queen said, “Though that won't be till morning,” and they made their way back to the cottage where due to the reduced number of the entourage they all got beds.

Meanwhile back at the palace Pixie Jean crossed her rather fetching legs and pondered on her fate. Since the great Queen Tempest's imprisonment life had gone swiftly downhill. Zanalon had gone to regency for Princess Madam was still a child and her uncle the Giant Ranter had took control. He was a bombastic, pedantic man who had taken it upon himself to make poor Pixie's life a misery. He had her flapping around like a one winged bluebottle and rarely could she find time to relax and contemplate. How she wished the Great Queen was back on her throne and all was well once more.

“Lady in waiting,” a voice bellowed loudly making her jump out of her seat, I am taking the princess to a party make sure she is ready to go by 10 minutes to 2 tomorrow and make sure she has a suitable present.”

Pixie Jean looked up and saw the large fat giant glaring down at her, “You may now retire,” Ranter barked, “For I want you up first light,” and stormed off leaving Jean with just two hours sleep.

Next morning saw the entourage up also at first light. After dressing and breakfasting they made good progress on their journey. The further away from the cottage they got the less the strength of the curse and so very soon Pamerella was seen in her true light. The journey itself was over quite quickly for the realm when all said and done was not that big. By half past one they were back in the palace much to Pixie's relief. She now had a new friend to help her with her task and the Giant Ranter, now without a purpose, never left his bed. And Skip rat, well he went back to the trench and its blistering potential

The Dying Breed

Dave Nebraska watched with a mixture of disgust and horror the news item on the T.V. set. It was six white police officers beating up on a black man. He had seen many things in his long industrious life but few had made such an impact. It was the sheer brutality and hatred in the mens' faces that sent a shudder through his very being. Sure he had seen the hatred before, as a Native American it was almost expected but to see it now in these so called enlightened times was a real eye opener. He thought that all that had long been consigned to history. The sixties with their civil rights marches had heralded the start of a more understanding nation, well so he was led to believe but this made a mockery of all this.

"Nothing's changed," he said aloud to himself, "I don't know about feeding those Pilgrim Fathers we should have slit their greedy throats."

His mind drifted back to his childhood. If this was the land of the free he had a reservation about it, one he used to live on, in fact. An infertile desolate place where his people scraped by on a meagre living heavily supplemented by taking on outside work, heavy dirty manual work that paid little and blistered a lot. Dave himself had started at a very young age, shunning school as it did not put food on the table and besides its version of history was an insult to his people. He was disinterested in the north fighting the south for the emancipation of the slave when in his mind he was still one. Alright maybe the chains weren't physical but mental ones are just as hard to break. He could never watch a western without seething with rage. They were made out to be savages when if the truth be known they were a lot more civilised in the spiritual sense of the word than the white invaders, for that was what they were, invaders. They were never invited over; they just turned up, built their strongholds and started to rape the land. It was only the charitable good nature of his people that kept them from starvation for their arrogance was only surpassed by their ignorance of the land. Too late they found them to be a nest of rattlesnakes, war mongering hypocrites that talked of a God of love as they loaded up their guns, diseased ridden vermin they infected his people wiping out vast numbers in the process. His people had been tolerant beyond belief but still the greed continued. They looked at the land differently to the native. To the native they belonged to the land yet to the white man the land belonged to them and they weren't too fussy at how they got it. As they grew in numbers and got stronger they forced the native off the fertile lands and into the barren wastelands. Even then they weren't satisfied. They culled the bison to virtual extinction in the hope of starving his people to death. They encroached his diminished territory in their search for gold and when they finally drove his people to revolt they were mercilessly dealt with. Their women and children slaughtered by the score, the white man's blood lust knew no bounds. He cringed when he heard the expression squaw to define a native woman for he knew what it meant. In his language it referred to a woman's sexual receptor, how the white man perceived the native woman, something to satisfy his sexual drive and there had been countless rapes to prove that point. No history to him was a pack of lies and half truths totally at odds with the history he had learned from his parents. The knocking door brought him out of his thought chain.

"Come in Nathan," he called and the door opened.

"How's it going Old One?" a youth in his early twenties said. He always greeted Dave that way.

"I'm still here; the Great Spirit has not called me yet."

"You'll outlive us all," Nathan said and took out a bottle of whiskey, "Fire water, the only decent thing the white man ever gave us."

"You'll be the death of me," Dave said and fetched a couple of glasses. Nathan poured out two healthy measures and said, "To all that have lived before us," and took a drink.

"May they look over us and keep us from harm," Dave said and did the same.

"So have you any news?"

"Only what's on the television," Dave said and told him about the beating he had seen. Much to his surprise Nathan did not seem too shocked. "About right," he said with a shrug of the shoulders.

"So what were all the sixties about?"

“Before my time Old One,” Nathan said, (he called him Old One not as a disrespectful term but because great, great grandfather was a little too long winded) “I thought it was just about drugs and free love.”

“No I meant the civil rights marches, equal rights for everyone.”

“It was just talk, you know what the white man's like, he's a slippery snake.”

“White man speaks with forked tongue,” Dave said with a laugh, “How quickly I forget.”

“Anyway,” Nathan said, “You promised to tell me the history of our people,” and finished his glass.

Noticing that Dave had done the same he refilled them.

“Very well, I guess it must be time now,” and collected his thoughts, “We are the chosen ones, we have always been, we have never been created. When Father Sky came to earth we were already here. Our totem is not an animal it's Mother Earth herself. We came from the north, a bleak desolate place, journeying south to a warmer climate and settled the land. Here we divided and spread across the land picking leaders to guide our path. Our branch of the family chose **Usal** for he was both strong and wise. He lived long and we prospered under him, his son **Ovest** took over and proved himself just as capable. His son **Owar** then took over and from him we learned to plant the seed. Times were good then though things were about to change. Under **Inth** we took to war, they were dark times indeed. After his fall **Enam** came next though his reign was short as was **Eof**, **Godite**, **Ulls** and **Thep**. We were getting nowhere, just wiping each other out so under **Oor** we talked and made peace. Times changed once again and we respected our brother as much as we respected the land. It was then that Father Sky came down to Earth and taught us about love and peace and told us secrets that would unlock the Universe. Under his guidance we became more aware of life and what lay beyond. He told us that through the Great Spirit we could be at one with our ancestors and live in peace with our fellow man. Yes they were good times though they weren't to last for after he had imparted his knowledge he left and arrogance became us. We argued over his words and great wars occurred. They were dark times indeed; they lasted for countless seasons and killed many of our braves. We had no leaders then for everyone thought it should be them, no some times are best forgotten,” and emptied his glass.

“Then what happened,” Nathan said as he poured them another.

“Eventually we wised up. Under White Eagle peace was restored. We had taken up names from our environment by then to show our oneness with nature. It was his idea along with a complex set of rules that were to guide our lives. We prospered for many generations in peace and harmony and then the white man came. We had heard stories about him long before we had ever seen him. He was a barbarian who knew nothing of the land. He was a bit of a joke to us if the truth be known though that was long before his devious nature came to light. We heard of his wars far to the east of us and were happy to let him for we were starting to wise up by then. Our brothers to the east had started to be pushed westwards and they told us stories of his cruel barbarity. We tried to fight him when he came but he was too powerful by then, we had small victories but they only slowed him down. We were drove off our land and forced to live here and then they had the effrontery to call this the land of the free.”

“And that's our history,” Nathan said, “So who was Father Sky then?”

“Ah, you are after our mythology.”

“Well if you don't mind.”

“No it is freely given, after all you will be Chief one day,” and thought awhile before he said,

“Father Sky was the mouth of the Great Spirit; he was its word incarnate as a man. He was not the physical sky only a symbol of it for the world of mythology is a world of symbols. Understand these symbols and your mind grows beyond reality seen.”

“Will you give me that understanding?”

“I could try but if your understanding is not developed enough you will not get the true value.”

“Oh I did not realise.”

“It's not that bad. With a little thought and contemplation your understanding will grow and then

you will feel the true value of the words I am saying.”

“Feel?”

“Experience, the deepest level of understanding you can have.”

“Right,” Nathan said not really understanding.

“In time,” Dave said knowing this, “First I will tell you of our creation myth.”

“I thought you said we were never created we have always been, how does that add up?”

“It's a myth, after I have explained it you will know what I am talking about.”

“I apologise Old One, I should have realised it was symbolic, please continue.”

“A long time ago in the time of fire and chaos the Great Spirit came to be. Although it was not chaos it came from chaos.”

“I'm sorry but surely if it came from chaos it must be chaos.”

“No, you came from your father but you are not him.”

“Maybe, but he still lies within me.”

“Probably a bad example,” Dave said with a laugh, “No what it is actually saying is that out of despair comes creativity. Fire is your imagination, the creative spark and chaos the disorder that puts your mind in despair.”

“I'm not sure about that. I would have thought that when you are in despair your imagination would be quite negative, more destructive than creative.”

“Initially but with strength of will you can overcome it. It is through despair that you find your inner self, this is your creativity.”

“Oh right, I always thought that your inner self was your depth of understanding.”

“Another name for it, true creativity comes from your understanding, the deeper you go the more creative you become.”

“Yes, I can see that.”

“Good, now once the Great Spirit had come to be it materialised and the Universe was born.”

“Sorry?”

“It created itself in the world of matter, before it had been an idea now it has taken up solid form. It had invented itself or created itself if you like. From the Universe came Grandfather Sun and from him Mother Earth and Father Sky. Now I will go a little more deeply into that after you have poured me another drink.”

“Oh sorry,” Nathan said with a laugh and replenished the glass, “I was a bit distracted, this is very interesting.”

“Dave took another drink and said,” Now when the Universe came to be Grandfather Sun and Mother Earth came to be at the same time, Grandfather Sun being symbolic of light, the Great Spirit's essence and Mother Earth understanding, its creative power which together make Father Sky or your Spiritual Will.”

“So the Great Spirit is just light.”

“Well not just light,” Dave said with a laugh, “Light is knowledge, it is one great mind. Now through knowing this knowledge the Great Spirit actually lives in you and this is what gives you your oneness with the Universe. Not only that though through understanding the Earth Mother she gives you a oneness with nature as she too lives within you.”

“And Father Sky?”

“With understanding and light you develop your will, as it develops it evolves to spirit, the Great Spirit in fact and you become an extension of the Great Spirit's will. So basically it lives within you and as it grows in strength it takes over.”

“And Father Sky the person?”

“He was an evolved man, a man that had fully embraced the Great Spirit.”

“And his teachings, you said that he told you secrets that could unlock the universe. Do you still know these secrets?”

“Over time some got lost but the majority of them are still intact. Would you like to hear them?”

“Well yes.”

“Very well.”

Chapter 2

“The Universe is a living being which comprises of cells which we call solar systems that generate life as we know it. That's the first secret.”

“Right, and is there any difference between our life and the life of the Universe?”

“First answer me a question.”

“Well if I can.”

“What is consciousness?”

Nathan thought awhile and said, “Awareness I suppose.”

“Good, awareness of Self. Your body and what it needs to find a healthy balance. Eat too much you get fat and become out of balance,” and laughed before saying, “Drink too much and you lose your balance and fall over.”

“Er right,” Nathan said not really knowing where the conversation was going.

“Well the Universe is like you but on a larger scale. It is there to create order out of chaos; basically it's trying to balance itself. It is governed by a set of laws that help achieve its purpose but as it has no will of its own it has created life to help it.”

“Sorry?”

“You have a will, with it you can make decisions and create situations,” Nathan looked blankly on so Dave thought it prudent to elaborate. “You decide how much you eat. You know that if you eat too much you will create a situation that will make you fat and unhealthy. Now I know that is a bad example for a lot of people are too weak willed to control their self which in this case their self will be their urge for the pleasure of eating.”

“Yes, but I think I understand what you are saying.”

“Good, now the Universe or Creation would be a better word for it, can only adapt to situations. If you clear a patch of land and leave it unattended it quickly goes back to how it used to be, that's one level. Now on another level it reacts to your actions when you uphold or transgress its spiritual laws.”

“Really so if you do good then good things will happen to you. I've heard of that before but when it comes to real life it does not seem to work. Take the white man for instance.”

“It does, you just have to look a lot more deeply into things.”

“Well I'll have to take your word for that one but from what I've seen they seem to prosper at our expense.”

“Materially yes, but from a well being and evolution to purpose perspective they are sadly lacking. Look deeper into their lives and you'll see they are not happy.”

“Well if you say so.”

“In time you'll see. Now finally to close the first secret I will say that Creation will find its harmony no matter what and no matter how long it takes.”

“Right,” Nathan said taking it in.

“Now the second secret,” Dave said and emptied his glass; Nathan refilled it and said, “Well that's the last.”

“There's another bottle in the cabinet, finest malt.”

“We can't drink that that was a present to you when you finished work.”

“Well this is a special occasion. No fetch it out as its doing no good in there.”

Nathan took it from the cabinet and put it on the table.

“Help yourself,” Dave said and he dutifully obeyed.

“Creation regulates itself through fatal intervention.”

“Fatal, are we talking deadly?”

“No, we are talking about the intervention of fate.”

“So what actually is fate then? From what I've seen it seems to be something to do with the stars and the planets.”

“Well it is but continue awhile for I want to gauge your level of understanding.”

Nathan thought awhile and said, “You know like we were fated to meet kind of thing, it was written in the stars.”

“Right, well written in the stars would be more to do with destiny so we will get that out of the way first.”

“Fair enough,” Nathan said and took a drink, “This is good stuff, very smooth.”

“It needed to be,” Dave said laughing, “It was rough getting it. Right onto destiny, first thing you must remember is that if it was written in the stars it doesn't mean that it is destined to happen.”

“What, really?”

“Yes, fate will throw up situations to help it happen but at the end of the day it's your free will as to whether you act on these situations. It's your decision if you like. If you don't other situations will come along so basically you will end up going around in circles.”

“So eventually you will succumb no matter your free will.”

“Or destroy yourself. You see destiny acts in your best interests, go against it and you go against your own interests and whenever you do that you are bound to come to harm.”

“Yes, when you explain it like that I can understand it. One thing though, with all the evil in the world today are some people destined to be bad?”

“Good point and I have given that matter quite a lot of thought in my time.”

“And what did you come up with?”

“I think it only works for the good.”

“And the badness?”

“Destiny is a long path to travel; along the way it throws up situations to test you. You might start off with the best intentions but sometimes temptation proves too strong and you make self motivated decisions and stray off its intended path.”

“Yes, I can see that and generally speaking when you stray off path you come to harm.”

“In time, now onto fate then.”

“Right,” Nathan said and took another drink.

“Fate always works with a purpose in mind, if you meet someone it is for a reason.”

“To fall in love?”

“No, that's usually just an effect. Usually it's to advance your cause, help you along the way to achieve your destiny if you like.”

“Okay,” Nathan said taking it in.”

“That's on one level fate helping you to achieve your purpose. It also works as Creation's balancer; we discussed that a little earlier.”

“The spiritual laws, I'm still not sure about that one though.”

“You'll only really understand it through experience. Though if it's any help it's usually happens in an ironic sort of way and not only that it also deals with the cause as well as the effect.”

“Sorry?”

“Say if pride wants to humiliate someone that does not deserve it fate will set up a situation that at first glance will uphold its cause; it will tempt you if you like. Take the bait and it will back fire on you and you will be the one that's actually humiliated.”

“Well funny you should say that I can relate to it, it happened only yesterday in fact.”

“What did?”

“We've got this foreman at work, he's not long started but he thinks he knows it all. Funny thing is he doesn't know much at all.”

“Usually the case, if he was any good at his job then he would get on with it. Generally speaking when they are like that they try and look good at others expense.”

“That's it exactly, I've had to put him right on a few things concerning work and I guess he didn't

like it but to tell you the truth some of his decisions were actually dangerous.”

“Oh no, you are not at fault, if he's not capable of doing the job he should not be there. What is he the boss' son or something?”

“Well cousin actually but you know where I'm coming from.”

“True, so what happened?”

“It was all over something as trivial as a shovel believe it or not. I had finished with it and put it back in the container. Old Jonah came up looking for it so I told him where it was. He couldn't find it though so reported the matter to the foreman. Well he waited to first break when everybody was there before he made his move. In front of them all he accused me of stealing it and when I told him it was in the container he mockingly went over to it pretending he was going to look for it. He opened the door where much to his surprise it was leaning up against the wall. You should have seen his face,” and laughed, “He stormed off before I could get an apology out of him though.”

“Fate at work, it was just that you weren't aware of it that's all.”

“I suppose so, what about bigger transgression though?”

“Firstly I would like to go back to your example.”

“Sorry I was getting a little ahead of myself. The impetuosity of youth I guess.”

“Don't worry about it. Now that incident was fairly trivial and if that foreman had anything about him he would have learned humility from it so it was or could have been a lesson in self development. Yes fate is definitely a complex subject.”

“You're telling me.”

“I know,” Dave said with a laugh, “So that's how fate deals with pride then. Now avarice is slightly different and so is dealt with differently. No with avarice it gives you what you want and more besides knowing that you can't cope with it and ultimately it will destroy you.”

“Could you elaborate on that a little, I understand what you are saying though I can't quite relate it to reality.”

“I'll give you an example that will probably be the best bet.”

“I won't argue with that.”

“Old Ma Grimley's daughter.”

“That nutter, thought she was dead.”

“Soon,” Dave said with a wry smile, “Now I don't know if you know her family's circumstances.”

“I think her mother lost her mind after her father's death, and didn't her daughter take over the running of her finances.”

“That's right, well her mother didn't actually lose her mind it just lapsed for a while that's all. The trauma of losing her husband I guess. Her daughter marched straight in and took over her pensions and running of her properties. It was well beyond her capabilities though her pride could not see it. Basically her incompetence and free loading nature left her mother in poverty. Yes pride and avarice go hand in hand.”

“So what happened then?”

“Well she mismanaged the properties. She put the rents well below the market values so they were not self sufficient even, let alone able to provide money for her mother's care. Not only that she made the tenants life hell because her pride told her that she actually owned the houses and so they never stopped more than a couple of months and rarely paid the rent. So instead of actually looking after her mother's welfare she was spending most of her time trying to keep up with the maintenance of the houses and looking for new tenants getting stressed out in the process.” he laughed before he said, “I saw her only a few days ago. She's almost a hunchback now; guess it's carrying all the weight of her world on her shoulders. Yes stress can be a very potent force.”

“It sounds like it.”

“Now her transgressions are a lot worse than a shovel. Her greed and stupidity left her mother's life in turmoil when she was at her most vulnerable.”

“Yes, I can imagine.”

“So her actions have been returned to her in equal measure. This will continue as long as she does. If she doesn't change, well it's her free will at the end of the day.”

“Can she change?”

“I think that her pride and avarice are too strong for her, she's too weak willed to control herself.”

“Well she created them herself I suppose.”

“True, now you mentioned bigger transgressions.”

“That's right, I'm starting to see things a little more clearly now though.”

“Good, so the greater the transgression the greater the retribution. We cannot make judgements in ignorance for we don't really know what goes on in others' lives. We are not here to judge anyway for that is the job of fate but I will say that if the transgressions become too much of a liability they will be forced to take their own lives.”

Chapter 3

“Would you care for another drink,” Nathan said on seeing that Dave's drink was empty.

“Sounds good to me,” Dave said and was quickly replenished. He took a drink and said, “You're right this isn't bad. Now onto the third secret before I relate it though have you heard the expression if you wish for something long and hard enough you will get it?”

“Yes, do you mean to tell me that it's true?”

“Undoubtedly, to harness the power of the Universe you must first give your Self.”

“The power of the Universe?”

“Fate. A word of warning though, misuse it and it will drive you mad for it is a very potent force.”

“And how would you er. actually go about using it? Is this something to do with praying?”

“Prayer does work if said frequent enough, or mantras depending on your belief. Belief or faith if you like is a big part of it.”

“Right, and are we talking about material stuff or just guidance here?”

“Both. Some people even use it to put curses on others. That's definitely one thing I wouldn't recommend though as it will back fire on you.”

“Yes I can imagine, and have you used it yourself?”

“No, it is better to work for fate than the other way around. You have to give yourself to fate and put your trust in its judgement for it both knows and understands the big picture. If I was to use it I would quickly fall to pride or avarice and besides with my little understanding of the big picture I think that I would quickly fall to grief.”

“Oh and you mentioned that you must first give your Self, what does that actually mean?”

“You have to give in order to receive. A selfless act or an act of charity if you like. It's to uphold the universal balance. This is more for safety than anything else because you can harness the power without doing it.”

“Do you think that's why a lot of the rich do works of charity then?”

“I'm not sure now that you mention it, maybe or maybe to appease their guilty conscience'. No if you do use the power it's best to do it without self interest and for the greater good. I wouldn't recommend it though for only Creation knows what the greater good really is.”

“And this giving of Self, it must work on a deeper level of understanding then?”

“Well it does, I was just about to get to it actually. However did you know that?”

“Just a guess really, it's got to go deeper than just a material level.”

“Well you're right,” Dave said and took a drink. “To truly give your Self to creation you must first get rid of your self interest, your will. Doing this makes you part of Creation so the power of the Universe is yours automatically. It's well above your level of consciousness though so you are not aware of it.”

“Really and how would you actually go about doing it?”

“You would make the conscious decision to work without self interest and for the greater good. Easy isn't it.”

“Too easy, there must be more to it than that.”

“Well there is a little more, to truly make the decision you will need the help of a mantra. Say it a few times in the morning and last thing at night and you won't go too far wrong.”

“And this mantra, how does it go?”

Dave took another drink and said, “I surrender my will to the greater will, the will of the divine, I will, to will thy will.”

“Right, I'll bare that in mind. The will of the divine though, didn't you say earlier that it had no will.”

“It hasn't, without man's intervention its natural reaction is to work for the greater good.”

“Oh so when I work for the greater good I become its will.”

“Well an extension of it, remember that well or you will quickly fall to pride.”

“I will” Nathan said and poured them both a drink, “This is going down well.”

“I noticed,” Dave said and looked at the half empty bottle, “Well it is a special occasion I guess,” and emptied the glass in one go.

Nathan did the same and refilled the glasses before saying, “You mentioned earlier that the Great Spirit was basically a force for good.”

“Well the greater good,” Dave said correcting him, “For on the smaller scale one man's good is another man's evil.”

“Right, what I want to know though is, is there an actual force for evil?”

“Good question, I have given the matter quite a lot of thought over the years I can tell you. You look around the world and see all the badness, it definitely makes you wonder.”

“And did you come up with anything?”

“Yes, the answer is no.”

“What is that it?”

“Oh no,” Dave said with a laugh, “It's a bit more complicated than that, first things first though you will actually have to define what evil actually is.”

Nathan thought awhile and said, “That's very tricky er, what is bad or harmful to others and your Self.”

“As good an answer as any, in fact better than most because you can actually see that it is harmful to your Self. Now to me that sounds like individual actions and not some outside force to be reckoned with. These actions may come from groups of individuals under some misguided doctrine but it's still not an outside force in the sense of the Great Spirit.”

“So how does it come to be?”

“The actions of man's self conscious will I would say, fate throws up situations to test your resolve.”

“Why?”

“To make you mentally stronger by increasing your will power. Now these situations also test your powers of discernment so to do this one decision has to be for the greater good and the other self interest. Now when I say self interest it need not be the personal self it might be your country or family, the group self.”

“Oh right, mind you that leaves me in a little confusion. I was always taught that the greater good was the good of the country.”

“Misguided doctrine I'm afraid. No the greater good is for the good of the Earth Mother and humanity as a whole.”

“I'll bare that in mind in future.”

“Good, now on a deeper level evil comes from out of darkness and I said earlier that the Great Spirit was light so if that's the case, what is darkness?”

Nathan thought awhile and said, “Er, chaos?”

“Very good, so darkness is to light as chaos is to the Great Spirit. On another level darkness is ignorance to light's knowledge. Most of man's actions come out of ignorance whether total or semi.”

“Semi?”

“Twilight, man gets a little bit of knowledge and uses it to uphold his false purpose.”

“Misguided doctrine,” Nathan said upon realisation.

“Excellent,” Dave said and took another drink.

“And how does fate actually equate with the Great Spirit, I mean it isn't the Great Spirit is it?”

“It is, well an aspect of it anyway.”

“Really, so how many aspects has the Great Spirit got.”

“Well three, love, light and power. Fate is the Great Spirit's power.”

“Oh right, and you said earlier its essence is light, so what about love?”

“Its purpose but I will have to go a little more deeply into it for you to fully understand it.”

“Fair enough,” Nathan said and took another drink.

“Its purpose is also its creative power, its power to create good works. It created itself for that purpose so its essence is actually its purpose.”

“Oh so what is light then?”

“Knowledge of its self and purpose, it is one great mind after all.”

“Of course, I should have realised. Now you said earlier that knowing the knowledge the Great Spirit actually lives in you.”

“That's right, knowing this you become enlightened, well your Soul does anyway, that is knowledge of Self. Knowledge of purpose gives you a sense of purpose so when you have fully evolved to your purpose you become an enlightened Soul with a purpose to serve.”

“Father Sky?”

“That's right though everyone has the potential to attain it. You see knowing this knowledge makes you part of this great mind for its essence is also yours.”

“Right, I'll definitely bare that in mind, and this knowledge where does it actually come from?”

“Well Father Sky defined it but that's only really planting the seeds. It is up to the rest of us to refine it.”

“Sorry?”

“Cultivate it so we can grow in understanding. Don't you remember earlier that I said it needed a little thought and contemplation?”

“Of course, though I still don't understand it.”

“Well understanding is your Soul's growth. When I first told you, you knew but because you did not understand it did not go to your Soul but to a different aspect of your mind.”

“Oh so your mind has different aspects as well.”

“That's right; do you want to hear them?”

“Well yes.”

“Right then. Light, love and power.”

“What, do you mean it's the same as the Great Spirit's mind?”

“That's right; your mind is actually a small scale replica of the Great Spirits.”

“Is that what the Christians mean when they say that we were made in God's image?”

“Yes,” Dave said and took another drink, “Look deep enough into anything and you will find the truth.”

“I think that I might start reading the bible again, I did not realise.”

“Well it holds the truth. One thing though, you'll have to be discerning as some of it is in the twilight zone.”

“I'll bare that in mind and what about the other mythologies, would they be worth my while.”

“Undoubtedly, yes they all have their place. Your best bet would be to cross reference them as that sorts the maize from the chaff.”

“Cross referencing?”

“Find a common thread between them. You will grow in both understanding and discernment then. You'll find it very interesting as well so I would recommend it.”

“Well I was never much of a reader to tell you the truth. Mind you that is probably because up till now I've never really found anything interesting.”

“You'll enjoy it.”

“Anyway you mentioned light, love and power, how does that equate with the human mind?”

“Well power is the Soul; it transforms your understanding or love and is fed by your will or light.”

“Right, so basically your Soul transforms light into love.”

“Basically,” Dave said and finished his drink. Nathan refilled it and looking at the bottle said, “I think one more go and this will be finished.”

“Nearly done myself, do you want to hear the next secret?”

“Sure do.”

Chapter 4

“Right,” Dave said, “Now we've talked about light as knowledge, knowledge of the divine and how it is transmitted through Father Sky. So how does he actually get it?”

“I wouldn't have a clue, by reading the mythologies I suppose.”

“That's how we get it but as I said earlier we are the refiners. What about the definers?”

“Well we get our light from the sun,” Nathan said and thought awhile before he said, “Are you saying that it comes from the sun?”

“Yes and other stars.”

“So how does it actually work then?”

“Cosmic rays are composed of knowledge, that's the fourth secret.”

“So the stars do influence our lives then.”

“Undoubtedly, now this knowledge comes under four different types, do you know what they are?”

“I wouldn't have a clue; all this stuff is new to me.”

“Fair enough, it's elemental knowledge,” and on seeing the blank look on Nathan's face decided to elaborate, “That's Fire knowledge, Water knowledge, Earth knowledge and Air knowledge. Now to understand that from a mind's perspective you have to substitute Earth for the Soul or the power, Fire for your understanding of love and Water for your intellect or light.”

“And Air?”

“That's your Spiritual Will of higher self, your guiding star if you like.”

“Father Sky?”

“That's right; it's actually a state of mind, the culmination of your purpose if you like. It's a mixture of Fire knowledge and Water knowledge, Fire and Water makes steam or Air.”

“These different knowledges, could you give me some examples so I know where you are coming from?”

“Sure Earth knowledge is knowledge pertaining to Earth, natural laws, seasons, that kind of thing. From this you get an awareness of the Earth Mother and your environment, its more to do with general consciousness and finding your niche in the eco-system.”

“Natural laws?”

“Laws which guide our evolution to grace and safeguard our species, do you want to hear them?”

“Well yes, it would help my understanding.”

“Very well, there are 8 of them in number and they are that every organism is to be adapted to the best of its ability

To survive in the climate around it

To survive the habitat around it

To survive in the social climate around it

To find its niche in the eco system

To attract a mate

To give its offspring the best chance of survival

To defend and hunt

To evolve to its purpose

Basically these laws are our instinctive drive so when we are controlled by our instinct that is what controls us.”

“Right, do you mean animals?”

“Everything with life and that includes us for at the end of the day we too are animals.”

“I've never really thought of us as that.”

“That's the arrogance of man; he's just an animal with a larger brain that's all. You surprise me though for I thought you would have known that.”

“A misguided education I guess, but don't worry for now I realise that I have a lot of re-evaluation to do.”

“Good, it's always good to re-evaluate for that's the only way to grow in understanding.”

“Why is that then?”

“The Great Spirit only reveals to you what you want to know when you are ready to hear it. This is because your understanding has to evolve through experience. So sometimes if you are not ready to hear it, it won't mean anything to you.”

“Right, I can understand that. It's no use talking to someone about multiplication until they have grasped the concepts of numbers.”

“Good, right then Fire knowledge is knowledge pertaining to fire. Not fire as we know it but mental fire which is your imagination, the purifier of your mind.”

“Sorry?”

“It purifies your mind of its subconscious fear of death. It's knowledge of life beyond the physical restraints that we call life, reincarnation, the levels of understanding that kind of thing. It's also to do with knowledge of your shadow self and through self development it purifies your negative aspects so this knowledge is a very potent force.”

“You mentioned negative aspects?”

“Yes, your pride and avarice would be examples, also envy, gluttony, sloth, lechery and anger, anything that disrupts your peace of mind in fact.”

“Right and the levels of understanding?”

“The journey of the Soul before it reaches fruition. The journey of life from the humble flower to the humble man.”

“I see,” Nathan said and finished his drink. Dave did the same and the bottle of whiskey was emptied.

“So,” Dave said, “Onto Water knowledge then. This type of knowledge is knowledge pertaining to water or the basis of your life. It feeds the intellect and helps you deal with the day to day running of life and any situations that life might throw at you. It is wisdom to Fire's spiritual wisdom which is basically wisdom that is understood in the spiritual sense.”

“Sorry?”

“Well take that shovel of yours, wisdom would take it at face value, spiritual wisdom would see it as the actions of fate to aid that man's self development.”

“Right, so Fire knowledge must also be about fate then?”

“Fate's actions, not actually fate itself for that comes under Air knowledge.”

“Oh and this Water knowledge how does it equate with the incident with the shovel?”

“Always put things back when you have finished with them so they don't get lost. Not really a good example for its more to do with helping you solve life's little problems basically as I said earlier it is wisdom.”

“And Air knowledge, you said it was about fate itself and not its actions.”

“Amongst other things. It's also about the Great Spirit, the higher truths, your spiritual purpose and reason for being. So there you have your four types of knowledge and these emanate from the stars around you.”

“And is this random or is there a particular pattern to it? The reason I'm asking is because if it's

random it sounds like it could be confusing.”

“It would be very confusing if it was random. No, there is a pattern. Do you know what the Great Year is?”

“No, I don't think I have even heard of it before.”

“Well its a normal year but on a much larger scale, now the year goes through star signs Aries, Taurus, Gemini, that type of thing.”

“The signs of the zodiac.”

“These are the constellations, star systems. The Great Year is the same but where as a sign of the zodiac take a month to travel through the great cycle is more than 2,000 years, the whole year around 26,000 years. The Great Year is also called the processional year for the procedure is called precession.”

Nathan thought awhile and said, “Is this something to do with the Age of Aquarius?”

“Yes, we're entering it at present and coming out of the Age of Pisces.”

“And that was Jesus' sign wasn't it, the fish I mean.”

“Yes, I suppose you could call him the herald of the age.”

“Does every Age have a herald?”

“I wouldn't like to guess at that. Now Aquarius is an Air sign and Pisces was a Water one. The next sign will be an Earth one and then a Fire before the process starts again. To truly imagine it picture a horizontal 8.the small circle will have the elemental signs north, east, south and west. The larger one will have the 12 signs of the zodiac on and as the two wheels turn they line up with each other.”

“The horizontal 8, isn't that the symbol of infinity?”

“It goes on for infinity,” Dave said and took a drink, “Now there was one final secret that said that every man was a Universe but I'm afraid we've lost our understanding so I can't go into it.”

“And did you give the matter much thought for I have heard that before.”

“You have,” Dave said in surprise, “Then perhaps you can tell me for I have indeed thought about it.”

“I haven't a clue, it was just something I heard somewhere. I didn't know it was one of the secrets. I just thought it was a bit of psyche babble.”

“Yes it was one. The trouble is that we know so little about the Universe so I had next to nothing to go on.”

“Well maybe in time as we grow in understanding,” Nathan said and looked at his watch, “Speaking of time do you know that it's nearly eleven o'clock?”

“Time quickly passes in good company, and you have work tomorrow too.”

“Yes I'm really looking forward to it,” Nathan said with a laugh.

“Are you expecting more trouble from the foreman?”

“No, just a hangover, he seems a bit wary at the moment though I don't know how long it will last.”

“You'll do alright; fate is on your side.”

“Well I hope so, it seems an ardent foe,” and finished his drink, “I thank you for your wisdom Old One and I will be up to see you tomorrow.”

“Take care now,” Dave said and they parted company.

As Nathan shut the door Dave finished his drink and relaxed in his chair. It was not long before he became aware of a presence in the room. He turned around to see a large Native man in full Chief's regalia. “Dave Nebraska, time passes by and I'm afraid it's time to move on.”

“Are you White Eagle?”

“In spirit, so how did you enjoy your time on Earth?”

“It was hard work. One thing though, before I go, I was wondering if you would answer me something that has intrigued me for more years than I care to mention.”

“Well if I am able to.”

“Every man is a Universe, what does that actually mean?”

White Eagle laughed and said, “Well it should really be a solar system, it's just that when the secret

was given man's perception of the Universe was pretty limited.”

“Oh, mind you I'm still none the wiser.”

White Eagle thought awhile and said, “The solar system is a blue print of man. The Sun is his Crown Chakra, Mercury his Brow, Venus is his Throat, Earth his Heart, the Moon his Solar Plexus, Mars his stomach and Jupiter his Base. That's using the oriental version to give you a rough idea. We have always taught that there were ten chakras though.”

“I was going to say.”

“Anyway time moves on, reformation is in the air.”

Dave cast off his body and left it in the chair and followed White Eagle to- well maybe that's another story.

The Enchanted Forest

Once upon a time a long time ago when some of my socks were still fresh there lived a young woodcutter called David, a strong silent man who lived off the land as well as with it. He was more at home in the vibrancy of the forest than the company of his fellow man. Though he would not stray too far as the forest was a well known haunt of witches and goblins. Yes it was a time of superstition when imagination held sway and the sense of reason was something you lost should you ever spend the night within the forest's grasp. Many had entered but only a few returned, the ones that did, their brains addled, they talked of ghosts and goblins and within a week lay dead, killed by their own hand. No, David knew he had no place there although fate was to change his mind.

It was a dark winter's night, the rain pounded and the wind disturbed the rotting leaves. David huddled to keep warm as he made his way the short distance to his semi derelict wooden cabin. He had had a bad day, spending most of it under shelter and was in no mood to be confronted by what he saw.

"Go away," he snapped.

"Now Davy," the little green man said, "Sure you know I can't do that, wasn't it yourself that said you owed me."

"Well yes but," Dave spluttered.

"Now no buts," the man said with a laugh, "Isn't it a wise man that knows not to butt in, isn't that the domain of the goat?"

"What do you want," David said giving up.

"I'm after a little favour; I'm in need of your muscle."

"Yes," David said impatiently.

"I want you to fetch me the Elgin Marvel; it is too big and cumbersome for my old bones."

"The Elgin Marvel?"

"Yes, sure have you not heard of it, it lies on the far side of the Enchanted Forest?"

"No chance, no way, forget it."

"Now Davy a debts a debt and I know how much your honour means to you mortals, so what do you say?"

"No, no way."

"You owe me and that's that and no amount of protestation can alter that," and if to emphasise the fact a lightning bolt lit up the night.

"I have heard bad things about that place. No one in their right mind would go there willingly."

"Well now you won't be going there willingly."

"A lot of difference that would make the outcome will still be the same."

"Now not necessarily obviously you don't know how the forest got enchanted in the first place."

"Well no, I thought it was just a name."

"Aw now no. No it hides a bloody secret."

"A secret?" David repeated wanting some elaboration.

"Now if I knew what it was it wouldn't be a bloody secret would it. No the forest is enchanted to hide the secret. Anyone who willingly enters it is thought to be after that secret for that is the only reason you could have for entering the forest. You will be safe for you are doing me a favour."

"And er are you going to tell them that or is this our little secret?"

"They'll already know. No you should be safe. I will even guide you and show you what to avoid."

"Avoid, I don't like the sound of that."

"Pit falls, under the forest lies a maze of mines; it's like a giant's warren."

"Giants," David said going cold, "Are there giants there?"

"No, not at all, well only one but we'll be going nowhere near him. Now go and get some rest and I will call on you in the morning," and watched David walk off into the darkness. After David had gone the leprechaun turned into a hideous goblin and laughed manically before it disappeared.

David soon found himself in his fire lit hut dreading the next day and ruing how he ever got involved with Rory MacManee. It had only been the day before as he was out coppicing the forest's edge. He had chanced upon a wild boar that was even less sociable than David and it was only by shinning up the nearest tree that he avoided the boar. The boar eventually got tired of butting the tree and left David pondering as to whether it was just hiding. It was then that Rory made his presence felt. He appeared on the branch next to him and said, "Sure it is a noble view though I doubt if the effort to get here was worth it. What brings you up here anyway?"

"What is this," David said in shock, "Who are you?"

"Rory MacManee and I've already asked the first one."

"Er what."

"What are you doing up here?"

"I'm keeping out of the way of a wild boar."

"I don't see one, sure now though it might be hiding."

"I wasn't sure if they did that, I've heard they are clever though."

"Oh noted for it and good too, you could be right next to one and not know it."

"So what am I to do?"

"I could find him and send him on his way."

"Well if you could, you would be doing me a favour."

With that Rory disappeared and unknown to David reappeared behind a large bush as a boar. He charged off into the forest then Rory reappeared by David. "Thanks," David said, "I owe you one."

"I would have been better off facing the boar," David muttered to himself as he fell to sleep.

David awoke next morning to an impatient Rory, "No time for lie-ins there's work to be done, goblins to be fought and witches to be vanquished."

"What," David said half asleep.

"Just joking," Rory said and disappeared. David got up and made sure that the fire was truly out before leaving the hut.

"We've a journey ahead of us," Rory said waiting outside, "I travel a lot quicker than you so I will let you go on ahead. Just go east and I'll catch you up later." and disappeared before David had a chance to protest.

It was a very bitter David that started the journey, "Some guide he is. The Elgin Marvel, whatever have I got myself into." Mile after mile he travelled with attitude in mind though before long he had fear to deal with as well. He was getting deeper into the forest and further than he had ever been before. The denseness of the forest meant little light got through and if not pitch black it was definitely getting darker. What little light that did get through created shadows and to David's imagination paranoia. Darting fauna also left their mark and it was not too long before he was having thoughts of turning around. It was around about then that Rory made his appearance. "Not too long now, I'll keep you company for a while," and walked along side, "So," he said as they walked, "Have you seen anything interesting?"

"Er no," David said suspiciously.

"Well we're still on the outskirts."

"This forest er. What actually can I expect to see?"

"Well nothing if all goes to plan."

"And if it doesn't?"

"It will never happen but I could tell you what you might have seen."

"Well?"

"A world of imagination," Rory said mysteriously.

"I sometimes think it's a waste of time talking to you."

"Only sometimes," Rory said with a laugh.

"What actually are you?"

"I suppose you could call me a game keeper," Rory said and changed into a goblin, "So you are

looking for the secret.”

“No.”

“Well you are in the forest and that can only mean one thing.”

“No, I’ve come for the Elgin Marvel.”

“That is the secret,” the goblin said and disappeared.

David looked around and found that the forest had got a lot denser. He was lost, alone and more than a little scared. He wanted to go home but he was that disoriented that he was going further, deeper into the jungle for that was what the forest was turning into. For some strange reason his mind was overrun with thoughts about the secret. What was it all about? Why was it called the Elgin Marvel? The forest got darker and took on a distinct coldness. David looked around nervously and a mist that had previously been around his feet started to metamorphosise in front of his eyes. He stood there dumbstruck as the figure solidified into a dragon and said, “Soon you’ll be mine.” David fled in terror and got even more disoriented in the process. By the time the terror had worn off he was that deep into the forest that it was at its densest. Crowded trees contorted into grotesque figures in their search for light and kept David well on edge. He saw movement ahead and looked warily as an old man made his approach. “Help me” the man said, “I’m lost.” As the man got closer David found much to his horror it was an older version of himself. “You,” the man said and disappeared.

David just stood there, was that to be his fate? Lost in the forest for the rest of his life, he couldn’t cope with that. A figure darting through the undergrowth distracted his attention. It was a small hairy creature with the face of a small dog, “Quick follow me, you’ll be safe.”

“What, who are you?”

“No time to explain at the moment,” the figure said turning to go.

“Wait,” David said but on seeing he had no intention to quickly followed. The figure took him past many trees to a hole in the ground, “Down here,” and quickly made the descent leaving David to follow. As David entered the darkness he saw a small light ahead and though not bright at first it was enough to guide him. As the light got brighter he found himself in a large cavern face to face with the creature.

“I am Cola, the last of the Quintons, once we were many but time and the forest have taken its toll.”

“So what is this place then?”

“It is a cruel, evil place, a place that feeds off the minds of the inhabitants that live here. You should be safe though as the enchantment only works in the forest itself.”

“And how did it come to be this way?”

“It was the work of the warlock Elgin. Some say to avenge the tragic death of his wife, others to guard his spell. It happened more years ago than a mortal mind could cope with so you could never know for sure.”

“Elgin’s Marvel, Rory er. The gamekeeper mentioned it.”

“The gamekeeper, you must have been tricked here then. The forest must be hungry. Elgin’s marvel is actually the forest itself. It is said that he sacrificed his life to become the forest.”

“And is that the secret?”

“No,” Cola said but before he could continue a long howl from outside disturbed him, “We must go further in, it’s not safe here.”

David followed him through a labyrinth of tunnels for what seemed like miles until he came across a gigantic cavern.

“We should be alright. No if you want to know more about the forest you will have to see Elsapeth the Ugly.”

“No, I just want to get out of here.”

“Without her help you never will, well not with your sanity still intact that is.”

“Well I guess it has to be then, so who is this Elsapeth?”

“A ghoul that lives by the black waterfall, she has a penchant for human flesh though so be careful.”

“She'll not help me; she'll just want to eat me.”

“Oh she won't tell you willingly but with guile you should get it out of her.”

“Guile, I'm not sure about that, I don't think that I have any.”

“Then you are lost in more ways than one,” Cola said and with that tiredness seemed to overtake David.

Chapter 2

David found himself face to face with a stern looking old man, “You might seek sanctuary in the caves,” he said, “But one day you will have to leave, then you will be mine.”

“Are you Elgin?”

“That is not for you to know,” the man said sharply

“But you mean to do me harm, I know that.”

“I'm harming you as we speak. I have your dreams now soon I'll have your life.”

“Why, I've never hurt you.”

“Does a foal ask a wolf why it eats him or a rabbit ask a fox? No that's just how it is you have entered my world and now you must pay.”

“I was tricked.”

“That makes no difference to me. Food is food no matter its motivational force.”

“Well there is obviously no talking to you. You mean to try and harm me and that's that.”

“You might have a sporting chance. Sure it might flush you out of your den and make for a better game.”

“Go on.”

“I have a weakness, find out what it is and you can defeat me.”

“What, is that it?”

“That's more than any other of your kind has got.”

“Yes but let's be honest it's hardly a sporting chance.”

“Very well if it will get you out of the hole, you may ask me three questions. Any questions you like as long as it's not what my actual weakness is.”

David thought awhile before he said, “Why are you doing this?”

“Because I am hungry, next question.”

“You haven't answered the first one yet, I mean why are you actually doing this?”

“Your kind took away my Elsapeth and for that you will pay.”

“Elsapeth, you mean Elsapeth the Ugly?”

“She was not always ugly, being burned as a witch did that to her. I raised her from the dead but she was not the same. No, you will suffer greatly for this. You have two more questions, use them wisely.”

“I'll need to think about them,” David said and with that found himself back in the cave. He told Cola about the dream and after he had finished Cola said, “So he has a weakness then, I never knew.”

“Well that don't concern me, I just want to get out of this place.”

“It's not as easy as that,” Cola said putting a dampener on things, “He has your dreams now. Where ever you go you will have him with you. You will have to defeat him otherwise you are finished.”

“Then I am lost, however would I find his weakness, I haven't a clue.”

“Elsapeth might know, though getting it out of her might prove difficult.”

“Ah yes, Elsapeth, I suppose we'd better make tracks. Is she far?”

“A fair way, the tunnels take us nearby so we should be safe,” and they set off on their way.

As they journeyed David said, “So what actually is this place then, the tunnels I mean.”

“It used to be an old gold mine. Long played out though, my ancestors used to mine it.”

“And what actually are you?”

“I am human; it's just over time we have adapted to our environment, the hair to keep us warm, the

smallness in stature to make traveling the mines easier and the strange face, well interbreeding I guess.”

“Oh,” David said and they walked on. After about half a mile of silence David said, “Do you think that this secret is his weakness?”

“Well now that I know he has one it would fit in.”

“So if I knew his secret I would know his weakness,” David said and went deep into thought.

“Hopefully, anyway we are nearly there now,” and they left the tunnel and came to a large black gnat infested pool which at its head had a waterfall.

“She lives in the cave behind the waterfall. Be careful and you should be alright.”

“Aren't you coming?”

“No, water is like fire to me. I splash and I burn, even the smell of it chokes me.”

David gingerly made his way to the cave and debated on how he should face her. By the time he got there he decided he would just keep a distance between them and try and brazen it out.

“Elsapeth, are you at home,” he shouted from the entrance.

“Who is that?” a voice shouted from the darkness.

“You do not know me I am a stranger,” David called back.

“And what do you want from me?”

“I need you help”

“Then come on in.”

“I'd rather not, for I fear that you might eat me.”

“That's a chance you will have to take, if you need me badly enough you will come.”

“Fair enough,” David said and waited outside.

“Well,” the voice said and after a while, “This is no good,” and David heard movement in the darkness, it was like a crunching sound and David stepped back a few paces as he wondered what it could be.

Eventually an old woman emerged from the darkness and looking wantonly at David said, “My you are a fine looking man with a lot of meat on him.”

David had a job to return the look for the term the ugly was a bit mild to what he was looking at. Her face was that badly burned that ashen bones protruded. Her teeth, well the two that were left were black and twisted for her burned gums had contorted them. Her whole body showed exposed bones and her colour was ashen white.

“Sure you are not so bad yourself, but what has happened to you?”

“Well enough of the small talk,” she said edging closer to him, “You are here for a reason.”

“That's right,” David said backing off slightly so as to keep a distance between them, “I hear that you are a wise woman that knows of the forest and its ways.”

“And,” she said impatiently.

“I want to know what you know; I want to know the secret of the forest.”

“I can't help you there. That's one thing I don't know.”

“Oh well what about Elgin's weakness?”

“Has he got one, well he certainly kept that quiet.”

“Right, anything that will help me then.”

“To help you to harm Elgin, do you really think you have come to the right person.”

“I have heard that you are the only one that can help me.”

“Then you are lost for Elgin is my man.”

“I did not realise,” David lied and pretended to look around nervously, “He's not about is he?”

“No,” she said with a laugh, “I haven't seen him in years.”

“And he's still your man?”

“Yes, why not?”

“Well not being funny, he's not been around lately, are you still his woman?”

“I do alright, now you'll get nothing out of me so be off as I'm getting a little hungry.”

"I have heard that you were once a beautiful woman. Elgin told me that himself."

"You have spoken with Elgin," she said, her attitude changing, "And he said that?"

"That's right, though I can't see why he would raise you from the dead and then totally ignore you."

"He must have his reasons," she said getting defensive.

"But what of you, what chance have you got of being beautiful again?"

"My beauty was lost to me, it will never return."

"Not whilst you are like this. Once Elgin is defeated his spell will be broken, you may die in peace and then get reborn again."

"Maybe or maybe I'll just die."

"You never can tell but let's be honest even death is better than this."

She thought awhile and said, "There is nothing I know off that will help you though I do agree with you when you say that death would be better than this."

"Would you know anyone that could?"

She thought some more and said, "Old Eliza might."

"And where would I find him?"

"That I don't know," She said and then, "I don't think I've been much help to you. I'm afraid I don't see many things now, it's a very solitary life."

With that the forest got even darker and David said, "Why does it do that?"

"I'm not sure, it seems to reflect my moods, it's almost like it feeds of my despair," and with that the forest shook to a loud prolonged "No," and the black pool started to bubble.

"Look at that," David said backing off. Elsapeth though had other ideas, she went closer to the pool and studying it said, "It's never done that before," and watched the bubbles speed up as the energy intensified. From the pool a watery hand emerged and grabbing her pulled her into the pool, which bubbled even more before it finally came to rest. David just stood there shocked, unable to help he watched in horror as she disappeared. "David, David," Cola's voice came through, "Quick, it's not safe here," and David hurried back to the tunnel.

"What was that noise?" Cola said when they were safe.

"I'm not sure; it sounded like it was in pain."

"You must have hurt it then, what did you say?"

"Me, nothing, though Elsapeth said it seemed to feed of her despair."

"Maybe that's its weakness then though I don't quite know how you will use it."

"She mentioned someone called Old Eliza, maybe he will know?"

"Who, I've never heard of him, where does he live?"

"She didn't know, in fact she didn't seem to know too much."

"Well she seems to have found his weakness; we'll just have to find Eliza that's all."

"I wouldn't know where to start looking. I mean if you have never heard of him what chance have I got."

"You could always ask Elgin I suppose; you said he said you could ask him three questions."

"There is that, though I don't really want him to know my plans."

"I'm guessing that that's the only way you'll find him, I'm afraid it's a chance you'll have to take."

"There's got to be another way," David said and went deep into thought.

"If it's any help he probably already knows your plans. After all the forest is his eyes and ears and he's also in your mind."

"So why didn't he intervene earlier?"

"Maybe he has his reasons, I don't know but I do know that anything that goes on in the forest he knows about. He knows every branch fall, everything."

"Then what chance have I got?"

"He must be keeping you alive for some reason," Cola said and then as if by inspiration, "He's feeding off your despair."

"What," David said and after a few seconds thought, "Yes you are right; he's feeding of my mind."

“Knowing that gives you an advantage. Just don't get downhearted and there is not a lot he can do to harm you.”

“Yes, maybe you are right,” and they continued talking until tiredness took David.

Chapter 3

David found himself face to face with an irate Elgin. He looked at David and said, “Maybe I was unwise to let you live this long.”

“Maybe but then again if I was dead what would you be able to feed on.”

“What,” Elgin said angrily.

“How would you feed off my despair?”

“I don't know what you are talking about and neither do you.”

“You know what I'm talking about I felt your pain earlier. Besides you could have killed me a lot earlier. That tells me that you are keeping me alive for a reason.”

“You are just guessing.”

“Maybe, Old Eliza will probably tell me, as soon as you've told me where he lives.”

“And why would I want to do that,” Elgin said with more than a hint of contempt.

“To answer my second question.”

“Very well for all the good it will do you he lives in the Poisoned Orchard.”

“Thank you.”

“Oh don't thank me; he will never help you as he is a loyal servant.”

“Just like Elsapeth,” David said with a smile.

“A misjudgement on my behalf, it will not happen again so I wouldn't concern yourself.”

David found himself back with Cola, “He lives in the Poisoned Orchard.”

“A very dangerous place and quite a trek as the tunnels go nowhere near it.”

“It must be done I suppose so what is the place then.”

“It's where Elgin gets the ingredients for his spells and potions. Old Eliza must be looking after it. It's not a place I would care to visit.”

“Then you will not come with me?”

“I'll take you as close as I can, after that you will be on your own.”

“Well fair enough, you must have your reasons obviously.”

“I cannot stray too far from the tunnels it's too dangerous for me.”

“Really, why is that then?”

“I'm spellbound, stray too far and I'll just disintegrate. Anyway I'll tell you more about it as we walk.” They set off through the tunnels and Cola said “After the mines had gave up their gold my ancestors wanted to move to look for other sources of gold. The landowner Edwin though had other ideas. He wanted us to work the land and become farmers. My kind are not farmers though and so quite a few of them fled. He had Elgin cast a spell to keep us here on the land and when we refused to work the land he got Elgin to intensify the spell to confine us to the tunnels. He said if we like the mines that much we can live in them.”

“So if he was using Elgin to cast spells for him how is it that Elsapeth was burned as a witch, it doesn't make sense.”

“Who knows, they were a strange people and no mistake.”

“Sounds like it,” David said and they walked on some more. After awhile Cola said, “We're here now,” and they came to a ladder. They climbed it and found themselves back in the forest.

“You have a long road ahead but if you keep on that track it will take you straight there. Remember that all what you see is not as it seems and you should be alright. I will wait here for you,” and wished David well as he sent him on his way.

It was with a heavy heart that David started the journey. He had grave doubts as to whether Old Eliza would help him. He did not really know for sure if he even could. The coldness of the forest cut into him and sapped him physically as doubts sapped him mentally and the darkness bit into his

being, eating into his Soul and emanating paranoia in the process. The trees seemed to take on a life force of their own and branches became like arms beckoning him to them and his demise. He sensed that if he strayed of the path then he would be no more and the forest was trying to get him to err. The trees had turned into hideous faces, their branches acting like hair and their bark weathered skin. "David, David." a soft moan surrounded him, "There is no hope, go back, go back." Briskly David walked forward, looking straight ahead and trying to shut it out. Before him there were more trees, more forces to contend with, "It's no use, it's no use," the voices around him spurned. His legs seemed heavier to his weakened form but still he continued onwards, forwards. The coldness seemed to intensify but then all of a sudden it was gone. The whole forest just went calm, the faces disappeared and it actually got a little brighter. Up ahead just on the outskirts of the darkness a figure darted out from the trees. David stood in terror when he saw what it was; it was a large black panther.

"None may pass," it growled.

David somehow conquered his fear and said, "I am a stranger here, a traveler. Is this how you treat Elgin's guests?"

"You know Elgin?" it said looking at David in a suspicious way.

"Yes I'm on an errand for him as a matter of fact."

"I don't believe you," the panther growled.

"Your choice but Elgin won't be too pleased to be waiting around for his ingredients."

"Wait a moment," the panther said and thought awhile, "Who are you anyway?"

"I am Elgin's apprentice."

"I thought that was Old Eliza's job, I must be behind the times."

"Well it's just really fetching and carrying, apprentice might be a bit too strong a word for it," David said with a false laugh.

"Oh a go-fer," the panther said, "I know the feeling. Well I may as well take you there then."

"I don't really want to put you out," David said reluctant to be found out.

"No bother, part of my job actually," and they walked on together with David debating his next move. They walked a little further and then much to his surprise the panther started to sing.

"Where hope does die where am I?

Despair

When life's unfair I flare

When the world don't sing, I'm the thing

I'm the one whose there."

"That's a strange song," David said, "The tune does not match the words though." (The tune was an upbeat tempo in an almost jocular beat)

"Well I don't know about that, it's very catchy that's all I know. Old Eliza often sings it."

"Oh really, is there any more to it?"

"Yes another three verses, want to hear them?"

"Why not,"

"When faith's expired where am I?

Despair

When life's untrue I'm blue

When the world don't dance, I advance

I'm the one that's you.

Where fortitude's lost where am I?

Despair

When life's unkind I mind

When the world don't care I am there

I'm the one unkind

**When patients done where am I?
Despair
When anger's spun I'm done
When the world don't act I'm the fact
I'm the one whose won."**

After he had finished David said, "I like that, will you teach me it?"

"Sure," the panther said and David spent the next mile learning it. After he had learned it the panther said, "Anyway we are here now. I cannot enter the orchard itself so I will wait here and then guide you back."

"That's kind of you," David said relieved as he wanted to face Eliza alone. He entered into what looked more like a weed patch than an orchard and gingerly made his way through poisonous plants. Some he recognised, others he surmised to be but all of them he kept away from. Up ahead he saw a crouching figure collecting fruit from a Bella Donna so he said, "Are you Eliza?" The figure turned around and stood erect, "That's me, now I don't know how you got here but this isn't a safe place to be."

"I know but I need your help in the game that I'm playing with Elgin."

"Really so Elgin has sent you?"

"I'd have never have got here otherwise."

"That's unusual; it's not like him to give you a sporting chance. So what's this help he wants me to give you?"

"I have to try and find out what his weakness is. If I can he said he would let me live."

"Right though I don't know what use I'd be. I didn't even know he had a weakness for a start. However did he expect me to help you?"

"He said you'd be able to point me in the right direction"

"I don't know about that," Eliza said and thought awhile, "No I'm afraid you've had a wasted journey my friend."

"Oh," David said with more than a hint of disappointment.

"Stay awhile and we'll talk some. I never see anyone nowadays; it's such a bleak desolate place."

"Well I suppose I could," David said for there was nothing for him to do now. They settled down and Eliza said, "So however did you manage to end up in this place."

"I was tricked."

"Ah the gamekeeper, he has sent quite a few people to their deaths."

"Oh,"

"Oh sorry, that was a bit thoughtless of me."

"I haven't even got a clue as to what it's all about. Elgin said it was revenge for his wife being burned as a witch."

"Ah Elsapeth yes, she was definitely a looker in her day."

"The next thing I hear Elgin was casting spells for the local landowner."

"That was a long time before. No it was a bad day for justice when Elsapeth went to her death."

"So what was it all about, well if you don't mind me asking?"

"No secret, it was a power struggle that was all. Edwin thought that Elgin was too popular and was going to drive him off the land. It was all in Edwin's mind though. He had got it in his head that Elsapeth was casting spells to try and poison him. Well that was the story he told anyway. I think it was just to put Elgin in his place and show him who had the real power."

"And the forest, how did that come to be?"

"That was Elgin's revenge. All this forest used to be Edwin's land. Elgin created it so nothing could ever grow in it. He spoiled the land which was Edwin's life."

"So he was innocent then, just a victim to Edwin's paranoia."

"Well I wouldn't say he was innocent," Eliza said with a laugh, "Only of that charge."

"I have heard that he injected his life into the forest."

“It cost him his life, he created the forest out of his essence. In his madness he became the forest, his hair, the trees, his skin the forest floor.”

“And me, where do I fit in?”

Chapter 4

Eliza scratched his long grey beard and said, “Well food I guess.”

“Well unless I can find out his weakness, he said he would spare me.”

“Ah yes, back to his weakness, have you any views on it?”

“Well I know that the forest feeds of despair and knowing that gave him pain.”

“Really,” Eliza said and went deep into thought before he said, “And you said that knowing that the forest feeds of despair so therefore Elgin must feed of despair. Well it would make sense I suppose.”

“Would it?”

“Well yes when you think about it. Despair generally comes about through feeling powerless. Elgin felt powerless watching his woman burn and for a man that could harness the Universe's power that must have been quite a blow.”

“Right,” David said wanting some elaboration.

“He put his despair into the forest,” Eliza said obliging, “And the only way despair can feed is on more despair.”

“Right, so does despair have a weakness?”

“I wouldn't like to say. You know talking about despair he taught me a song once and called it 'The Suicide Note', it was all about despair.”

“Really,” David said pleading ignorance.

“I can't tell you it of course, with what you have told me it sounds like it might have something to do with it.”

“I understand.”

“It's got to be sung in the right key anyway. No, I've said too much already.”

“Time moves on anyway. It was nice meeting you but I had better be off as I've a long walk ahead of me.”

“Well good luck, sorry I couldn't be much help.”

“I understand,” David said and walked off carefully avoiding the poisonous plants. He had soon reached the panther who said, “All done then?”

“Yes, I've got everything I need.”

“Elgin will be pleased.”

“Yes,” David said with a wry smile. He knew he was close but he still had a road to travel.

“So do you think you'll be working for him for long?”

“Hopefully, there is a lot that man could teach me.”

“He's definitely a wise one, have you learned much?”

“I've only just started really; I haven't proved myself to him yet.”

“True,” the panther said and they walked on. Soon the panther was back at his post and David walking through a calmed forest. He had a lot on his mind and so did not notice his surroundings. Elgin had called it 'The Suicide Note', did that mean it was Elgin's suicide note or anyone's suicide note. He had heard talk of people taking their own lives after spending a night in the forest. Maybe this note had drove them to it?

“Quick David, over here,” Cola's voice disturbed his thought process. He ran to its direction and was quickly back in the tunnel.

“So how did you get on?”

“He was pretty helpful,” smiled and said, “Although I don't think he meant to be.”

“Really, so what did you learn then?”

“I'm still a little confused at the moment. It seems that he taught Eliza a song and called it 'The

Suicide Note'. He told Eliza that it had to be sung in the right key though.”

“And you think that this is his suicide note?”

“I'm not sure, you see everyone who ever got out of the forest ended up committing suicide within a week.”

“I was going to say. It seems pretty foolish leaving a possible source of your own destruction lying around.”

“My thoughts exactly but there's still something I don't understand.”

“What's that?”

“Well you said that he knows everything that goes on in the forest.”

“That's right, every branch fall.”

“So he must know I'm getting close yet he's done nothing to stop me.”

“Maybe you are not as close as you think then or he could be throwing a false line of hope.”

“To what purpose?”

“When you find out its false imagine the despair, he could just be building you up for a fall.”

“There is that I suppose but there's something inside me that says he wants me to win.”

“Well that could be him,” Cola said and went deep into thought. After a while he said, “You know maybe you could be right.”

“You think so?”

“Well despair can drive you to suicide when it's strong enough and he has been getting stronger through feeding of others despair so maybe he has reached his limit.”

“That might explain it,” David said but then tiredness took him and the conversation came to an end.

David found himself in front of a glaring Elgin. He was in no mood to talk, “You have one more question and then tomorrow will be your death.”

David calmly said, “Why do you want me to win?”

“What, that's preposterous. You have just wasted your last question.”

“But it isn't is it; you have been helping me all along. You were the panther that taught me the song. You even told me the title and that it had to be sung in the right key.”

“You are cleverer than I first thought or you're receiving good advice. Well the games coming to an end now. Find the right key and I'm finished, pick the wrong one and you are, it's as simple as that.”

“And what if I don't sing the song?”

“You'll be here for eternity but I have a feeling that tomorrow you will sing it,” and disappeared.

David woke up to a surprised Cola, “That was quick, so what happened then?” David told him what had occurred and then Cola said, “It appears you have no choice then.”

With that a soft voice said, “Cola, Cola.”

“What's that,” David said.

“They are calling me.”

“Who are?”

“The voices,” Cola said and stood up as if in a trance. “Cola,” the voice said again, “Cola,” and he started to walk to the ladder that led back to the forest. “Stop,” David shouted but he was helpless as some unseen force was holding him back. “Cola, Cola,” Cola was at the bottom of the ladder looking up. He was about to climb when a large rock fell down the shaft and crushed him in front of David's eyes. “No,” he shouted and then again only quieter. He had lost his friend but he had found the key, it could only be one 'A' flat minor.

David climbed the ladder with anger in his heart and quickly found himself back in the forest. The forest seemed to be mocking him, taunting his friend's demise. He gathered his thoughts and in the key of 'A' flat minor started to sing.

“When hope does die where am I?

Despair

**When life's unfair I flare
When the world don't sing I'm the thing
I'm the one whose there."**

The forest seemed to writhe in pain and this encouraged David to continue.

**"When faith's expired where am I?
Despair
When life's untrue I'm blue
When the world don't dance I advance
I'm the one that's you."**

Trees started to disappear and light flooded in.

**"When fortitudes lost where am I?
Despair
When life's unkind I mind
When the world don't care I am there
I'm the one unkind."**

More trees gone and a soft moan began.

**"When patients done where am I?
Despair
When anger's spun I'm done
When the world don't act I'm the fact
I'm the one that's won."**

With that the forest was gone and before him lay a fertile plain. A voice echoed in the sky, "This is your land now David, do with as your will."

Nursery Crimes

Once upon a time, a long time ago when some of my jokes were still fresh there lived a fisherman called David Hook. He was a gentle man by trade if that's not a contradiction in terms and would often while away the night time hours along the river bank alone with his thoughts and trusty rod. The actual event that I am about to relate happened one cool spring night around the time that the trees had started to bud. David was smoking his pipe and intently watching the water when a voice distracted his attention.

**“Davy Hook, Davy Hook sat beside a babbling brook
Waited there with rod in hand hoping for a fish to land
But tonight he's out of luck for that fish it will not cook
And now the brook it will not babble unless Davy has the nerve to dabble.”**

“What,” David said in a mixture of confusion and panic, “Whose that, is there anyone there?”

**“Davy, Davy, rich man fie, tonight's the night you're going to die
For the hook has got you now and so your life will have to bow.”**

“Look what is this,” David said getting up and looking at the bushes behind him, “Come out and show yourself.”

**“Sing a song of misery for Davy's got to die
For 20 long years now he's never questioned why
Now his life is over he'll hear the angels sing
What a silly man he is ignorant that's the thing.”**

“Who are you,” David said, “Is this some sort of joke?”

**“A joke you say, that's not my way but to know me there's a price to pay
It's not a fiddle nor a diddle it's just the answer to a riddle.**

**I am Babel, Lota, Uran to understand me is the plan
I am Salome, Ne-eshan, Hur know me now well if you dare
I am David, Taliesan, Kai, have you the wisdom not to die
I am Caleb; Moriah too, put me together that's the clue
I am Hu Gardarn, Gomer, Idris work me out and you'll get bliss
I am Rhea, Acab, Jose with understanding things get rosy
I am Jesus, Jachin too work me out or life you'll rue.”**

Though David liked the occasional riddle with this one he had no chance for he was given all the answers. His rational side was still trying to come to terms with the fact that there was a formless voice and his imagination threw out negative perceptions equating failure with his death. The harder he thought into it the more confused he got and his mind raced in all directions in the vain hope of upturning some light. He called to the voice for more clues but all he got was silence. Panic captured him once again and thoughts of mortality took him well into their grasp. He found himself being drawn to the river with a strong urge to end it all. He saw the reflection of the moon in the water and this seemed to enhance the pull on him. Closer still he got, right to the water's edge. He was just about to plunge into the coldness below but a voice inside stopped him.

**“Davy Hook come on now, where's your sense in reason
The question has no answer well not in this same season
When apples ripen and the moon is full then it is you'll find me
A Friday evening, a meditation underneath an apple tree
But heed these words and listen well or life is not worth living
You should be a humble child, loving and for giving.”**

In David's state of mind he took little regard to where the voice had come from even though it had pulled him from the abyss. He had forgotten the riddle as the shock of his near death experience had suppressed its memory. He just ran home with thoughts of ghouls and goblins and vowed he would not fish at night again.

As spring turned to summer the event itself faded from the forefront of his mind but it did leave

an effect on David. Although he did not realise it he had become more charitable as a person and not just financially for he would tend to put others before himself. He became a true gentleman. Others noticed though he could not see it himself, he just carried on his own humble way.

As summer turned to fall he developed a restless nature. He was looking for something although he did not know what. He took to going for long walks at night to try and placate himself and though it did calm him down slightly he was still on edge.

It was a Friday evening and the moon was full as he walked across the orchard that swept behind his house. Two questions seemed to rise and haunt him. Where is wisdom found and where is the place of understanding? With their surfacing he became a bystander to the reality that was around him. He had been taken over and drifted as if in a dream like state. He found himself under an apple tree and a voice inside him, though it was still him, said, "Most gracious one to thee alone I make a daily devotion of my heart."

With that a shadow left the tree and took up solid form. It became a woman of unsurpassed beauty. She spoke with the voice of an angel, "Your devotion has been sorely missed so come to me and you'll be kissed, wisdom's found it just needs landing so hold me I'm your understanding."

With that they embraced and humility merged with patience. She disappeared in David's arms though left him a piece of paper, it read.

Babel, Lota, Uran, Salome, Ne-eshan, Hur, David, Taliesan, Kai, Caleb, Moriah, Hu Gardarn, Gomer, Idris, Rhea, Acab, Jose, Jesus, Jachin.

Self of God (self through God's purpose)-God's purpose seeing wisdom of God (loving knowing of God's light).

Understanding God-God's purpose sees life through light and through spiritual understanding of God's light (spirit of loving knowing) transforms to God's love (blessed transformation).

Wisdom of God-God's purpose through understanding God's light.

Work of God (blessed will of God)-God's purpose through self (life sees knowing blessed by God's spirit, the spirit of love).

Will of God-knowing transformation (God's knowing light) will sees life through knowing blessed transformation (knowing blessed with understanding).

Spiritual knowing through God (God's will)-God's self blessed seeing understanding and

Blessed through understanding (loving understanding blessed) God's Spiritual Will blesses light.

The Philosopher Stoned

Dave Nesbit lit up his third smoke of the day and relaxed in his armchair to enjoy the taste. It was only 11 o'clock in the morning but he had already been up 5 hours trying to solve a problem that had occupied his mind for just under a week now. He was into psychic awareness and was trying to get a better understanding of how the mind actually worked. He had traveled a long way if the truth be known but still had a road to go. Not content with the shallow dogma of the day he wanted to go deeper, a lot deeper. It had all started with a conversation he had had with his friend Joe Latham, Smoking Joe to his friends, as they sat and watched television. The news was on and it was one particular item that had inspired him.

"Look at that," Joe said, "Scientists reckon that obesity is in your genes, what a load of crap, they can't even get into their jeans for a start."

"I don't know much about it," Dave admitted, "But if they say it is well who are we to argue?"

"They haven't a clue," Joe persisted, "They're just giving fat people an excuse that's all."

"What do you think about it then? I mean there must be some reason that people are fat."

"Oh yes, over eating and lack of exercise, common sense really. They are just idle gluttons at the end of the day."

"That's a bit strong; maybe they just can't help themselves that's all."

"Too weak willed to control themselves you mean."

"Have you got something against fat people, I mean they are not doing any harm at the end of the day."

"What," Joe said in surprise, "Are you serious?"

"Well yes, if they want to ruin their bodies it's up to them."

"They're clogging up the hospitals and not wanting to sound self righteous but when people starve obesity is a crime."

"Clogging up the hospitals?"

"Yes," Joe said in surprise, "Didn't you know?"

"Well I never really thought about it to tell you the truth, I guess being thin you don't."

"The bodies not structured to carry so much weight; it just can't cope with it. With all that undue stress it will just crumble not to mention the excess pressure on the heart. No seriously imagine carting around a bag of concrete all day that will give you some idea. You'll be surprised at how much sickness is weight related nowadays. They even have to use stronger beds it's getting that bad."

"What really," Dave said with a laugh, "Mind you I suppose they are more to be pitied than anything else."

"Pity the fool that created his own environment, no, well not me anyway."

"You really do have a downer on fat people, why is that if you don't mind me asking?"

"No, I don't mind admitting it; I used to be overweight myself. Only 5 stone which is nothing compared to most of them today but it was enough for me I can tell you."

"So what happened then, I mean how did you get to be that way?"

"Overeating and lack of exercise, sure I could make excuses for it but at the end of the day that's what it boiled down to."

"Excuses?"

"I'd split up with my wife, it became sort of an emotional prop to me though at the time I did not realise."

"And then, I mean you are not fat now so what happened?"

"I wised up, I realised I was actually destroying myself. I had let gluttony rule my life so I took back control."

"When you put it like that it sounds easy so why doesn't everyone do it?"

"I don't know, it's not my problem. Too weak willed I guess. Maybe it's how they cope with reality, I'm not sure. No I think at the end of the day they like the taste that's all."

"It's got to be more than that surely; I mean it's got to come from somewhere."

"Well it's a desire not a need."

"Sorry?"

"You need to eat to live; you desire food for its taste, cause and effect. Well normally anyway. With gluttony though it lives off your desire to eat, that's what keeps it alive so the more that you eat the stronger it gets and the more you desire food. It actually becomes the cause itself."

"Yes I can see that but how does it actually come to be in the first place?"

"Now that I wouldn't know, speaking for myself I would say lack of purpose."

"Lack of purpose, how do you work that one out?"

"Well I had built my life around Lydia, she was the purpose I served but not only that she gave my life a purpose. When she left she took away my purpose and left me feeling empty inside. I guess gluttony filled the gap."

"Do you mean to say that gluttony became your purpose in life?"

"I guess so when you put it like that," Joe said and thought awhile before saying, "Yes it must have done."

"But some fat people are married."

"As I said speaking from my own personal experience I don't really know what goes on in other peoples' minds. Maybe they are in the wrong relationship, the wrong job; they've lost someone close. There could be many reasons but it all boils down to being unhappy in yourself."

"And how does that equate with lack of purpose? I can see the truth in what you say but it doesn't add up; well unless your Self is the purpose you serve."

"What, you know you could be right."

"Sorry, really?"

"Yes, when you give someone your Self they become the purpose that you serve."

"But what actually is your Self though I mean I have heard the expression find your Self but does it actually exist in form?"

Joe thought awhile and said, "I suppose it's a state of mind more than anything else."

"How do you work that one out?"

"Well take me as an example when I finished with Lydia I was still serving a purpose, it was my bodies needs as opposed to hers. Now I know I said it was gluttony but let's be honest life has got a lot easier. In olden times and in some parts of the world still today finding food is a struggle. So in basic survival terms serving your purpose would be making sure that you were warm and fed. As life gets easier you have more time on your hands and your purpose evolves."

"Evolves, in what way?"

"Either materially or spiritually take your pick, I picked the wrong one and got fat. No actually I had better rephrase that. It can only really evolve spiritually as materialism is stagnation."

"Spiritually, you're not er, gone religious on me have you?"

"Me, no, it's more to do with the giving of Self to an external force, selflessness as opposed to selfishness. This force might be your partner, your job even the church, it's the actual giving that counts. It's not a clear cut thing though."

"I was going to say, I mean how many people give themselves to their jobs for the material rewards that it brings."

"I was thinking more of vocational work. I would say that people who work for excess material gain only give their time and not their Self. The purpose they serve is actually the material gain not the job itself," Joe looked at his watch and said, "Is that the time, are you working tonight?"

"Afraid so," Dave said with a laugh, "And on the wages they pay I would call it a vocation."

"I'll get off and let you get some sleep then. I was glad to get out that place I can tell you."

"The hours are good I suppose, the only thing good about it." Joe left Dave who quickly fell asleep in his chair."

Dave found himself in front of a wizened old man, "Who are you?"

"I am your Self, you were asking after me well here I am."

"So you are not a state of mind then you do actually exist."

"I am and I do," the man said much to Dave's confusion.

"Sorry?"

"I am both yet I am neither," the man said then laughed before he said, "Just playing with you. No the state of mind is the level of understanding that you are on, that is the true purpose that you serve. When you have evolved to your purpose I will look like you for I am actually your true Self, the culmination if you like."

"Then don't you mean I'll look like you?"

"No, you are now in a reflected reality. Anyway about your earlier conversation, your Self's evolution is actually to climb the levels of understanding. The giving of Self does help it evolve but the only true way of evolution is through awareness of Self. It's actually done through knowledge."

"Really, do you mean knowledge of Self?"

"Yes, amongst other things."

"What other things?"

"Well the actual levels of understanding would be one. Do you want to hear them?"

"I wouldn't mind, it might help my evolution."

"Alright then, now before I start I would like to talk about awareness in general. This will give you a little grounding."

"Fair enough."

"Right, now awareness is all about refinement of Self. The more refined the Self is the more aware or conscious you are. To put it another way the Self at its purest is light or spiritual energy, before it can get to that state though it is tainted with matter. The lower the level the more tainted. Are you with me so far?"

"Yes, I don't understand why it should be tainted though."

"Light has to materialise to live in reality seen, this is what taints it."

"Oh right."

"Now light as you know is a spectrum of colours a rainbow full in fact. Seven in number they are different aspects that make up the whole. We will call them spirits to make it easier for you. As the Self purifies, or climbs the levels if you like, the different aspects merge to make the light stronger."

"Right, so they are not all together from the start then."

"No, the first level only has two of the spirits, life and love; basically it's a being with the ability to recreate itself, flora and basic fauna. Now the reason it has only two is at this stage of its development it only needs two. The second level sees the mergence of the third spirit, understanding, an animal controlled by its instinct, which is a set of natural laws." (See the Dying Breed for details) and explained them. After he had finished he said, "Now level three comes in with level four and they are two more aspects, discernment and wisdom, you start to know good from evil and develop a free will. Now a downside to discernment is self consciousness, you start to relate things to your personal experience which is a good spur to your understanding but at its lower levels you tend to take things personally. You also start to evolve on two levels, Will and Self so it gets quite confusing. Level five is the journey of life which basically is the purification of Self and Will's expansion into spiritual consciousness."

"Purification of Self?"

"Oh all its negative aspects, you know like gluttony, lechery, sloth, that sort of thing."

"Oh right, so how did those negative aspects come to be then?"

"Lack of purpose, now level six is the mergence of the spirits of wisdom and understanding. This is an out of body experience that happens in a dream. Level seven is when your old Self dies and is spiritually reborn and level eight when through the sixth spirit you get to know all things in a spiritual sense for it is the spirit of knowing. Hand in hand with this you get level nine, the spirit of purpose though at this stage it is a triad of love, pride or anger. Pick love and you get to level ten

and an even deeper understanding of life. That will do you for the time being as you have to get up for work.

Chapter 2

Dave woke up and quickly checked the time. He had a long night ahead of him and was not looking forward to it. He was a line packer at the local crisp factory, a tedious job but someone had to do it. I won't bore you with the details of the night for not a lot actually happened except to say that the man's words gave him something to think about and helped the time pass a little quicker.

The tale actually picks up the following day when Dave was asleep and talking to a slightly younger looking man. "So, that's the Self's evolution through the levels of understanding. Next I would like to dwell on the purification of Self, getting rid of the matter in your mind so to speak. Any thoughts before we begin?"

"Not really, it's all to do with getting rid of your gluttony and sloth I think you said."

"Well amongst others," the man said and listed the rest of the seven deadly sins. "But to really deal with them you have to understand them. How they came to be and why they need to be defeated."

"Right, I was wondering how they came to be as a matter of fact but all I've got so far is lack of purpose."

"Well it is but I'll take it a lot deeper to give you a better understanding."

"I won't argue with that."

"Good, now remember the 8 natural laws I told you about on our first meeting. They are all constructed to help you evolve to your purpose; the first seven are all aspects of the eighth."

"Does this equate with light? You said that was comprised of seven aspects too."

"It's all light in the sense of it being knowledge," the man said with a laugh, "The first one was the development of Self and the second the body. Evolving to one's purpose would be the giraffe evolving to reach the leaves higher up the tree. On another level though evolving to one's purpose is also climbing the levels of understanding."

"That sounds confusing."

"Not really, the body is just a vehicle for the Self so as the Self grows in understanding it takes on more evolved forms. The giraffe takes countless generations to achieve its purpose; its level of understanding doesn't change though its original Self's level would definitely have. It would have outgrown it."

"Oh right, I thought that the body created the mind."

"Well it does, it's actually the Self that activates the mind that controls the body. The Self is your life force so as it grows in purity it can activate more evolved minds. So anyway back to the natural laws, these were put in place to guide and mould the Self in the early stages of development. As the Self grows though it develops a will of its own and the laws lessen their hold. Also though as the Self develops its emphasis changes from serving itself to serving others for it evolves out of basic survival and into selflessness. Well in theory anyway for sometimes the Self stagnates and falls back into the old ways though this time with a vengeance for its strength of mind gives it better opportunity in life, and that's how the seven deadly sins came to be."

"What so each sin is just an evolution of a natural law?"

"Yes, attract a mate becomes lechery, find its niche in the eco system becomes gluttony."

"Sorry," Dave said interrupting him, "I don't see how that equates."

"To find your niche you must only take your fill, it's just to sate your need, anything more is just gluttony."

"Oh right, when you explain it like that."

"I would probably be better explaining them all; it will give you more understanding."

"Sounds good to me."

"Survive in the climate around it would be sloth. This is because man used to be nomadic by nature and travel vast distances in his pursuit of warmer climate. With his more evolved mind though he

could build shelters and so the traveling stopped. In hand with this goes survive in the habitat around it except in this case man got avaricious for he excelled in his surroundings. Surviving in the social climate around it became envy for that was the motivational force behind his society and giving his offspring the best chance of survival became a matter of pride. Finally man's drive to defend himself and hunt became anger.”

“Yes, I can see that now, amazing.”

“Oh it's only just started. That's how they came to be but they have evolved since then, they have become aspects in their own right.”

“What?”

“Demons to you, recognizing brings them into the light so it might be a good idea to name them.”

“Definitely, I don't like the sound of this; I've never been into demonic possession.”

The man laughed and said, “Very well then, pride is Lucifer, sloth is Belphegor, gluttony is Beelzebub, envy, Leviathan, avarice, Mammon, lechery is Asmodus and finally anger is Satan.

“And knowing this will help me control them?”

“Oh yes, when you know you are angry it somehow loses its control over you.”

“I'll definitely bare that in mind, and this is why they need to be defeated?”

“No, they need to be defeated because they hamper your evolution. You see once they are defeated they become virtues personified by the archangels. They don't die as such they just evolve that's all.”

“And could you tell me what these are?”

“Well that's the next logical step. Pride becomes humility personified by Gabriel; sloth becomes fortitude personified by Raphael. Gluttony temperance personified by Michael, envy hope personified by Uriel, avarice charity personified by Japhiel, lechery faith personified by Zadkiel and anger patience personified by Samael. With these inside your Self becomes pure as with your nature for your Self transforms it.”

“Right.”

“Just a little bit more to journey now. If you think of the sins as negative the virtues as positive the seven spirits finish the triad. These triads are called chakras and the triads are gluttony, temperance, life. Anger, patience, love. Lechery, faith, understanding. Avarice, charity, insight. Sloth, fortitude, wisdom. Envy, hope, knowing. Pride, humility and purpose. Now as humility is selflessness it only exists in purpose so the crown chakra is pure spirit. That will do you for the time being as your friend is just about to come round.”

The knocking door awoke Dave from his slumber. He checked the time and saw that he had overslept so quickly got dressed before answering it. “Sorry Joe,” he said letting him in, “I must be working too hard.”

“Yes right,” Joe said with a laugh, “Mind you, you've got a few days off to recuperate now.”

Dave worked on a continental shift system which involved three days on, one day off, another three days and then a full week off.

“True,” Dave said, “It does have its advantages. So are you going to do the honors whilst I make the tea?”

“Yes, why not,” Joe said and Dave went into the kitchen. By the time he came back Joe was sitting comfortably already smoking.

“That was quick,” Dave said as he passed him his mug.

“Here's one I prepared earlier,” Joe said and passed it to him.

Dave took a drag and said, “So anything been happening?”

“Well Ben and his missus came back from Prague yesterday, got back early evening.”

“And did they enjoy it?”

“Yes,” Joe said and then laughed, “Well apart from nearly being arrested that is.”

“Sorry?”

“They were going to take a tram to Prague castle, it was only about four stops away (no.22, late

morning 20th April, 2007) so they just got a normal ticket. Now they did not read the back and so did not know that it needed to be validated.”

“Actually I would probably done the same is it something about the English that they don't read the small print?”

“Funny you should say that though I'll get back to that later. So anyway they missed the one they wanted and so had to wait for the next right one. Four went by in the meantime, the first of which a strange couple got off and stood behind them kissing and cuddling.”

“Strange?”

“Well that's what Mary said. The man was middle aged and quite grotesque and the woman younger and fairly good looking. They followed Ben and Mary on and Mary took a seat. After a couple of minutes the man came up to Ben showed him his I.D, said he was a ticket inspector and wanted to see his ticket. Well Ben showed it him, the man took it and told him it hadn't been validated and so he would have to pay a fine. Ben explained that he did not know and if he would give him the ticket back he was validate it immediately. The man refused saying it was too late and things got rather heated. It was almost like they were the Gestapo he said. An old man tried to help saying they didn't know but they just turned on him with venom telling him to shut up and mind his own business. Ben and Mary refused to pay the fine so the man threatened to call the police. Mary told him to go ahead and they all got off at the next stop along with a couple of other tourists who had fallen in the same trap. Well as they waited for the police the two other tourists paid the fine and told them basically that their attitude stunk and they were a disgrace to the country. Ben and Mary stopped and Ben told Mary not to say anything more until the police came as they would be wasting their time. They had even asked for their passports, can you believe it? Well after 20 minutes a police car drove past and so they realised that weren't coming and gave Ben and Mary their tickets back. They even validated them on the next tram for them.”

“And you were saying about them being English?”

“They had let 3 trams go by. When Ben and Mary thought about it later they thought they must have known they were tourists having listened to their accents for they were just behind them.”

“And the other tourists were they English too?”

“No but they were foreigners to the country and ignorant of its ways. They were already on the bus and caught by chance.”

“So it's not just the English that don't read the small print,” Dave said with a laugh, “It's a bastard when they try to capitalise on your ignorance though isn't it?”

“Oh yes, though it did backfire on them in the end.”

“I don't know about that, they wasted Ben and Mary's time for a start.”

“Well” Joe said with a laugh, “I would have thought their time was more valuable.”

“Really, how do you work that out?”

“Well think about it, there must have been a reason they were collecting fines.”

“What do you think they were on commission?”

“I would say so, they saw tourists as easy prey and an extra bonus, and it's the same here with traffic wardens.”

“I reckon you must be right.”

“So whilst they were wasting time waiting for the police they were losing out on the stream of ignorant tourists and not only that imagine the humiliation.”

“For Ben and Mary?”

“Well I was thinking about the ticket inspectors, the power they thought they had was only in their mind. They thought they were the secret police when in reality they were just glorified ticket collectors. The police weren't interested as they thought it too trivial to bother with but to them it was almost a matter of national security.”

“Well yes if you put it like that,” Dave said and laughed as he said, “And I suppose having to watch a police car go by didn't really help the illusion either.”

“True, although delusion would have been a better word for it. No I would say it was quite a humbling experience for them.”

“Well it will teach the greedy bastards a lesson, it mustn't be good for the country p####ing of tourists and all that.”

“No, I bet it does untold damage.”

“Apart from that though they enjoyed it?”

“Oh yes, beautiful city, friendly locals, well most of them and pretty genuine people.”

“Anyway, you want another cuppa?”

“Yes why not,” Joe said and passed over his mug.

Chapter 3

Dave came back with 2 mugs of tea and said, “I guess this power thing can be pretty deluding, I wonder why that should be?”

“You know I don't know. I've often thought about it myself. The closest thing I can come up with is it's an ego thing.”

“I have heard of the ego though I've got to admit I don't know much about it.”

“It's your image of yourself I suppose, how you imagine yourself to be.”

“Not the true Self then, the purpose you serve I mean.”

“Not you true Self though it is the purpose you serve,” and thought awhile before he said, “I would say it was pride with maybe a little avarice thrown in.”

“Avarice?”

“Well the only way that avarice can justify itself is through pride. I'm better so I deserve more kind of thing. You know thinking about it the only way that pride can justify itself is through avarice. I've got more so I am better. Do you think they are mutually dependent?”

“It does seem to go hand in hand though pride has been used to justify other things.”

“Has it?”

“Sloth, manual work is beneath me. Lechery, when you're this good you don't restrict yourself to just one partner. Gluttony, I deserve to taste the good things in life and anger, who are you to say that to me.”

“That just leaves envy which is the opposite of pride.”

“You know about the seven deadly sins,” Dave said in surprise.

“Well just what they are. You know pride can be used to justify envy, why has he got that when I haven't so you could say they all come from pride.”

“Yes and they all can make you proud too so which came first the chicken or the egg?”

“Good question so maybe that's the ego then, not just pride but all seven of the sins.”

“Well if that's the case it must be the evolution of your drive for basic survival.”

“You know that makes sense,” Joe said and finished his drink, “I've got to get off anyway. Are you out tonight? Silly question you always go out on your final night off.”

“Well I don't want to break a habit; I'll see you in there at eight.”

“Too right, anyway I'll see you later,” and left Dave alone with his thoughts. He had a smoke and relaxed awhile to contemplate on what they had been talking about. He made little progress if the truth be known and soon fell back to sleep.

“So,” the man said greeting him, “That was quick, you must have been tired.”

“Well it can be draining; you've started to look a fair bit younger.”

“It must be getting through to you then,” the man said with a laugh, “So you are confused by the image of your Self.”

“Er, yes, how did you know?”

“I sort of had a feeling,” the man said with a laugh, “So what actually is your imagination then?”

“I don't know, is it something to do with your ability to create an image?”

“Your creative ability. Now on the levels of understanding this comes in on level three with the

spirit of discernment. Basically it's your ability to create an image in your mind. It is actually a spur to your evolution put in place to aid your understanding past reality seen. This is a very potent tool, use it wisely and you will climb the levels, forsake it and it will control you."

"Sorry, what do you mean control you?"

"Govern your thoughts; the ego is just you without a true purpose that's all. Your imagination not used wisely is a very destructive force. It creates all those demons in your mind and they become your motivational force and control your perceptions of reality."

"Oh right, and image of your Self?"

"It comes from your Self not from your Will, one of its two aspects in fact. You see the ego only exists in your imagination, it is your Spiritual Self as opposed to your understanding which is your Physical Self."

"And your Will, does that have two aspects?"

"Yes, your Physical Will and your Spiritual Will. These are elements of your mind, Fire your imagination, Earth your understanding, Water your Physical Will and Air your Spiritual Will."

"Fire, Earth, Water and Air, I've heard of them but I did not realise what they actually were."

"Well now you know. Your imagination when not used to good purpose is your ego; it is the manifestation of your Self which is actually your understanding of purpose. If it has no understanding then it creates its own."

"So your Self is not the purpose you serve it's your understanding of purpose."

"The Self is the purpose that the Will serves so it is actually the purpose that you serve, well your understanding of it that is."

"Yes that makes sense," and thinking back to the story of the tram, "So why is power so deluding?"

"It inflates your ego, this gives you a higher opinion of yourself though as you have become your imagination you do not perceive your Self as a separate identity. This power that you are talking about is only illusory though, the real power you get from serving your purpose is true peace of mind."

"I don't know about that, the first type of power sounds more er, potent."

"At first glance but remember that pride does come before a fall and fate is always around to trip you up. Look deeper into things and you'll see I am right. In fact looking deeper into things gives you a better understanding of life and promotes your spiritual growth no end."

"I suppose so-so how would you actually confront pride then?"

"By recognizing it for what it is, it will soon lose its hold on you."

"Oh no, I meant in others."

"With patient understanding but each situation is individual so I cannot give you anything more specific."

"Yes, I can understand that, what about the situation with the tram then?"

"I would have said he handled it pretty well. He did not pander to them which would have only made them worse, he bided his time. He knew he was in the wrong but he knew it was only out of ignorance and not intentional. He tried to explain the situation but knew he was getting nowhere so waited the judgement of a higher authority, the police."

"Well fate," Dave said with a laugh.

"That was the police. No I would have said that he handled the situation well under the circumstances, emphasised by the fact fate was on his side."

"Probably then, so don't pander to it and wait your time and see if fate is in your favour."

"That's about it really. With patient understanding you can generally master most situations but I strongly suggest that you try and get as much information about the subject before-hand."

"Yes there are a lot of people who feed of ignorance."

"That's what gives them their power now that was quite a trivial situation, hardly life threatening but some situations maybe. What are your thoughts on those?"

"I'm not sure, turn the other cheek I guess."

“Now that was the answer you thought I wanted to hear,” the man said with a laugh, “You are entitled to defend yourself if your life is in danger but generally if it’s just a what you looking at kind of thing walk away if you can.”

“You know I generally do that but I seem to beat myself up a lot afterwards.”

“Sorry?”

“Go over the situation again and again though this time with what I should have done.”

“That's just your ego talking, anger I would say.”

“Oh right, yes, who are you to say that to me kind of thing?”

“That's right, but if it does escalate any further deal with it, you'll sort of sense it so don't worry about it.”

“I'll bare that in mind, especially about the anger thing, that gives me a lot of grief I can tell you.”

“Well you'll be tested on it to see how you get on.”

“Sorry?”

“Now you understand it you have to experience it to get its true understanding. That's the only real way to grow.”

“I suppose so, so when will this test be?”

“When you least expect it,” the man said with a laugh, “If I tell you when then it wouldn't really be a test.”

“True, er, nothing serious I hope.”

“Wait and see, anyway I won't be seeing you for a few days as me and alcohol doesn't mix.”

“Sorry?”

“When you have drink inside you it distorts the channel. When it's left your system I'll be back.”

“I can stop in if you like. It's not a big deal, besides I'd rather listen to what you have to say. It's a hell of a lot more interesting than getting drunk.”

“No, you go out and enjoy yourself; we're not hard task masters.”

“Well if you're sure.”

“It's for the best. You've took in a lot of information in a short space of time, it needs to be absorbed now.”

“Oh right, well I won't argue with that then. I will toast your honour.”

“Don't overdo it,” the man said with a laugh, “Anyway so that's it for the time being so good luck and good hunting.”

“Good hunting?”

“Your anger,” and disappeared.

Dave got up and checked the time; he would be running late if he was not careful. He still had a half an hour walk but it was a good pub that served a good pint and had live music so he did not mind. He still had to get something to eat for although the pub served good food Dave never mixed business with pleasure. Dave made himself some poached egg on toast and sat down to enjoy it. He still had ten minutes before he left so he pondered on what the test might be. His mind dredged up countless scenarios but as he was pretty much in the dark it was a pointless exercise.

“Ah well,” he said to himself as he got up, “I guess it’s just a case of wait and see.” he put his coat on as it was quite cool outside and started his long journey. There weren't many people about and Dave went by unhindered until he came to the first pub on his journey. It was a good pub but Dave never used it as it did not serve his particular brand of beer. A lot of other people did though for the car park was full and people had started to park on the road in front of it.

In fact a car had just pulled in front of him and parked half on the road and half on the pavement restricting his room. Not only that though instead of waiting for him to pass a young girl got out of the back of the car and what Dave took to be her mother got out of the driving seat. Dave smiled at the woman and carried on his way. A man got out the other side and not knowing what had happened said to her, “It's legal to park on the road, don't take any crap from no one Tracy.” Dave never said anything as he was a few yards up the road by then so he carried on his way. He

did hear the woman say, "What are you talking about, you are always causing trouble," and smiled to himself as he thought about their night ahead. It was only later that he realised that that was the test so he could settle down for a peaceful night and a couple more afterwards.

Chapter 4

Four days passed since the incident with the car and life had gone on pretty much as normal. Then for some strange reason Dave started to get restless. Normally when he was not working he would get up around nine but this particular morning he got up at six for no reason really other than he had a lot on his mind. All the things the man had said had come back to haunt him and different strands of thought vied for his attention. An hour passed but he was none the wiser another, then another but still he couldn't pacify his mind. The fourth hour saw the thoughts getting less erratic and some even merging after they had found a common thread by then though he had just given up. He had reasoned that he had no control over it so he left them to it. It was quite an enlightening thing for him and he seemed to get a certain peace from it. He lit up a smoke and checking the time saw it was just after 11 so he relaxed awhile and waited for Joe. His arrival stirred him from his seat.

"Come in," Dave said, "I'll put the kettle on."

"Sounds good I'll get the ball rolling, though looking at you you've already started."

"I've been up since six," Dave said going to the kitchen. He came back with 2 mugs of tea and said, "So anything interesting happened?"

"No, not really, nothing at all actually. I saw a good programme on the T.V. Last night though."

"That's unusual."

"True," Joe said with a laugh, "No it was about a thing called the Philosopher's Stone."

"I've heard of it, wasn't it something to do with alchemy?"

"That's right; it's all to do with turning base metal into gold oh and also a single cure for all diseases and a way of living longer, indefinitely in fact."

"Really, it could do both?"

"So they say, I don't believe it myself though it doesn't add up."

"Sorry?"

"Well maybe they could turn base metal into gold. They reckon that scientists can through nuclear fusion but it costs that much it's not viable. How does that equate with immortality though, there's no connection."

"Maybe it's symbolic then, though as to what I'm none the wiser. What else did it say?"

"Just that it takes many transformations; it was more to do with the history of alchemy than anything else. It seems it goes back a long time, China or Egypt they said. Actually thinking about it it was the Chinese that thought the gold itself granted you immortality. It still doesn't add up though." and with that Joe's mobile phone went off. He took it out his pocket and said, "What the hell does she want now?" before answering it, "Hello, I'm just at Dave's, I won't be too long.....No of course I won't forget the loaf of bread, you've already reminded me twice.....Right, fair enough, I will see you later then," and hung up.

"God she's a moody one sometimes, I don't know why I put up with her."

"'Cus you love her I guess," Dave said with a laugh.

"Sometimes I wonder, anyway I had better get going, things to do and all that. I will see you later," and left Dave in quite a confused state as Joe had only just got there. He had even left his drink half finished. That was one aspect of the mind he had never dwelt on, people's moods, strange really as he was quite prone to be moody at times. His ex girlfriend had often said that he could sulk for England, in fact it was one of the reasons they split up. He thought awhile about the subject but it was beyond him. Sure he knew that when some women were on their cycle they could be moody but that was hormonal he reasoned. Maybe it was hormonal balance he thought but if the truth be known he wasn't any further forward when he fell to sleep later that afternoon.

Dave found himself face to face with himself. Well it was actually the old man he had first met but

looking at him now there was no difference.

“So you expressed an interest about the Philosopher's Stone. And you said it was symbolic if I remember rightly.”

“That's right, though of what I wouldn't have a clue.”

The man smiled and said, “It's symbolic of the mystical art of human spiritual transformation into a higher form of being.”

“What, I'm still none the wiser.”

“How many transformations does the process undergo, that might help you.”

“Er, I don't know.”

“Well if I said 10 would that be any help?”

“The levels of understanding?”

“That's right, so what would base metal actually be?”

“The impure Self?” Dave said still a little unsure.

“Good, and gold?”

“A pure Self,” Dave said more sure this time.

“Very good, easy wasn't it.”

“So why did they think it was actually gold then?”

“That was just a false trail to play on man's greed. I mean let's be honest eternal youth is worth a lot more than any gold isn't it? The real adepts knew the truth but they tried to keep it for themselves.”

“And what actually is the Philosopher's Stone, did it really exist?”

“Well what is a philosopher, that might help you a little?”

“I don't know, a clever man?”

The man laughed and said, “Philosophy means love of wisdom so a philosopher would be someone who loves wisdom.”

“Right, so what about the stone then?”

“I was just about to ask you that myself,” the man said laughing, “Well now that you know what a philosopher is would you say that it was literal or symbolic?”

“Symbolic I guess.”

“Good, it's symbolic of purpose; a true philosopher's purpose is to find enlightenment or purification of Self. To get the true understanding you have to understand the symbols of the letters.”

“Really, I didn't even know they were symbolic.”

“Yes, surprising isn't it. It stands for 'The spiritual word blessed with God's purpose sees understanding (seeing the spiritual word through knowing)' does that make any sense to you?”

“Well I suppose the spiritual word would be the transforming agent that the philosopher's were after. Seeing understanding would mean understanding it as opposed to just knowing what it says. I'm not sure about blessed with God's purpose though nor why it should be bracketed.”

“Not bad, basically what its saying is that esoteric knowledge, that's another word for it; it means knowledge of the higher truths, when put to good purpose, that is the betterment of life, gives you its true understanding.”

“And this is how you climb the levels through its true understanding.”

“That's right otherwise it leads to self delusion, something you don't really want to have.”

“And the bracketed parts?”

“Supplements, knowing in this case is a deeper understanding.”

“How does that work out?”

“You have knowing in the sense of knowing the words like a parrot saying pretty Polly and not understanding what it means. Then you have knowing through experience like you with the incident of the car.”

“Oh the test, that was quite a relief I can tell you, I was expecting something worse.”

“We're not hard task masters. Besides why should you have let that fool transfer his anger on you?”

“Can they do that then, I did not realise.”

“Oh yes, basically he gets his anger of his chest and if you're not careful you end up taking it on.”

“You know I can empathise with that, when my ex got moody I would end up the same.”

“It's just transference of negative energy; it works in a positive way also though. If you are well motivated you can usually motivate others.”

“I sort of knew that, I did not realise it worked the other way though.”

“Oh yes, it can be very destructive I can tell you. Some people are like pressure cookers; they let things build up and then let off steam by taking it out on others who are not the actual problem. I wouldn't mind but if they'd have used that energy to sort out the real problems their lives would be a lot easier and the world would be a better place.”

“I won't argue with that.”

“I mean take the example of you at the library the other day (Dave had been going down the stairs at his local library the day before when a woman stormed past him. She was followed by an irate man and two children who looked bemused. The man crossed over the stairs in front of Dave's path expecting Dave to move but Dave did not so he had to move back to his original place. He wasn't too happy about it and swore under his breath) He was trying to justify himself at your expense. His ego must have taken a hammering and he was trying to re-inflate it that's all.”

“You know I thought that later though at the time I've got to admit I was quite angry.”

“Only natural but you managed to contain it. Now you're a pretty humble man and would have put him before yourself and move out of his way. Why didn't you?”

“Well I don't mind stepping aside for anyone but he actually went out of his way to make me.”

“Good, humility is a good thing to have though don't let others abuse it as it disrupts your peace of mind. You were a little angry at the time but with a little thought or patient understanding it soon cleared. Sometimes these situations take a little time to come to light that's why you need patience and by understanding the situation it tends to dissolve your temper.”

“But sometimes you can't get this understanding. I mean how do you know what's in other peoples' minds?”

“Use your imagination; put yourself in their shoes it's not as hard as you think.”

“I suppose not.”

“Well take the library. You knew the man was angry and you guessed he must have had an argument with his wife. You don't need to know what the argument is about as it's not your concern.”

“Oh right, so I don't need to go too deeply then?”

“Not at all, in fact if you over rationalise it not only are you wasting time you might actually lose its sense. Take the alchemists.”

“The alchemists?”

“They believed that the elements controlled your moods, daft really as they're only aspects of your mind.”

“So what does cause moods then?”

“Usually the actions of others if you are unhappy it's because something has made you that way. You might not have got the job you wanted; someone is making your life a misery. You can control your moods though.”

“Really, how?”

“With patient understanding.” the man said with a laugh and disappeared.

Dave woke up and if he was not more patient he was definitely more understanding.

The Rogue Gene

David Johnson lit up another cigarette and coughed as the poison entered his lungs. He did not like the taste and got no pleasure from it as he was only feeding an addiction. Generally speaking he was quite a strong willed man but no matter how many times he tried to stop it always got the better of him. It would pester him and wear down his resolve with thoughts like 'well it's been a few days now, it's well out of your system you should be alright,' and 'go on you're in control now, the occasional one won't do you harm'. Eventually he would have one and this would lead to another then another and soon he would be back where he was before, an addict. He had tried using patches and gum and that held it at bay for a while for they did satisfy the cravings. He had reasoned that if he took the nicotine in this form it would be less harmful than the smoke inhalation. Though there was truth in this it did not actually deal with the problem so it was still around to haunt him. Once the course of patches had finished he was soon back to his old self so it was a bit of a pointless exercise really. The only good that came out of it was it gave his body a little time to start repairing itself and his fingers time to clear. He finished his cigarette and stubbing it out in the ashtray by the bed quickly fell to sleep.

Dave found himself in a darkened cave in front of an elderly woman, "That's a dangerous habit you know, it could be the death of you."

"I know, I've been trying to quit for years now."

"Well then, I was actually only talking about smoking in bed but now you have mentioned packing up all together what's stopping you?"

"Lack of will power I guess, I've tried but it just seems to creep up on me."

"Now I know you to be a strong willed person so it can't be that. Think harder there must be something else."

Dave thought awhile and said, "No, I haven't a clue."

"Good, you see it works in darkness and feeds off your ignorance."

"What does?"

"Why the devil of course," the woman said as if it was obvious.

"No, I don't believe it, who are you anyway?"

"It's about time you asked me that, I thought judging by your silence on the matter you were content to live in ignorance. I am Zelda, your understanding, the feminine force that's within you. As you are the Will I am the Self, does that make any sense to you?"

"Well not really."

"Then this is going to be a long night," Zelda said with a laugh, "Now to put it simply I am your nature, a different aspect of your Self. When I am humility you are humble when I am not you are proud. Is that any easier?"

"Not really."

"In time you will understand, so back to the thing you don't believe in then, the devil. What actually do you know about him?"

"Only that he doesn't exist, he came from the imaginings of a religious mind constructed to keep people in fear by playing on their superstitions."

"Oh you haven't given it much thought then. No, let me get one thing clear from the start. He does exist and he's alive and well and living inside you. He is the one that is intent on pulling you into destruction."

"Why, I mean not that I believe you but if it was true what would the purpose be behind it?"

"He hasn't got a purpose that's the whole problem. Well not strictly true as he was created to stop you from reaching your purpose so that's his purpose."

"What is that it? That doesn't make sense. Why should he be created at all then, no it doesn't add up."

"Really, so who's the one that pesters you to have a cigarette then?"

"I don't know, me I guess."

"If you think that then you are lost. It's time you let some light into your life. The devil was created as a tempter; he was put in place to test your resolve so you could get mentally stronger by defeating him."

"And how would I defeat him," Dave said in a mocking tone.

"Just by saying no, it isn't hard work it's just you making it so. You seem to have a blockage about the devil, why is that?"

"He doesn't exist."

"Now that sounds like the devil himself."

"What," Dave said and with that something strange happened. He felt a part of him died and left a distinct smell of brimstone in its wake, "What was that?" he said in shock.

"Just a little fear of the unknown, the devil in disguise right, so you still don't believe in him?"

"After that I'm not sure, your version seems different to the one I've been brought up on."

"Well perceptions of him have evolved over time basically he's your imagination when used to bad purpose or not used at all. I suppose you could call him a negative or destructive imagination as opposed to a positive or creative one."

"And you said he was put in place as a tempter?"

"Yes that's right, not initially though. No initially he was created as your instinctive drive which at the lower levels of existence is control by fear."

"Fear of the unknown, well it would make sense I suppose."

"Ah wisdom through experience the best teacher, now before I really get into it I would like to talk a little more about this fear of the unknown for it is quite a handicap to your evolution and life in general."

"Well I won't argue with that."

"That makes a change," Zelda said with a laugh, "Right this fear of the unknown in instinctive creatures is a good thing to have for life at that level of understanding is quite a dangerous occupation. The rabbit runs at the first sign of trouble to give itself a head start and a distinct advantage over its predator who usually doesn't get that close before it's noticed. Are you with me so far?"

"Yes, I can see the truth in that."

"Good, now as we grow in understanding we become more self conscious and this fear of the unknown evolves to lack of confidence in ourselves, the unknown now being strangers that we meet or belief in our ability to take on tasks."

"So it actually becomes a handicap then."

"To some people a great obstacle. Experience of life usually helps to conquer it and knowing what it actually is also has a part to play."

"So knowledge conquers it then, mind you it's obvious when you think about it. The fear of the unknown only goes away when it becomes known and this is done through knowledge."

"Good, easy when you think about it isn't it. Now this fear of the unknown also works with things that happen beyond life in general as you noticed earlier. This is what stops you looking beyond and keeps you in your place on the evolutionary ladder. Try to look beyond reality and you give your imagination a purpose so it evolves to lose its fear of the unknown. You see it's not your fear of the unknown it's actually its."

"Oh right, so positive and negative imaginings are just two side of a coin."

"Yes, held in place by fear for that's what separates them. So a quick recap then, the devil in its capacity of your fear of the unknown serves its purpose in the lower levels of existence by acting as your instinctive fear. When you evolve out of this stage of development it had served its purpose and so is in need of another. Until it gets another it cannot evolve out of its fear stage and when it gets it, it becomes your ability to see beyond the confines of reality."

"I couldn't have put it better myself," Dave said with a laugh.

"Probably not," Zelda said laughing and got a little younger.

“What's just happened here?” Dave said in surprise.

“I get younger as you get more understanding. You see it's also in my interests for you to listen.”

“I'll bare that in mind. That must be it for the devil in its fear of the unknown aspect.”

“That's right, so the next thing on the agenda is why do you think it is intent on pulling you to destruction?”

“I wouldn't even like to guess.”

“You could try; it might improve your understanding.”

“Well you said it was to test your resolve so maybe it's not personal then.”

“No, it's not personal believe it or not it was actually put in place to promote your mental growth. Without it you would just stagnate for if the mind is not tested it will not grow.”

“So what was all that about it being created to stop you achieving your purpose? That does not make sense with what you have just said.”

“I don't see any conflict, it was created to stop you and you were created to grow by defeating it.”

“Well if you put it like that.”

“You're hard work sometimes, so anyway it is intent on pulling you to destruction for that's its job. One it takes very seriously as you can guess.”

“I can imagine.”

“Then you are halfway there” Zelda said with a laugh, “So where were we yes. Now the devil creates a home for itself and we call it hell. Do you know what hell actually is?”

“A place of fire and brimstone?”

“No,” Zelda said with a patient smile, “It's actually emotional turmoil. Not only does it make its home there it actually feeds on it too.”

“I'll bear that in mind, emotional turmoil, that's stress isn't it?”

“That's right,” Zelda said, “So that's hell then,” and got a little younger, “Finally for tonight we'll talk about its different aspects for recognition is their downfall. Seven in all you would know them as the deadly sins.”

“Oh yes, I did not know their significance though.”

“Not many people do, we will take them one at a time until we come to the one that actually concerns you.”

“Fair enough I can't see which one has anything to do with smoking though.”

“In time, so first pride then, this is your greatest hurdle and is actually a catalyst to all others. It causes the most turmoil because it sets you off on a collision course with fate.”

“Why is that then?”

“We're all equal in the eyes of the divine, it's the law I'm afraid. You put yourself on a pedestal and it will be knocked from under you, definitely a breeding ground for turmoil. Now on another level your actions when controlled by pride are antagonistic to others which is another breeding ground for turmoil.”

“Right, yes I've seen it at work.”

“Good, experience is the best teacher. So envy next then, this too causes conflict mainly through self torture but if your actions come from it they too are antagonistic. Avarice next and with it you break another law which is if you take more than you need someone has to go without so fate will take a keen interest in you. Your greed as well will cause others to suffer and that too will come back to haunt you on a personal level. Now also don't forget that all these aspects when nurtured by you will grow in strength so they really want nipping in the bud.”

“And that's by recognising them?”

“That's right when you recognise them you see them for what they are and this strengthens your mind enough for them to lose their hold on you.”

“Right.”

“Good sloth then, with this inside both your mind and life stagnate. It dwells heavily into self torture and distracts others from their purpose if they carry its load. Lechery next and another one

that gives you stress either through guilt or situations that fate puts you in.”

“Sorry?”

“When you are out with one partner there's a good chance you'll meet someone that knows the other, that kind of thing or maybe you'll get a phone call from one when you're out with the other.”

“Oh right.”

“The next one is a volatile one, anger, self destructive and environmentally unfriendly. That just leaves?”

“Gluttony though I can't really see what that has to do with smoking.”

“With patience you will. Gluttony is not just about food it's about sensory pleasure. This means it could also be about drink and drugs. From your body's point of view this is the most destructive. The rest of them have more of an effect on the mind and through stress may age you prematurely but this one goes for the kill. Now you expressed a wish to give up smoking.”

“Well yes I suppose.”

“If you didn't then your body did. I will help you. The next time I see you I will go into greater detail about the sins but in the meantime I want you to get hold of some raisins.” and disappeared.

Chapter 2

Dave woke up the next morning not remembering the dream only knowing that he had a strong urge for raisins. He went down stairs to make some breakfast and lit a cigarette whilst he was waiting for it to cook. He took his first drag and hiccupped so it didn't go down. Another drag and it had the same result, this had never happened before and it left him a little shocked. He stubbed the cigarette out and had his breakfast before going to work. The day wore on slowly and he did smoke although not as often. He picked up some raisins on the way home and had a quiet night in front of the television before going to bed.

“So,” Zelda said, “The seven deadly sins, we scratched the surface now it's time to go a little deeper. Did you get the raisins by the way?”

“Yes, though I can't see what good they'll do.”

“In time, so back to the aspects then, to truly understand them we have to go right to the core, the brain stem in fact. A set of laws that guide your being through its instinctive stage,” and told him them, “Now as you grow in understanding they lose their control although they still have their hold on you as they are enshrined in your being. To try and maintain this hold they use the pleasure-pain principle. If sex was not pleasurable you wouldn't do it and your species would quickly be extinct. All this comes from the emotional brain and to life in the middle realms of existence it is its sole guiding force. So basically speaking the emotional brain is there to enforce the natural laws through the medium of pleasure and pain.”

“Right, yes I can understand that.”

“Good now the administration of the pleasure pain is done by the Self.”

“You,” Dave said in surprise.

“That's right.”

“So er, what actually are you then?”

“I am your understanding the spur to your evolution, in fact without me you would not evolve at all. At the middle range of existence I uphold the laws, well my understanding of them that is.”

“And these laws, why are they so important?”

“These are what give you your life and ability to love. Without them you would not exist at all, well not strictly true as you would just be unrestrained spiritual energy.”

“What, so you mean to say that all I am is restrained spiritual energy?”

“Yes, the body is just the clothes you choose to wear.”

“I never knew so where does the devil fit in with all this? I mean according to my logic it must be you.”

“Oh that's nice,” Zelda said with a laugh, “No, the devil is an evolution of the laws mixed with a

little self consciousness in the negative sense of the word, basically David it's you.”

“What, no this is a wind up.”

“Sorry but its true you created yourself in that image and now I'm here to evolve you out of it. Why do you think you've been fighting me all the way, trying to pick faults with what I say? Think about it and you'll see I am right.”

Dave thought awhile and said, “So you are saying that I am the devil?”

“The devil is within you, it surfaces when you uphold its work.”

“Sorry?”

“When you are envious, when you are proud sort of thing, don't you remember the smell of brimstone?”

“Oh,” Dave said upon realisation.

“I did tell you that it works in darkness so now it's time to bring it into the light.”

“I think that you are right. I think it's had a lot more control over me then I have given it credit for.”

“Good, now we can go to work. So I mentioned a negative self consciousness, any ideas in the matter?”

“I don't think I know what self consciousness actually is, I thought it was just being embarrassed.”

“We'll get that cleared up first then. To help itself to understand things the mind has to relate things to itself, its personal experience if you like. That is self consciousness in essence, the minds fundamental tool for growth.”

“Right and I suppose a negative self conscious would be one used to a negative purpose.”

“Logical but I am afraid you will have to elaborate to get its full understanding.”

Dave thought awhile and said, “I suppose envy would be an example. Instead of knowledge it relates to material things and attributes and instead of personal experience it relates to its personal possessions and attributes.”

“Good so when self consciousness is not used for its true purpose the mind finds another for it. Now you said envy but it could just as easily be pride. In fact pride would be a better candidate for it believes it can grow no more as it has all the understanding it needs.”

“So why would it think that then?”

“It has no imagination, it cannot see past its immediate reality so if it perceives it as good then it won't go any further. It has been conditioned to live in one lifetime I'm afraid.”

“Right so when it starts to see past reality it starts to lose this conditioning.”

“That's right it starts to evolve from the Physical Will into the spiritual one.”

“So would I be right in thinking that the devil is actually your Physical Will,” Dave said and watched Zelda get a little younger. “Well it speaks for itself,” he said with a laugh.

“Good and how does that fit in with a negative imagination?”

“Tricky that as I always thought that your imagination came from your understanding which is more your department.”

“True but what creates a negative imagination, a Will without purpose perhaps?”

Dave thought awhile and said, “Well it would make sense as it's the Will that actually gathers the information to create the perceptions in the first place.”

“Good, it is the Will that has consciousness in the world of reality seen. Now your evolution actually happens on two levels, both you and I have to evolve as one. If you have the knowledge and I don't understand it then we are out of balance and so the Will can never be truly spiritual.”

“Yes that leaves me a little confused as you actually have the understanding. Where did it come from for to the best of my knowledge this is all new to me?”

“You are in dream-time, I am fully evolved here. I am the culmination of your evolution here. In your realms though I am not, I am still growing as you grow in understanding more of me can live in your world. The more of me lives there the younger you see me here. I am expanding your consciousness.”

“Right, that makes sense.”

“Good so a quick recap then. The Physical Will is self centred, conditioned to live in one lifetime. It creates a negative imagination that we call hell through ignorance of its true purpose as it has no imagination to see past itself. It is actually an evolution of the natural laws and though now outdated they are still its driving force,” and with that got even younger.

“It seems to be sinking in.”

“Hopefully it will give you the inner strength you need.”

“Ah yes smoking.”

“A bit of a road to travel yet, now next on the agenda we'll take the aspects one by one and hopefully by truly understanding them they will completely lose their hold on you.”

“Sounds good to me, any particular order?”

“Esaplag, that makes the first one envy.”

“Oh, right.”

“Now in a society based on inequality it's bound to raise its ugly head. It actually forms a triad with sloth and avarice. Either you just give up or you perceive that more material things will pacify it neither of which is good for your evolution of purpose for they distort your mind.”

“Right, so how do you actually destroy them?”

“Oh you can't destroy them, you have to evolve them.”

“Evolve them, what's the point then, I want them completely out of my system.”

“The laws they evolved from are enshrined in your being. You cannot get rid of them so you have to adapt them to suit your purpose.”

“Maybe but the laws about adapting to the social climate and you said that society is based on inequality. Surely envy will only be gone when everyone is equal?”

“Now that sounds like a little envy talking, society might be unequal but that doesn't mean that you have to uphold its cause. You have a free will at the end of the day so the choice is yours.”

“In theory yes, but I do know that it happens well below my level of consciousness so come to reality I have no choice in the matter.”

“You're the one who lives in reality. You just have to recognise it for what it is and this actually expands your level of consciousness. Just find out what it is in essence and it will soon go to ground.”

“And what might that be?”

“That's your next step.”

Dave tried to think but found it difficult, “No,” he said, “It's like there's something fighting me.”

“Well you don't think it will give up easily. Use your strength of will and it will come to light.”

Dave thought some more and said, “It's a fear.”

“Go on, you're getting closer.”

“It's a fear of someone having more than you.”

“Right and why should that matter?”

“Well it shouldn't.”

“But to envy it does, so to put it in a nutshell it's an irrational fear. You should have said it's an irrational fear of someone having more than you.”

“Alright now I know what it is how do I evolve it?”

“You already have. You have recognised it for what it was so now your mind can heal itself of it. It still exists but now it's an inner sense of knowing.”

“Knowing?”

“Knowing that we are all the same, our persona's may be different but we are all evolving Souls on the path of life.”

“Right quite a struggle to get there though.”

“It won't give up easily. Like most fears its an evolution of the fear of death, its own in fact. It perceives that once you've understood it, it has served its purpose and so has to die. It does not perceive rebirth though for if it did it would not have the fear in the first place. Now to truly

understand it you have to know how it came to be in the first place.”

Dave thought awhile and said, “Well it came from the law of adaptability to the social climate. I suppose with the advent of self consciousness it started to relate the people around it to itself. As everyone is different and have different strengths and weaknesses it compared their strengths to its weaknesses and envy came to be.”

“I could not have put it better myself,” Zelda said with a laugh and got a little younger, “So next on the list sloth, any thoughts on the matter?”

“Well it’s a fear I’m guessing but as to which I’m in the dark.”

“Well think about it, it’s not that hard really.”

“You said it was giving up on life, would that make it a fear of life then? An irrational fear of life I mean.”

“Good, easy wasn’t it? Well not that easy for it needs a little elaboration.”

“Oh I thought it was too good to be true. Right then, I suppose you would say that it fears life for it knows if it embraces life, it will be its death.”

“Good, now with recognition it evolves to inner strength or fortitude, which it gets from the wisdom it now yearns to acquire.”

“Right, so now all that’s left is for me to work out how it came to be.”

“You’re learning fast.”

Dave thought awhile and said, “Well it came from the law of adaptability to the climate itself, I’m guessing that when they stopped migrating they got idle.”

“True but a bit simplistic, when man evolved past basic survival his spare time should have been used for gathering wisdom to promote further evolution. The fear of life was actually a spiritual life. It evolved to life in general when mixed with self consciousness for it did not think it had a chance to compete,” and with that got a little younger. “That will be it for now as the mind needs time to heal itself,” and disappeared.

Chapter 3

Dave woke up to another day. Nothing of any real interest happened and although he did smoke he was starting to loathe the taste. He went to bed the usual time and the process continued.

“Ah David, you’ve come back for more. So what’s next on the list then?”

“Er, avarice I guess.”

“Good I’m glad to see you were paying attention, any thoughts on the matter?”

“Well the best I can do is it’s a fear of someone having more than you.”

“It is an evolution of envy though you are right, it isn’t that. If it makes it a little easier tell me how it came to be?”

Dave thought awhile and said, “Well it’s an evolution of surviving in the habitat so I guess it came about through storing for when times were lean. With the advent of self consciousness it became storing for its own sake and to have more than your neighbour.”

“Good, does that help?”

“I would say it was fear of lean times though I wouldn’t call it an irrational fear.”

“Now that would depend on how far you took that fear. It might have a rational basis but when you take it to the extremes then it becomes irrational.”

“Oh right, so it’s an irrational fear of lean times then, how does that fit in with envy?”

“Self consciousness, initially you want to be more secure than your neighbours. Envy says you are not and so you keep going.”

“Yes I can see that, and you said the recognition brings evolution.”

“That’s right, with evolution it turns into an inner sense of calm for you get a deeper understanding of life.”

“Really, how does that work then?”

“Through insight, when you are avaricious your mind dwells on material things. Once it’s lost its

hold then it evolves to the understanding of the knowledge it has acquired. This is done through insight or the ability to look within, either knowledge or situations that life throws up.”

“Right, so that's avarice down then.”

“Just a little more to travel, so that's knowing, wisdom and insight. Now to get the real understanding you have to go a little deeper. You see it's all to do with knowledge of self as opposed to knowledge of purpose the next triad. You have knowing of self, wisdom of self and understanding of self which you get from insight, not only that it gives you insight. This is the triad of wisdom as opposed to purpose which is the triad of understanding.”

“So they are related on two levels then.”

“Well three for they are the laws of survival,” Zelda said and got younger, “A triad of triads.”

“You know you're turning into quite a looker.”

“I've had my moments,” Zelda said with a laugh, “So what's next on the list then?”

Dave thought awhile and said, “Pride I guess.”

“Good guess, care to continue?”

“Well it's an irrational fear of something.”

“One step at a time, it's actually part of a triad with lechery and anger first define the relationship between them.”

“Oh sorry,” Dave said and thought awhile, “The only thing I can really think of is that anger erupts when pride is challenged but as to lechery well I'm none the wiser.”

“Not much help then. Perhaps it would be a good idea to work out how pride came to be.”

Dave thought some more and said, “Well it came from the drive to give your off spring the best chance of survival. That was the purpose you served I suppose. As life got less hazardous it evolved to the best start in life I guess. That's as far as I can take it I'm afraid, after that, well I don't know.”

“It is a tricky one I'll admit but you are close when you said it was the purpose that you served.”

“It seems to have evolved from off spring to yourself, that's the part I'm stuck on.”

“That came about through self consciousness. Now envy came to be by comparing your weaknesses to others strengths pride comes by comparing your strengths to others weaknesses.”

“Oh right and thinking back to the triad it would be a matter of pride to give as many off spring the best chance of survival so lechery would come to be. As for anger though?”

“It's alright having them you have to defend them as well, whether your children from danger or your partners from other suitors.”

“Yes, of course,” Dave said and thought a little before saying, “Would pride be the same as envy?”

“Sorry?”

“An irrational fear of someone having more than you.”

“Easy wasn't it. Mind you they are two different sides to the same coin when you think about it.”

“True would that mean that recognition would evolve it to a sense of inner knowing?”

“Well in a way, knowledge of purpose as opposed to Self,” and got a little younger, “Anyway that will be it for now,” and disappeared.

Dave woke up to another day and though it was smoke filled it was less than the day before. He retired to bed at the same time as normal and the process resumed with earnest.

“Not too many left,” Zelda said by way of encouragement, “So lechery next, any thoughts on the matter?”

“Well it came from to attract a mate though I have been giving the matter a little thought. Shouldn't that actually be pride and giving your offspring the best chance of survival Lechery?”

“At first glance though it's the actual drive to attract a mate that causes lechery.”

“Oh right well that makes more sense. So it came from the drive to attract a mate mixed with pride and a little self consciousness making it want to attract more than one.”

“Good though lechery is more than just having many partners it's an obsessive drive for sex, well the pleasure of sex. This is the actual drive I am talking about. You'll notice it in quite a few animals in the springtime; in fact in humans it still has its hold. When they evolved free will they

transcended the seasons though to some that meant that the drive was all year round.”

“Yes, so the laws actually give the drive.”

“Well yes, they are the channels to the instinctive drive; I thought I had already mentioned it.”

“You did, it’s just that now I think I understand it more.”

“Good, now I can give you fresh understanding then. The laws are not the drive itself for that is spiritual energy. They channel the energy at its early stage of evolution as the energy purify's through understanding it gets more aware of both itself and its surroundings. It still needs a purpose to channel itself so without a new purpose, which is the next stage of its spiritual growth it reverts back to the one ones. Now though it is more evolved for it has both self consciousness and an imagination which are actually the tools it needs for the next stage. The tools it needs when not used for their proper purpose are detrimental to the mind it occupies. Self consciousness and a negative imagination create pride and envy for the mind takes things personally in the negative sense of the word. To put it in a nutshell without a purpose the spiritual energy though it has a will of its own is controlled by its imagination for without a purpose it cannot grow past that stage.”

“So it’s held in its instinctive drive.”

“That's right except now it has the ability to create images in its mind which channel the energy into negative thought forms so giving them life.”

“Amazing, and by recognising them the mind can heal them and turn them positive.”

“Yes and by recognition I actually mean understanding them for by understanding them you grow in awareness. It actually promotes your spiritual growth.”

“Yes, so next I've got to work out what it's an irrational fear of, “and thought awhile before he said,

“Is it something to do with the perpetuation of the species?”

“Well in a way you could say that it is.”

“Well if that was its perceived purpose would it be a fear of not serving your purpose?”

“Well an irrational fear.”

“Why's that then?”

“Its purpose has evolved; it’s a different purpose now.”

“Right, and with its recognition?”

“It evolves to inner peace through a deeper level of understanding. I thought you would have guessed that for it actually just happened to you.”

“About the instinctive drive you mean”

“Yes, when you lose lechery you start to look more deeply on a subconscious level.”

“Why is that then?”

“When it’s in control you see people as potential partners though only from a physical attraction. Without it you can look deeper and see the person. This deeper level works its way into other aspects of life,” and got a little younger, “So the last of the triad then, anger, any thoughts on the matter?”

“Well it comes from the defend and hunt law and you said to defend its mate and offspring,” and thought some more before saying, “I would say that through self consciousness it evolved to defending itself, its perceived Self for with a negative imagination it was actually its pride.”

“Very good, you see what a deeper level of understanding can bring, new insight.”

“Yes, it’s surprising.”

“So that's how it came to be. So next on the list what is it in essence?”

“I think it is an irrational fear of being hurt.”

“You'll have to go deeper; fear of being hurt is a rational fear.”

“Taken to the extremes,” Dave said and thought awhile before saying, “Self consciously.”

“Go on, you're nearly there.”

“I suppose you call it losing face, it becomes irrational when your pride is being hurt.”

“And why is that irrational?”

“Because your pride should not even exist, in fact I would say that by defending it, it’s very

detrimental to your growth.”

“Good, now recognition brings inner peace through patience and promotes loving understanding of purpose. So you have knowledge of purpose, understanding of purpose and loving understanding of purpose. The difference between the last two is the last one is an even deeper level of understanding. So that's two triads down, the final triad the laws of purpose, attract a mate, defend her and carry on the species,” and got younger, “Now the one you've been waiting to hear.”

“Ah gluttony.”

“Any thoughts on the matter?”

“Well it's not part of a triad it seems to be out on its own.”

“Tell me how it came to be first.”

“It evolved from finding your niche in the eco system law. I'm guessing that the only way to fit in the eco system is to only take your fill for it is finely balanced.”

“Good and how did it evolve into gluttony?”

“I suppose self consciousness; it started to hunger for the taste as opposed to the nourishment value.”

“And how would it justify that?”

“Through thinking itself better than the rest I guess.”

“Pride or used as a comfort to pacify envy.”

“So it created them?”

“To justify itself so it is actually a triad. You have self and purpose, mental attributes and life itself, the living of. This is the triad of life, so what is it the fear of?”

“Death, well the irrational fear as it takes hunger avoidance to the extremes.”

“Good,” Zelda said with a laugh, “Now with recognition it evolves through temperance into a spiritual life from which you get knowledge of Self, the feminine force, knowledge of purpose, the masculine force and the final triad. Three triads make nine which is a very powerful number. That will be it for now,” and disappeared.

Chapter 4

Dave woke up the next morning with a strange feeling of elation. He went to work with a spring in his step and his world was good. Sure he still smoked but he had cut down enough for his workmates to have noticed. Even the day passed reasonably quickly so he was soon back with Zelda who now looked the same age as himself.

“Smoking,” she said, “When did you first start?”

“Well there's a funny story to that actually. When I was 8 I was with a cousin and his friend who were both a little older than me. We were on a patch of wasteland just behind our house and one of them had some cigarettes. I had a few drags on one and when I got home saw this anti smoking advert on the television. It was the one with the lemmings running over the cliff. It scared me that much I told my mother.”

“And what did she do?”

“Well gave me a good hiding and then went round and gave their parents what for. It put me off for quite a few years I can tell you.”

“That sounds like fate to me, so when did you start smoking properly then?”

“About 13 I guess, it might have been peer pressure, I'm not sure I just drifted into it.”

“And you've tried to stop before you said.”

“Frequently, the last time was on patches and I went 7 weeks without a cigarette. Though as I guess I was still putting nicotine in me it didn't count.”

“True, and was that the longest time?”

“Well no, there was another funny story to that one as well.”

“Oh quite the comedian, go on then.”

“I had not long stopped a couple of hours or so when the cravings began in earnest. I just lost my

temper and said "It's not like you are going to die if you don't have one." They just stopped; it was like they had been flooded with Adrenalin. I went for nine weeks."

"Then what happened?"

"It was Christmas time, I just fancied one. It was not a strong craving as such, more of a whim. Well one led to another and well I'm still smoking."

"Right, these cravings, when you know you can't smoke do they still continue?"

"No, it's funny that. I used to work at a warehouse and you could not smoke anywhere on site. I went 9 hours a day without any trouble when I finished though I did have a couple of fags one after another."

"Good, I think you have told me all I need to know."

"Oh, so what now then?"

"I will try to give you some understanding to help your resolve; hopefully it will make it easier for you."

"Well I'm all for that."

"Right, well first things first you know that there's a very good chance it could kill you."

"Oh yes, I've tried to dismiss it by saying I know people who have smoked all their lives and lived to a ripe old age but I know deep down that it's doing me harm."

"That's one thing then and you do know the harm it can actually do?"

"Well there's lung cancer, and throat cancer too."

"There are many cancers; we'll first talk of the danger to the coronary arteries though."

"Is there, I did not realise?"

"Oh there are many dangers. With nicotine the vessels lose their elasticity and become narrower. This restricts the blood flow to the heart and being ill nourished its walls start to deteriorate."

"Really, I never knew."

"Surprising isn't it. Also the heart muscles suffer through lack of nourishment and start to deteriorate affecting its ability to work and eventually ending up in failure, nicotine is actually poison to your body."

"Oh I thought it was the carbon monoxide from the smoke that caused the trouble."

"Added to the trouble the tar released from the act of smoking to a great degree is responsible for the development of cancer so it gets you in many ways."

"Oh, definitely a thing I should be avoiding then."

"It's a time bomb. I could go into a lot more details about its other effects, impotency, its numerous cancers and all that but you realise that it's bad for you so that's all that matters."

"Yes, though I did not realise how bad it actually was for me."

"Take it from me its best avoided. Now that's its effects sorted. Incidentally if you want to go into more detail there are plenty of books as it is well documented."

"Right, I'll bare that in mind, so what's next?"

"I would like to talk about it as a food stuff."

"I did not realise that it was."

"It isn't, though your body thinks it is. Now the cravings you actually get are the body hungering for it in much the same way it hungers for food."

"Really, I never knew."

"It's worth remembering that when you crave for a cigarette it's the body's addiction wanting feeding. By fighting the cravings you are starving it and sending it on to its death. You should actually look forward to the cravings as it means that the nicotine is leaving the system."

"I don't know about that some of them are pretty strong."

"The stronger they are the better for you, it means the more they are going."

"Right, though with gluttony gone surely I won't get the cravings."

"You will, it works on a different level. It might be a good idea for me to elaborate on it for you so you get the full understanding."

"I won't argue with that."

"Now gluttony works on sensory pleasure, it lives for it in fact. Smoking itself doesn't really give you pleasure as such its more to satisfy its self created desire but gluttony doesn't see it in that light. It sees it as a foodstuff and quite a few people actually use it as an appetite suppressant. Now when you lost your temper that time and said it's not like you're going to die if you don't have it you confronted it. You did not evolve it but you pacified it for awhile, this gave you the edge to fight the addiction."

"Right, so it crept back after awhile and I started smoking once more."

"Got it, that's what actually pesters you so not only are you fighting the addiction you are also being pestered by gluttony."

"So it gets me on two levels, no wonder I find it hard."

"Well 3, you have been smoking that long it's become a habit."

"I've got no chance."

"No I wouldn't say that, you have defeated your gluttony so now you won't be pestered. You will still have the cravings but as I explained earlier they are the hunger pangs of a starving addiction."

"Well there is that," Dave said cheering up slightly, "But what about the habit side of things?"

"We'll talk about that now if you like, so what do you actually know about habits then?"

"Not a lot really, I guess they are just things you get that used to doing they become part of your nature."

"Good answer, would you like to give me some examples to uphold your cause?"

"What me personally," Dave said and thought awhile, "Well good manners I suppose. I always open the door for others; it's just a reflex action I guess."

"That's not a habit as such though is it, as you said it's more of a reflex action?"

Dave thought some more and said, "Well I don't know then, the only habit I would say I had was smoking."

"And do you think that it is a habit?"

"You said that it was."

"I was just bringing it up for discussion," Zelda said with a laugh, "To some people you see it is. They'll have a cigarette after a meal kind of thing. You though believe it or not are not a creature of habit."

"I'm not, so how come I have a cigarette first thing in the morning."

"Well 8 hours sleep is a long time away from a cigarette, as is two hours between breaks."

"Oh so it's not a habit to me then."

"No, with your restless nature and constant changing of jobs your life never falls into a solid routine. I wouldn't think you'd find it difficult to quit once the addiction is finished."

"Really."

"Yes, you shouldn't be pestered now and as I've said once the cravings subside you'll think no more about it."

"So what was all the fuss about the raisins then it sounds like I won't need them."

"They might be worth a chew now and again. They're a lot healthier than sweets I can tell you."

"And these cravings, how long will they last?"

"A few days, no more, you can stop whenever you want," and disappeared.

When Two Worlds Collide

1. Woke up this morning with an aching head
Found a woman beside me sleeping in my bed,
I'm sure I don't know her yet I guess we must have met
And if you thing that strange it gets better yet.

Chorus Get a pint of snakebite and drink it through a straw
Then tote yourself a spliff and be heavy on the draw,
Then a Gold Label with Southern Comfort mixed
Then repeat the process until you get transfixed.

2. I studied her intently, well as much as I could
For with the hangover I had my senses they were dud,
A lot of painful thinking but no progress I could make
Though I'd get my answer soon as she started to wake.

3. She opened her eyes and said, "Never again
What a state to get in this head is giving pain,
Where the hell am I, God I need the loo"
Then she looked at me and said, "who the @#?@ are you?"

4, Well what could I tell her, where was my escape
If I wasn't careful she might have me up for rape,
I don't remember anything, why was I so porous
You want to make the same mistake get back to the chorus.

The Key

1. What rational, what majesty has caused this evolution
Selected breeding's well and good but it's hardly the solution,
If Natural selection was the key what animal could turn it?
Think it through you know I'm right, my logic you won't spurn it,
Long term planning to such degree it's beyond our understanding
What animal could master it, he'd find it too demanding.

Chorus The gangling giraffe to reach tall trees in neck he has a surplus
Evolution is not sporadic it was put there with a purpose,
Mother Nature holds the key but what exactly is she
The Collective Soul is what I've got but I guess its wait and see,

2. Camouflage, mass migration and adaption to the environment
Hibernation, the hunt for food these points will not relent,
Nature's too complicated to be pigeon holed that way
No Natural Selection maybe true but it has too little say,
What animal in consciousness could make its own decision?
Afraid with Natural Selection it's open to derision.

3. So it not Natural Selection it must be an outside force
One that has the big picture and guides the animal's course,
Sometimes for generation for the animals must evolve
And it might take many lifetimes for the problem to resolve,
Come to understanding our ignorance stands tall
Yet we in our arrogance think we know it all.

A Site for Sore Eyes

1. The majestic tree with outstretched branch to capture light
The fleeting hares hop and jump as they like to fight,
The lush green grass in the wind looks like waves
The sharp grey squirrel collecting acorns which it saves,
The buttercup and dandelion brighten the place
Many facets, many things all with nature's face.

Chorus Look around the world and take in all its charm
See the natural beauty, Mother Nature's farm,
Watch the earth in growth, appease you heart
For all this is a building site of which you are a part.

2. The leaping frog into the water makes a splash
The king fisher racing past at quite a dash,
The graceful swan gliding by somehow aloof
The water vole swimming by on the rivers roof,
Fish abound jumping up to capture flies
Everything just fits in place, it all has ties,

3. The little robin looking around in search of worms
The starling and the nightingale on the same terms,
The sparrow and the house martin alight the sky
The eagle and the sparrow hawk that fly so high,
Just look around and see real life for what it is
It's not man made its natural, a drink without the fizz.

The Dying Breed

1. My daddy always told me treat people with respect
Put others before yourself and never show neglect,
You should be a beacon for a selfless type of life
You'll find that come to living it will save a lot of strife,
I did not really take it on I thought his words insane
No good could ever come from it only mental pain.

Chorus Life today is a selfish thing no one is for giving
It seems to me it's take, take, take, that's the cost of living,
No one wants to give you aid all they do is frown
No it's even worse than that they'll kick you when you're down.

2. So his words of wisdom, well on me was thorny ground
I struggled on without them with logic that's unsound,
I tried to be like others cold and just self seeking
What I had was mine and I was all for keeping.
Yet it never gave me happiness just an empty feeling
In fact it got so bad his words they seemed appealing.

3. Eventually I wised up and saw the sense in what he said
I'd had enough of selfishness and dismissed it from my head,
I made the conscious decision to follow his advice
I vowed that from now on I would lead a selfless life,
Sure I look around me, get disheartened with what I find
But that's their choice of living, I want peace of mind.

The Enchanted Forest

1. There's a place not far from me where magic's all around
It's a great green forest where nature's to be found,
It looks to me primeval, unspoilt by human hand
Shrouded deep in mystery, a supernatural land,
Come to man's imagination legend has its place
For this enchanted forest can have a nasty face.

Chorus Never enter a forest especially after dark
For you might find yourself in conditions stark,
Sure you might escape them but I think you'll find
That once you leave the place you'll be out your mind.

2. They say that many years ago the forest was defiled
Tainted by a virgin's blood, a sacrificial child,
It was a pagan ceremony, an appeasement so they thought
But instead they cursed the land, the forest became fraught,
Ghosts and goblins everywhere, witches ran the show
The forest was a nasty place, one you would not go.

3. Many people disappeared, never seen again
The forest once a vibrant place now became a pain,
Stories sprang up every where it became a place of woe
A place encased in evil, it became an ardent foe,
I guess they were just stories, imagination running wild
For I often went there, especially as a child.

Nursery Crimes

1. When I was younger I believed what was said
No matter the context it went straight in my head,
I took it on board and thought it was true
And from this situation my ignorance grew,
The canons I followed well they were just lies
And whilst I kept them I would never get wise.

Chorus When you talk to children never steer them wrong
For you have an influence, one that's very strong,
They take it all as gospel for they know no better
So instead of freeing their mind you actually are a fetter.

2. Now I am older I can think for myself
You'd think that by now I'd find mental health,
But things they have told me still have a place
They distort my perceptions for they are the base,
They affect understanding and I mean by a lot
For they are my basis they're all that I got.

3. So think what you say when you talk to a child
Don't talk through prejudice or it will end up defiled,
Always show goodness and speak with the truth
For you are its teacher, its guide through youth,
You are responsible, a burden to bear
You are the example to show how to care.

The Philosopher Stoned

1. David Johnson liked a smoke to help him contemplate
He'd dwell on Esoteric things especially on Fate,
He'd yearn to know what life's about, try to find his Self
He thought its understanding would promote his Mental Health,
He covered many topics for he had a restless mind
Anything to null the pain to ease this mortal bind.

Chorus You want that Peace of Mind go and roll a joint
Don't let it take control though or you'll lose the point,
Master it with strength of mind and you'll fill a void
But if you're not strong enough you'll get paranoid.

2. He'd think about the Higher Truths the purpose to our being
And get a deeper meaning, life was there for seeing,
He'd look into the spiritual to try and grow in peace
And fight the inner demon so restlessness might cease,
He was after spiritual expansion and purity of the Soul
And he thought that cannabis would help him with this role.

3. But he found to his cost that the drug was stronger
Any progress that he made was fleeting nothing longer,
Sure he had profound thoughts but they would not last
By the time they'd come to Earth they'd already passed.
So basically it was a waste, knowledge was just lost
Think about it should you smoke, is it worth the cost.

The Rogue Gene

1. When I was younger I lived life to excess
I drank whiskey like water with no fear of redress,
I seemed to court trouble where ever I went
I needed an outlet, my spleen I would vent,
I wasn't a nice man of that have no doubt
My temper controlled me there was anger about.

Chorus Life is for living well that's what they say
Enjoy it more fully for that is the way,
Life is a challenge so seek and you'll find
It's only through struggle that you find peace of mind.

2. As time progressed though I found a wife
She kept me from trouble and calmed all the strife,
She gave me a purpose her bidding I'd serve
And to her greatest honour my loyalty won't swerve,
She calmed my foul temper took my anger away
Replaced it with love, a much gentler sway.

3. Now I am older with kids of my own
Time just flew by and quickly they've grown,
I see myself in them when I was a lad
So I pray to the Good Lord they won't always be bad,
Yes times gone full circle with re-enactment scenes
I've come to the conclusion that it's in the genes.

Time, a Harbinger of Doom

So the end of time then and didn't it just go so quickly. One minute you're sitting down, just kicking back and eating a water melon in the Garden of Eden and then suddenly it's all over. And what does it mean? Well the Earth will still go around the Sun and the Moon will still go around the Earth so it must be Man's time that is coming to an end. Are all the clocks and watches suddenly going to disappear? No, well not quite anyway, what actually is going to happen is that Man is going to evolve to non existence. Falling birth rates will make society as we know it unsustainable, that's the long term progression but other factors will accelerate our demise. Now before I go into these other factors I had better dwell a little while on the falling birth rate. At this present moment in time there are more people on Earth then there have ever been and people are even worried that we will have insufficient resources to feed them. How does that equate with a falling birth rate? Well it doesn't unless you want to clutch at a straw and say that nature regulates its litters to suit its environment but I don't really want to do that as that only really works between a predator and prey ratio. No Man at this moment is at the pinnacle of his evolution. On the karmic wheel he's at the top but if everyone was to wake up sterile tomorrow within a hundred years there would not be a man, woman or child left on this planet. Impossible true but it is a statement of fact. I said impossible before because nature has to evolve to its purpose. Overall the sperm count has fallen quite dramatically already. That will be the main cause of the decline but there are also other contributory factors. People are making the conscious decision to have fewer children for either economic reasons or career decisions and though at the moment this is the main reason as the sperm count falls further it will take over as the paramount cause. Across western civilisation we have seen quite dramatic falls already. Britain has come down from a nuclear family of 2.4 to 1.6 and Italy is hovering around 1.1. I do not have information on other countries but if it happens in some countries you can guarantee it is happening across the whole sphere.

So onto other factors. Pestilence, well aids to be precise. Africa has taken the brunt of it with very high percentage rates but as aids is pretty much incurable it is only a matter of time. Now I am no scientist so I hold my hands up in ignorance but I would have thought that a mutating disease was actually an evolving one. Taking it a little hop it has to evolve for a purpose but we'll skip that and jump to the conclusion that it will end up viral. To discuss this in detail would get us well off track but basically I'm saying everything evolves to a pinnacle and a diseases most advance way to spread is to become viral and given a sporting chance it will do this.

Famine, though with the high obesity rates amongst westerners you'd be surprised. Our world is overpopulated and its resources are starting to dwindle. The fish in the sea would be a prime example as would the disappearing rain forest. We are losing more and more land to desert and once lost it can never be regained. The rain forest would be a good example of this as the soil acquired by chopping down trees because of its poor quality quickly turns to dust. Now famine comes in two forms, human famine for example when a man holds back food and lets his people starve or man made when he just hasn't the space to cover his appetite but the outcome's still the same. The seven fat camels eat the seven thin camels and we still have room for war. Over consumption by certain countries will lead to safe guarding of the Earth's natural resources, oil for example, fishing rights would be another. The mass scrambling to safeguard the precious supplies will inevitably lead to war and further population culling. And finally death if we don't wise up. So onto time then, what have we learned? Nothing, well perhaps how to tell it, now where did I put that watch?

Update to falling sperm count- From 1972 it was recorded that the sperm rate was falling at 1.18 % a year up until the year 2000 when it increased to 2.54%. In 2012 it was said the Man had lost 60% though with the increase in rate every 4 years after it has reduced another 10%. They said that Man would be sterile by 2040 but at the rate of decline its more likely 2028.

Delusions of Ganga - The Gospel according to St. Steven

The world is divided into smokers and chokers. The former inhale and take in its goodness whilst the latter cough up on the exhaled remains. Sounds simplistic I know but life was never meant to be difficult, it is only the chokers of the world that perceive it so. In their ignorance they divide the world into rich and poor, black and white and a myriad of other material diversities for they believe that matter matters while the smokers prefer the mind. I used to be a choker until I met Mary-Anna and then changed my mind; you see that's all it is a state of mind.

Having established it as a state of mind I guess my next step would be to actually quantify it and then get rid of the opposition so to speak. Now to truly understand this concept you have to inhale, well contemplate for that smoke is spiritual wisdom and its goodness is power to your understanding. So a smoker would be a spiritualist in the true sense of the word i.e. either a person embarked on a singular path to enlightenment or guided by the burning bush or a person embarked on a group path to enlightenment or taking refuge in the solid and a choker would be a materialist in every sense of the word. The exhaled remains would be perceptions of wisdom devoid of goodness and why they cough up is because it chokes their spirit. So to put it in a nutshell the smoker believes in a Soul whilst the choker does not. And why does this transcend all the other divisions in importance? It does because enlightenment is reason to your existence, it is central to your evolution. In fact I would go further and say that it is the purpose of your evolution so its importance lasts for more than one lifetime, it lasts for eternity. The standard of your living and the colour of your skin may vary with each lifetime but your purpose remains the same even if you are not aware of it. I would like to point out that this is not a religious concept for you can believe in God and still be a choker for it is the belief in the Soul that is the lynch pin.

Perhaps you are reading this and wondering how to get this state of mind. Well to become a smoker takes a choker seven steps.

1Go out and get an ashtray-or to put it another way to admit to yourself that you could turn into a smoker, if not now maybe at a later date. When you get this ashtray you start to take on a new type of lifestyle and as if by magic, well fatal intervention, you find yourself in situations where friendships with smokers can occur.

2Go out and get a lighter-You're still not a smoker but should your new friends want a light you will be up to the job. In other words you start to develop an imagination to help you understand what they are actually talking about.

3Go out and get some tobacco-You read up about it for yourself for tobacco is knowledge.

4Go out and get some Rizzlas -Something to hold the tobacco together You start to make sense of it all and develop some understanding and so want to take it further.

5Look for a safe place to smoke-It could be a church, it could be a circle, it matters little it's just a place where like minded people can meet in a community.

6Meet the dealer-Mary-Anna, the Holy Spirit. Mary symbolic of the virgin Mary or to put it another way a pure Soul and Anna standing for God's light, light of God or divine knowledge and knowledge of the divine merged together as loving spiritual wisdom and spiritual wisdom.

7Make a joint-Basically this means cross referencing different esoteric schools of thought and finding a common thread.

Smoking!!!!

A FINAL THOUGHT-I used to have delusions of grandeur but I'm above that sort of thing now

Mack and Wellies- The Labourer.

1 On the things for which men and especially labourers are praised or blamed.

It now remains to be considered the technique and manners a labourer should adopt to both his work and the people that work around him. A little written about subject I know but one that is close to my heart and hopefully beneficial to the understanding reader. Though little has been written a lot has been surmised about the poor and humble labourer therefore I intend to go behind the imaginings and focus on the actual truth. Much of this supposition came from ignorance or arrogance and since the distance between it and the truth of the matter is so great he who discards what he does to adopt the false mantle usually falls into ruin and forsakes his purpose. The labourer as a class covers many aspects of industry but I intend to use the builder's labourer as my illustration. I had better point out that I mean a builder's general labourer (site labourer) here not to be confused with a bricklayer's labourer or an electrician or plumber's mate. A builder's general labourer's duty is to maintain the site cleanliness and to supply the trades with their material. That is his job description and on that he is judged for I maintain that all men when talked about and especially labourers since their work is more exposed are judged on their various qualities which bring them either praise or blame. For some are considered industrious whilst others indolent. Some are considered humble, others meek, some trustworthy whilst others if you ask them to do something you may as well do it yourself and some punctual whilst others tardy. Some shun working in the rain and frost whilst others are more hardened to the elements. Some find solace in the shovel whilst others the bottle. Some level the ground whilst others the site manager and so on. I realise that everyone will admit that it would be commendable to find all the good qualities above combined in a labourer but the frailty of human nature makes for a virtue one day and then a vice the next so a labourer must be prudent when his state of mind falls to vice and avoid the stigma that would deprive him of a good reputation. He should never fall down to Monday morning syndrome nor should he let his personal life's emotions interfere with his work.

2 On industry and indolence.

Let me begin therefore with the first of the qualities mentioned above .I maintain that it would be good to be considered industrious and indolence should not be a word in the labourer's vocabulary. Having said that labourer should be wary of other people's indolence and the concept known as 'taking liberties'. His purpose is to maintain the craftsman in materials so he can achieve his purpose and clean up after him. Nowhere in his job description should he make the tea, fetch the sandwiches or generally wet nurse the craftsman. If out of the goodness of his nature he chooses to do it that's his choice but I strongly warn him that he might find himself in the Soul destroying role as a doormat with little time and less inclination to uphold his true purpose.

3 On humility and meekness and whether it is better to be respected than 'dissed'

Passing down the list of qualities I maintain that each labourer should desire to be thought humble and not meek. To those that cannot discern the difference I will bring it down to Earth. Humility is when you lose your ego and truly become part of the job. To do this you have to understand the job and by that I mean its various stages of development and who is doing what and their whereabouts on the site. You might not be able to hear the drop of that fabled pin but you must know where it landed. When you see the site as a big picture you take a fresh interest in it and develop a purpose so intense that the job becomes a vocation and the time at work goes quickly. Meekness on the other hand is more akin to timidity. It is self conscious fear no less and grows stronger as your self esteem diminishes, with every undefended slight and act of disrespect a sapping of your self esteem may occur and if left unchecked it tends to escalate to the stage that work becomes an ordeal and not a pleasure. When shown respect on the other hand though you tend to grow in self esteem and find a sense of self worth. With this in mind I would say that it is better to be respected than 'dissed'

and you should try and cultivate respect whilst simultaneously challenge acts of disrespect either to your person or your ability to do your work.

4 Whether labourers should keep their word

It is well understood how praiseworthy it is for a labourer to keep his word and live with honesty instead of cunning. It might be argued that those who have little respect for keeping their word and know how to confuse men's minds with cunning will overcome those who have preferred honesty and there is ample evidence of this supposition. I would refute this though for it is the mark of a politician and has no place in a labourer's job description. In the day to day running of the job he should shun the politics for it distracts him from his purpose. He is not the contracts manager trying to get the job done as cheaply as possible nor is he the tradesman vying with the other trades for the precedence of his job. His motivational force is the job itself and this transcends cost and petty power struggles. The deviousness of his fellow men should have little interest to him and he should never let it affect his peace of mind. A labourer should never give his word unless he fully intends to keep it.

5 On avoidance of contempt and hatred

With the main qualities discussed I would briefly like to consider the next two under this general heading. The labourer as hinted in the title should avoid anything that will bring him contempt and hatred. He should never arrive late for work as that is a sure fire way to be held in contempt. His contempt for the rules brings contempt on himself for there is nothing as worthless as an unreliable labourer. Neither should this self same labourer cower to the elements for this could bring charges of effeminacy and with it contempt. He should welcome the challenge and invest in a Mackintosh and a pair of Wellingtons for building is not cricket, rain never stops a labourer's play. The labourer who earns the reputation as a good reliable worker is held in high esteem amongst his fellow workers. It is difficult to conspire against and attack such a person when they are esteemed for they have the people's good will in their favour. Any would be conspirator would be openly derided and accused of having a motivational force derived from jealousy and dismissed with the contempt he tried to foster in others.

6 On manual work and whether it is useful or useless

In this section I would like to extol the virtue of manual work in general and heavy physical work in particular. Some people perceive it to be beneath them though you generally find that their motivational force is sloth not pride it's just their cunning nature at work. Manual work is not beneath anyone as we are all equal in the eyes of Mother Nature. Manual work is an integral part of our nature; we were created to tend the land so when we uphold our purpose we derive a sense of fulfilment for we are serving a purpose. This fulfilment can only be achieved through serving a purpose and other methods can not compensate for lack of purpose. No amount of alcohol can fill this void so it is just a waste of time. Moreover a hungover labourer is quite a cantankerous chap who should be avoided like the plague. Heavy physical work is even more virtuous for it keeps you in shape and channels any aggression that might lead you to harm. A healthy body has to be balanced with a healthy mind and heavy manual work can help you achieve it, in fact it was made for the job.

7 How a labourer should act in order to gain reputation.

Nothing makes a labourer more highly esteemed than the assumption of great undertakings and striking examples of his own strength. No pile of dirt is too large to be barrowed nor any wood too heavy to carry. That is what he should strive for and not the misguided assumption of being a hard drinking, fighting man. He should also have the discernment to know what materials could be discarded and what should be saved for strength without wisdom is the domain of the animal and the labourer though thought of as little more than an animal should in actuality be thought of as a deep thinking self reliant man.

8 On the labourers that work with the labourer.

A labourer has little choice over who is allocated to share the burden of work with him so this is more of a damage limitation exercise than anything else. Generally speaking I recommend that you carry your own weight and nothing more. It is not your place to give orders nor is it your place to check up on the work of other labourers. That is the general rule but from time to time exceptions might arise. If the other labourer's work is interlinked with yours his vices may reflect into your virtues and it could even dampen your reputation. This should be avoided at all costs so a quiet word may be in order to set the record straight.

9 How boredom is avoided.

At certain times of the job you may run out of work and when this happens the day seems to drag intolerably. Boredom can turn virtues into vices and so should be avoided at all costs. The only way to do this is to keep yourself busy but only with things that need to be done. I would not recommend sweeping a room you've cleared already for you'll arrive no sense of fulfilment from it. Moreover it will be done in a fraction of the time for you will only be going through the motions of the job. What I would recommend though would be to find out the tradesman's future needs and supply him in materials well in advance. This should keep you busy till work picks up once more.

10 Why labourers as a caste have never had status.

When Adam ploughed and Eve span who was then the gentleman.

Status is defined by gentlemen and usually in caste. Once the mould has been cast it cannot be broken though it can evolve so you think it so. The evolution of the labourer came from slavery turned into serfdom and came to fruition as the agency temp. A man that can be sold to an employer without a say. He signed it away in ignorance when he enrolled on the agency's books.

11 How much fortune can influence work and why it should be recognised.

Fate, as I call it surfaces at work in the form of sod's law. You walk down three flights of steps and go to the woodpile for a length of 2 by 2 only to find there was one in the very next room. That's its influence and recognising it could save you a lot of walking. If the labourer was doing his job properly he would find the pin for he would already know where it was.

12 An exhortation to remove status and free us from the stigma of being called a savage.

Time has moved on somewhat since the advent of the gentleman. He still has his power but now the labourer knows him for what he is. He is someone who lives of other people's sweat and any of his suppositions come from sloth for that is his true motivational force. Familiarity breeds contempt and education breeds insight so the days of the gentleman are pretty much numbered.