

POST CARD

Dear James

I'm sending you a
dream as you need
to write the story
of the Fitch House -
Yours Billy.

ENTER THE DRAGONS

A Billy Taylor Book

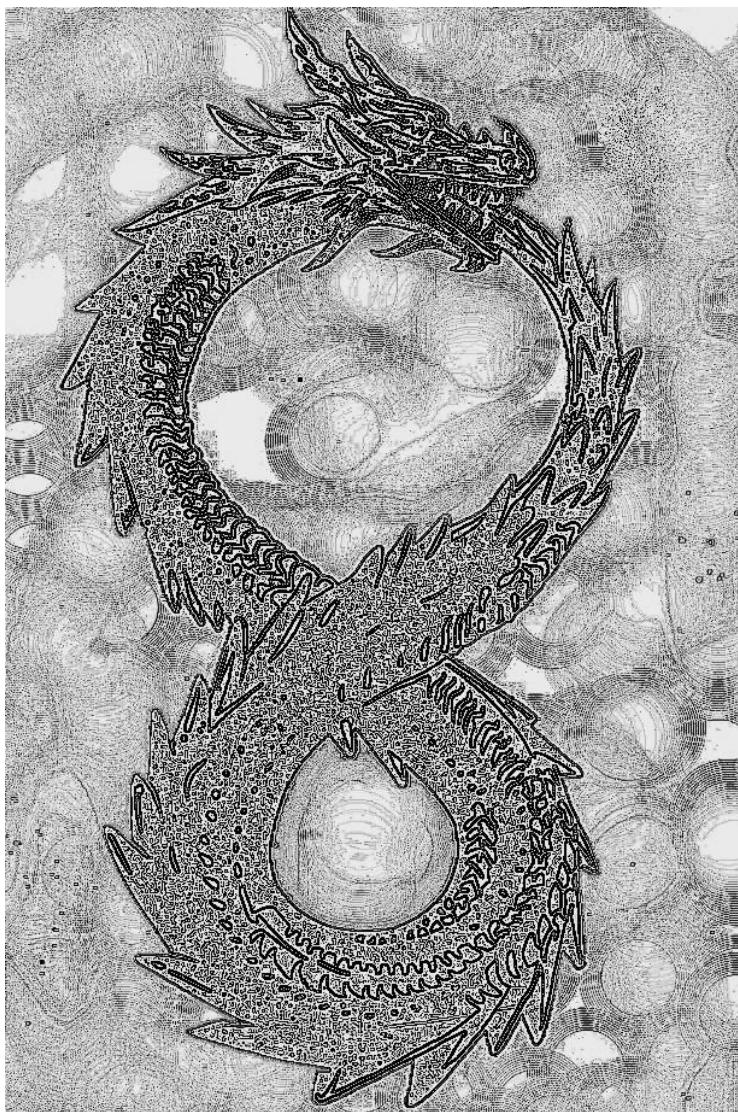
by James F. Whitehead

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This is the fifth book in the Billy Taylor series.

Material includes information both fictional and not from various sources including 'Billy', West Midlands Police, Wikipedia, and The Department of Comparative Religion, The University of Birmingham.

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

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

JFW.

CHAPTER I: MOUNT JUDD

Mount Judd is a man-made cone shaped hill and landmark in Nuneaton, Warwickshire, England. It was created by the spoil from the former Judkins granite quarry. A famous landmark in the area at 518 feet (158 metres).

From the north of the hill, it can be seen for many miles across the flat farmland of North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire which is crossed by the river Tame and the Coventry canal.

There is evidence of palaeolithic habitation in the surrounding area, with some worked stones being found nearby dating from 60,000 years ago. The area may have been used industrially by the Romans as some potential kiln sites have been identified. From the medieval period the site was largely used for agriculture. Quarrying of granite and the extraction of clay began on the site in the mid-18th century with the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. The site was served by the Coventry Canal and the railways which later became the Trent Valley and Birmingham, Peterborough lines. By the late 19th century brick, textiles and clothing factories occupied the area. The quarrying operation, Judkins Quarry, had expanded by the mid-20th century with large filter beds and a stone crushing plant in operation. Mount Judd was formed during this era as a conical-shaped spoil tip of unusable stone arising from the quarrying operation.

Mount Judd is also known as the “Nuneaton Nipple”. This reflects the shape of the mount and may be a derogatory term applied by residents of nearby Bedworth. It is the 16,403rd. highest peak in the British Isles and the 3,306th highest in England. Warwickshire County Council purchased the former

quarry for use as a landfill and it became the largest such site in Nuneaton. This use came to an end in the summer of 2009.

Mount Judd is renowned locally and it was usual for youths to climb to the top, being described as a “rite of passage”. The hill is privately owned and is fenced off, with access discouraged for health and safety reasons. Mount Judd was voted the United Kingdom's best landmark in a May 2018 poll by the Daily Mirror newspaper, beating competition from the Angel of the North in Gateshead, a sculpture by the celebrated artist Antony Gormley, and Stonehenge, a prehistoric megalithic site and famous stone circle on Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire, dating from 2300 BC or earlier. The poll remains live as of 2020 with Mount Judd as still the top landmark.

From certain views it resembles the famous extinct volcano of Mount Fuji in Japan.

CHAPTER II: THE MURDER OF MR ATKINS

Living in a semi-detached house on Tuttle Hill Nuneaton which has a view of Mount Judd, Mr and Mrs Atkins, Tom and Mary, were soon after their marriage 45 years ago never on good terms. Things grew worse after Tom's retirement from the railway. While Mr Atkins could garden the days were relatively passable, but not so once his back gave way. Often lying in bed at night Mrs Atkins, full of regret wished her husband dead. The regret being for her marrying him in the first place, and her life afterwards.

They had no children, and since Mr Atkins was effectively housebound Mrs Atkins had to put up with day on day of endless criticism from her husband, of the world, the country, of Nuneaton and especially of his wife. Her housework, her cooking, and any and everything else.

So, the night of the fire was the night her wish came true. At around eleven thirty on a clear night in late April there was a large bang as something smashed their bedroom window, a roar and a sheet of flame. Mrs Atkins screamed and ran from the bedroom in terror, leaving Mr Atkins in their still shared bed, but now Mr Atkins and his part of the bed mostly ash and cinders. Not knowing what to do Mrs Atkins stood in the open front doorway of the house screaming. That and the fire in the upstairs front bedroom soon woke neighbours, cars stopped on the road outside and within minutes police, ambulance and fire services were in attendance.

By now a calmer Mary Atkins was sitting on a chair in their small front garden sipping tea a neighbour had brought her. The firemen soon put out the flames but the site of the charred remains of Mr Atkins could not be accounted for.

Mary was taken to ‘The George Eliot’, Nuneaton’s hospital, named after one of the few famous personages from the town, or nearby.

George Eliot, AKA Mary Ann Evans, the famous novelist and poet was from South Farm on the Arbury Hall estate in Nuneaton. After age sixteen her formal education ended, she did however have access to the library of Arbury Hall and so she could read extensively. The family leaving Nuneaton to move to Coventry when she was aged 21. Here she met Charles and Cara Bray. Charles Bray had become rich as a ribbon manufacturer, and the people whom the young woman met at the Bray’s house included Robert Owen, Herbert Spencer, Harriet Martineau, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Through this society Evans was introduced to more liberal and agnostic theologies and to writers such as David Strauss and Ludwig Feuerbach. She travelled to Switzerland with the Brays, returning to London in 1850 with the intent of becoming a writer.

She also adopted a nom-de-plume, George Eliot, as she wanted to escape the stereotype of women's writing, it at that time being limited to light-hearted romances, and not to be taken very seriously. In 1857, at 37 years of age, “The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton”, the first work of George Eliot, was published in Blackwood's Magazine and was well received.

Now in the George Eliot Hospital Mary Atkins was unconscious, asleep having been sedated. Meanwhile the semi-detached house where Mr Atkins had been incinerated was now considered a possible crime scene, and a very strange one, as expert fire offices and SOCO (Scene of Crime

Officers) reported. It was several passing motorists who first alerted these officers to something else. One such parking his car and shouting to a constable outside the house,

‘Hey mate, Mount Judd’s on fire!’

This created a new scene to be investigated. There was it seems a fire burning on the top of the spoil heap. Two firemen were first to reach the summit, or at least near to the summit.

‘It’s a crater...’ one said.

And it was, a crater with fire coming from it,

‘A F-ing volcano.’ said the other.

Similar conversations took place as police officers arrived, and quickly the summit was cordoned off.

The Warwickshire Police is the second smallest police force in England, the City of London Police being the smallest, with only around 1,000 officers. It was soon realised these two incidents were well beyond its resources. The West Midlands Police Force being its big neighbour of around 8,000 officers and some very specialised units, only the MET, the Metropolitan Police Service of London, being larger, much larger. WMP were soon involved.

By morning the crater was only emitting smoke, and specialised units from Llyod House, the HQ of the West Midlands Police Force had arrived. They too were however unable to offer explanation. The remains of Mr Atkins had been removed to The University of Birmingham’s advanced pathology unit. Here it was established that the body of Mr Atkins had been subject to temperatures in excess of over 1,000° Celsius,

‘Possibly hot enough to melt steel!’

Dr Arshdeep Singh head of the unit had reported. Other ‘experts’ from the university added that it seems impossible that,

‘One, half the bed was still intact, and two, that Mrs Atkins was alive, being in close proximity to such heat.’

This was seemingly something that could not be rationally or scientifically explained. Eventually Chief Superintendent White was contacted, being at home in Tanworth in Arden, on leave, but contacted by the acting deputy after some hours of indecision. Not so the Chief, the call was made, that call in these situations.

CHAPTER III: THE VICAR OF ARLEY

The Reverend Lisa Phillips was not the vicar of Arley, that is Old, Arley and New Arley, two ex-mining villages in North Warwickshire, her base was the church in Fillongley, and she was Vicar also to Ansley, Astely, Galley Common and Furnace End, or rector in the case of Arley. Vicars tend to be associated with churches once part of a monastery, hence the term, to be an interface between the clergy and the lay people, the priests were called “rectors” where no such interface was required.

Lisa Phillips was well known to both forces, Warwickshire and The West Midlands, a celebrity, as she was responsible for solving a particularly difficult murder in Fillongley involving the use of a poisonous mushroom, Deadly Webcap, *Cortinarius rubellus*. The onset of illness from eating this can be delayed for up to two weeks, and the fungus can easily be mistaken for the edible Chanterelle. The active agent in Deadly Webcap being the chemical orellanine.

The first symptoms of orellanine poisoning are similar to the common flu, nausea, vomiting, stomach pains, headaches, myalgia, etc., these symptoms are followed by early stages of renal / kidney failure, with immense thirst, frequent urination, pain on and around the kidneys, and eventually decreased or nonexistent urine output as well as the other symptoms of kidney failure. If left untreated death will follow, and there is no known antidote against orellanine poisoning. That the Rev Lisa Phillips knew about this fungus was because she is a keen amateur mycologist, and her brother the well-known professional mycologist.

The case concerned one of her parishioners, Pam, who had died of renal failure shortly before she was about to marry a widower in his 50s, she being in her late 60s. She had died ten days after being visited by a nephew who lived in France. He was her heir or would be until the marriage. The Reverend had visited Pam well before her sudden illness to discuss the wedding, and in passing Pam had mentioned a meal of Chanterelle mushrooms her nephew had cooked for her. So, Lisa knowing of the link between the similarity of Chanterelle with Cortinarius rubellus and its toxicity had involved the police. The nephew was duly arrested in France, deported and convicted in the UK.

The Reverend Lisa Phillips was also a keen historian, especially of the local industries, not only the Judkins quarry, but the brickworks and coal mines of the area. Her involvement with the Warwickshire force and the West Midlands Police meant she was well known to them. So, when one Billy Taylor, who had received the call, from the Chief, asked about any locals who knew of the industrial heritage of the area, her name and telephone number was given.

‘Reverend Lisa Phillips, a Reverend and a dragon, interesting.’ he thought. And another thought was why had this thought struck him as particular. [And why he didn’t connect this with The Revelation of St. John the Divine.]

So, Billy telephoned the Reverend Lisa Phillips from his home in Woodbridge Suffolk before travelling to the midlands. He said he was to help with the enquiry regarding the events on Tuttle hill, she was well aware of these. He then asked if she knew much of the old industries, obviously the Judkins quarry and the site of the hill and fire were significant. She asked him

to wait a minute to check her notes in order not to miss anything.

She began, 'The coal mines or 'pits' in the area, well, Alvecote, Amington, Ansley Hall, Arley, Baddesley, Birch Coppice, Charity Collieries, Bedworth, Coventry Colliery, Keresley, Daw Mill- the last to close, Exhall, Glascote, Griff Colliery Co. Ltd, Chilvers Coton, Haunchwood Collieries Co. Ltd, Hawkesbury, Hockley Hall, Kingsbury, Mount Pleasant Colliery, Bedworth, Newdigate - closed 1982, Pooley Hall Colliery Co. Ltd. Polesworth, Stockingford Colliery.

I've fairly detailed notes on these, and plans, and those many of those that link, or linked underground.

As for quarries, Boon's Windmill Hill Quarry, William Griffiths Granite Quarries, Jeas Stone Quarry, Judkins Ltd. Tuttle Hill Granite Quarries- obviously your main interest, Man-Abell Quarries at Mancetter, and the Midland Quarry, Tuttle Hill.

Brick and Tile works, perhaps not of particular interest, Charity Banks Brickworks, Collycroft Colliery & Brickworks, Haunchwood Brick & Tile Co. Ltd., Stockingford, Jeas Brickyard & Morewood Stone Works, Stanley Brothers Ltd., Stockingford, Whateley Brick & Pipe Works.'

She finished, there was a long pause, Billy thinking,

'And I asked If she knew much of the old industries!' then Billy spoke,

'I'm going to investigate the scene at Judkins quarry, would you like to accompany me?'

She replied she very much would. Billy had been given the address of the office at the recycling centre, so he asked if she

could meet him there tomorrow around midday, he had to travel up by train. She agreed.

CHAPTER IIII: OF DRAGONS

At Woodbridge after supper Billy Taylor had a discussion with Professor Catherine Mulberry about dragons. Billy shared a large Georgian House with the professor who had been a long-time platonic friend. She, like Billy, also having an interest in comparative religions and such, in her capacity of director of the faculty for the study of Comparative Religion at The University of Birmingham, but she was now in semi-retirement.

They were in the shared kitchen, sat around a large pine table and drinking red wine.

‘Speak.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

Which woke Billy out of his reverie.

‘Dragons.’ he said.

‘What of them?’ was the response.

‘I think the incident in Nuneaton was the result of a dragon.’ was Billy’s reply.

Catherine Mulberry did not respond with a ‘don’t be ridiculous’ but with, ‘And.’

Billy began,

‘I think a dragon was conjured, a dragon from the spoil hill, now a volcano, though...’

Then added underneath is breath, ‘yes maybe very much conjured, as in a conjuring trick, by who I do not know, and why I do not know.’

Catherine Mulberry was listening attentively.

‘I heard that, a conjuring trick, explain please.’ she said

‘You won’t like it,’ he began, ‘like in the Eve Sharif affair...’

She interrupted, ‘No I won’t!’

‘Well,’ he continued, ‘as in the affair an artist thought he was fabricating devils, and he was, but in fact there were actual devils who didn’t appreciate this, and your suicide, sorry you overheard.’

‘So, there are or is a fake dragon, but you think also a real one?’ she asked.

‘Something like that, and as before not a devil, but devils, and this time not one dragon but many, though maybe one in particular to begin, so yes dragons, fake and real, and the real...’

‘An Instinct for Dragons, the anthropologist David E. Jones.’

interrupted Catherine Mulberry, who took over,

‘The fear of snakes, yes, linked perhaps to humans, like monkeys, have inherited instinctive reactions to snakes, large cats, and birds of prey. The things dwelling in dark places, but more importantly the myths are deep.

The Egyptian Apep who Ra the sun god does battle, and Nehebkau on whose coils rest the Earth, but more like Denwen whose body was made of fire? And then there is the ouroboros serpent swallowing its own tail, but we won’t go there.’

‘Or alchemy.’ said Billy.

‘We have references to dragons which are both benevolent and malevolent in Mesopotamian literature and Sumerian poetry, and of course Tiamat, the Babylonian goddess personifying primeval chaos...’

She continued, to be interrupted by Billy,

‘Slain by Marduk in the Babylonian creation myth.’

‘Perhaps more importantly Yahweh's destruction of Leviathan in Abrahamic religious texts at work in the western consciousness.’

she continued,

‘As well as in Zoroastrianism and Sufi literature...’

‘And China of course.’ interrupted Billy.

‘Yes, many East Asian deities and demigods have dragons as their personal mounts or companions. Dragons were also identified with the Emperor of China, a dragon being the highest-ranking creature in the Chinese animal hierarchy.’

continued Catherine Mulberry only to be interrupted,

‘Yes, dragons in Japanese, Vietnamese and other cultures, the Greek hydra and Typhon. But it's in the New Testament and Revelations that we have a huge impact on our popular culture.

The Great Red Dragon with seven heads, ten horns, seven crowns, and a massive tail, the war in heaven, the Great Dragon was thrown down, who is called Devil and Satan, the one deceiving the whole inhabited World.’ Billy added.

‘You are ignoring then Germanic and Norse myths?’ Catherine Mulberry asked?

‘Yes, I think in this case the dragon who is summoned is that of Revelations.’ said Billy,

‘So, I’m ignoring the symbolic dragons of Wales and Saint George. I think it’s in this case the idea of an evil which is other.’

‘Interesting.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

‘It’s a power from the land, but takes the form of a very obvious symbol, which works. But for now, I’m packing for my trip to the land of the dragon in North Warwickshire and meet a Vicar, or is she a Rector?’

All this time another at the table, Emily Clarke, had remained silent, she was a house guest staying in the cottage in the garden of Billy’s and Catherine Mulberry.

And so, Billy left the kitchen.

CHAPTER III: THE CRATER

Billy left early morning for the train from Woodbridge to Ipswich, from there to London Liverpool Street, taxi to Euston where he caught a Manchester train that would stop at Nuneaton. He had breakfast on the Manchester train.

Having pre booked a room in the Hilton Hampton Nuneaton, and for the room to be ready late morning. This gave him time to settle in before getting a taxi at midday to the police scene of crime office at Tuttle Hill. The old quarry was no longer used as a waste disposal site, but it still had an office building.

For some time now Billy had been an advisor for Hollywood studios making films related to myths, and one such based on the native North American Indian Cahokia civilization had grossed many millions and was an idea of Billy's. Thus, in line with the studios' image of an Englishman he now wore Anderson & Sheppard suits and John Lobb shoes. He also wore for this trip in early spring an Anthony Eden hat from Lock and Co, a Mackintosh by Francis Campelli, of Ireland, the colour in ink, and a Berluti leather travel bag. Which he was to find later was not the correct dress for a climb up mount Judd.

Outside the office were several police cars, some marked others not, and a land rover. Inside the office he was offered coffee which he refused and was introduced to the DCI and DS from Warwickshire Police and two "consultant" specialists from The West Midlands Police, and finally to Reverend Lisa Phillips. Each had given a look at Billy's attire, they were all dressed in suitable outdoor walking, if not climbing clothes, which was also how the Reverend was dressed, walking boots, and outdoor gear. She was probably in her early

thirties, shoulder length dark brown hair, a pleasant smile, or was it a grin at Billy's inappropriate dress.

Despite his attire Billy was able to climb to the top of the hill unaided. There the group of six looked down into what was a deep crater from which were still wisps of smoke rising. All were silent, then the DCI asked the question,

'Well, what made this?'

Almost from an automatic response Billy spoke,

'A dragon.'

The DCI grinned and checked with a question,

'A dragon?'

'Yes, a dragon.' was Billy's reply.

The DS laughed loudly, louder than his DCI who also laughed, the Reverend Lisa Phillips had a bemused and quizzical smile. The two "consultants" from WMP had straight faces, why, they had very unusually been summoned to the Chief Constables office, offered coffee, which of course they accepted, and told that this Billy person was to be taken very seriously with all respects, and that they should be prepared for "crazy". This was repeated several times.

Billy continued,

'The dragon was what killed Mr Atkins, just across the way there.'

He paused, the group looked across to where the line of semi-detached houses could be seen, and one probably where Mr Atkins was killed.

‘It’s interesting this landscape, deep,’

he was continuing almost talking to himself,

‘Over there the plain of the Trent, coal seams, strata, and the dragon, the Dragon in the pit, the coal seams, it’s almost as if someone is playing with us.’

He paused as if realising he had an audience,

‘The pit, so the dragon, yes the dragon from the book of revelation,’

He was ignoring the now quizzical looks,

‘a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. – it’s a reification, an idea made concrete.’

The others still speechless he continued,

‘So, let’s say for argument’s sake Mrs Atkins’ hatred finally caused it to materialise, and as a dragon from her psyche, the image maybe from long ago at Sunday school, of Satan, the Devil, the great red dragon and the pit.’

The faces of the others now not at all showing amusement, perhaps in some fear, he continued,

‘But how she acquired this power is very odd, but anyway if that’s the cause, it will ever be made public.’

He turned and began to walk down the hill, looking across to the north, still speaking perhaps to himself,

‘Something here, anyway this,’ he gestured to the crater, ‘will soon be gone.’

He took out something from the pocket of his Mackintosh, it was a small round lead ball on some line, a fisherman's ledger, the others watched on in fascination. It was a pendulum that Billy used for dowsing, originated in ancient times, a form of divination once banned by the church. It was, and still is typically used to find water, but it has other uses, can locate other substances or objects, or used to answer questions of yes/no by swinging either in a circle or straight line.

He looked over the landscape, the pendulum swinging back and forth, then he looked up into the sky, the pendulum slowly altered to a circular motion. He stopped the pendulum and put it back into his raincoat pocket saying,

'A pendulum, used for dowsing, and maybe it was not Mrs Atkins.' He again looked into the sky.

Back in the office the DCI was trying to arrange somehow to get down into the crater, the two consultants looking bemused.

'Reverend Phillips,' Billy was talking, 'I suspect the Land Rover is yours, could you possibly take me to some of those industrial sites you talked about?'

Not knowing what else to do or say, she said 'Yes.' and before anyone else could speak they had left the office and had driven off.

'It's Lisa, please' was the first thing she said whilst driving.

Then anticipating an unasked question Billy spoke,

'I don't know, I don't know how or why the poor woman's feelings should or could so materialise, but it's one possibility,

one of many, it is, well it is more complex, how things interrelate...’

‘One of many?’ asked Lisa.

‘Yes, it could have been a kind of suicide, death wish from Mr Atkins, or’, he paused looking up at the unseen sky, ‘from elsewhere, or?’ he stopped.

Billy talked, sometimes almost as if to himself,

‘Dragons are definitely involved, and those who do believe and those who don’t...’

So, he spoke as Lisa drove stopping at sites of what were once coal mines and quarries, she just providing names. Some, most, a brown field wilderness, a few having more recent industrial units.

Billy was again speaking his thoughts,

‘We have the sandstone and granite, the coal measures, strata, and the plain of the Trent. There is power and conflict, power and conflict.’

Finally, Lisa said at the last site, which was Arley,

‘Well, that’s the tour, hope it was of use, I’ll take you back to Nuneaton now, unless you want coffee or tea, I have a house here, the old schoolhouse, we could...’

‘Yes, that would be fine.’ Billy said.

Back in the schoolhouse they made light conversation about their histories, Billy looking at the books, obviously theological and then some mycological, fungi.

‘I see you’re interested in fungi.’ Billy said.

‘Yes, my brother is something of an expert, but I take a keen interest,’

she not mentioning her solving a murder case from knowing about mycology,

‘It’s fantastic how the hidden mycelium mats come together to form a fruit body.’

she paused,

‘Just like reification I suppose,’ she said slowly, ‘do you think?’

‘Yes.’ was Billy’s reply.

Nothing much more of significance was said, the Reverend taking Billy back to his hotel. That evening he ate out, at an Indian restaurant, a king prawn jalfrezi, one of the best he had ever had, and slept well, unlike the Reverend Lisa Phillips.

CHAPTER ### I: DRAGONS CLAW

The next day Billy had a call from Lisa Phillips, he had given her his number, well in the morning she found it written on a piece of paper next to her phone,

‘My number is.... just in case’.

The case was the Reverend had not slept well, if at all, such that the ‘red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads’ was in her dreams and waking thoughts.

‘Of course we can talk, I’m supposed to be leaving, but anticipate this kind of thing, yes you can come over and see me at the hotel, sure around eleven.’

Whilst Billy was at breakfast he was joined by a now serious looking DCI and his DS, the DCI spoke,

‘You were right, the crater is now just a dip, we had lined up some potholers to check it out, but now no point, just thought you should know.’

‘And by tomorrow there will be no trace at all I suspect.’ said Billy.

‘And,’ continued the DCI, ‘Mrs Atkins has left hospital and gone to Brighton, of all things to stay with a niece. Not that we can arrest her for conjuring up a dragon.’

No laugh this time,

‘So unsolved.’ He finished, then added, ‘oh and the doctor said she had muttered the word dragon a few times in her sleep.’ and he gave a bemused look.

At eleven Lisa Phillips arrived and they had, in her case coffee, in Billy's sparkling water, in the hotel lounge.

After some pleasantries Billy asked, or rather stated as he does,

'So, you dreamt about the red dragon, and then this morning saw marks.'

Lisa, 'How, how do you.... yes marks, scratches...'

'Claw marks.' interrupted Billy, 'you want to show me, OK, let's go.'

So, they drove back to Arley, as they did Lisa spoke, looking at Billy's suit,

'You're not really dressed for this; I'll take you to Jacksons first.'

'Jacksons?' said Billy.

'Yes, a renowned camping store in Old Arley.'

It took Billy only 15 minutes to select Jack Wolfskin Men's Go Hike Waterproof Jacket Phantom, Jack Wolfskin Men's Horizon Fleece Jacket, Regatta Men's Highton Winter Lined Walking Trousers in Black, Merrell Men's Moab 3 Apex MID WP Walking boots. Sealskinz Runton Waterproof Cold Weather Socks, and gloves, hat and a walking stick.

He told the assistant he would be wearing these as he had unexpectedly been asked to go hiking and hadn't brought his hiking gear. So, he left Jacksons of Old Arley ready to hike. Lisa thinking to herself, 'Does he just pick the most expensive things?' Which he always did.

‘I get paid for by a company or companies I do work for.’ he said.

They parked at Lisa’s house, then began their short walk, a footpath across the playing field of Arc School Arley, once Herbert Fowler Middle school, now an independent school providing specialist education. From the field the footpath led downhill across pasture to a ford and footbridge across Bourne Brook.

‘It’s a regular walk of mine.’ Lisa was saying, ‘It clears my head, but this morning here I noticed this.’

She had now followed the brook to where it had twisted and cut into the sandstone, almost like a small cave, the inside of which now showed clear deep scratches.

Billy looked, gave a slight smile and said,

‘Maybe a dragon, but not Mrs Atkin’s, this is no evil thing.’

‘How would you know?’ asked the Reverend Lisa Phillips.

‘Just take your glove off and touch.’

She did, ‘And how do you feel?’ asked Billy.

‘Calm, good.’ came the reply, she turned and said,

‘OK, do you know what’s going on?’

Billy looked around him,

‘I like this landscape, not like the Trent valley, this is gentle yet strong, and no, I don’t know, but I guess I need to stay at the hotel so I can try to find out. I’ll phone for a taxi.’

They began the walk back, ‘I’ll drive you back.’ Lisa said.

‘OK, thanks’ replied Billy,

Lisa drove Billy back, stopping first at Jacksons for a second set of trousers and some warmer outdoor shirts.

That night he again ventured out into the town and found another Indian restaurant, the food, this time a King Prawn Vindaloo, Rice and garlic Nam, was also excellent. He was in a good mood, looking forward to exploring the North Warwickshire countryside in the morning. This he did not do, his night was problematic, this time it was he and not Lisa who was plagued by dragons. He hardly slept; his mind filled with these beasts.

In the morning, he left a text for Lisa and booked out of the Hotel, he travelled to Birmingham by train and found a room in the Hyatt, his go-to Birmingham hotel, and spent the next few days in the central reference library. And then time at ‘Think tank’, the science museum. He had friends in Birmingham, one very close friend, but he made no contact.

He was wrestling with a problem, perhaps made more acute by being helped by a Christian minister of the church. Dragons it seems in western culture are not good, unlike those of the east. He spent days in the Hotel, library and museums pondering the facts of Atkins’ death, he studied the history of dragons, and despite enjoying the excellent food in the Hyatt spent waking nights in the company of dragons.

CHAPTER III II: DRAGONS

Draconic creatures are first described in the mythologies of the ancient Near East and appear in ancient Mesopotamian art and literature. Stories about storm-gods slaying giant serpents occur throughout nearly all Near Eastern and Indo-European mythologies. Famous prototypical draconic creatures include the mušḫuššu of ancient Mesopotamia; Apep in Egyptian mythology; Vṛtra in the Rigveda; the Leviathan in the Hebrew Bible; Grand'Goule in the Poitou region in France; Python, Ladon, Wyvern and the Lernaean Hydra in Greek mythology; Kulshedra in Albanian mythology; Unhcegila in Lakota mythology; Quetzalcoatl in Aztec Culture; Jörmungandr, Níðhöggr, and Fafnir in Norse mythology; the dragon from Beowulf; and aži and az in ancient Persian mythology, closely related to another mythological figure, called Aži Dahaka or Zahhak.

In his book “An Instinct for Dragons” anthropologist David E. Jones suggests a hypothesis that humans, like monkeys, have inherited instinctive reactions to snakes, large cats, and birds of prey. He cites a study which found that approximately 40 people in a hundred are afraid of snakes and notes that fear of snakes is especially prominent in children, even in areas where snakes are rare. The earliest attested dragons all resemble snakes or have snakelike attributes.

Many dragon images around the world were based on folk knowledge or exaggerations of living reptiles, such as Komodo dragons, Gila monsters, iguanas, alligators, though this still fails to account for the Scandinavian legends, as no such animals have ever been found in this region.

Egyptian dragons.

In Egyptian mythology, Apep or Apophis is a giant serpentine creature who resides in the Duat, the Egyptian Underworld. The setting of the sun is caused by Ra descending to the Duat to battle Apep. In some accounts, Apep is as long as the height of eight men with a head made of flint. Thunderstorms and earthquakes were thought to be caused by Apep's roar and solar eclipses were thought to be the result of Apep attacking Ra during the daytime.

Nehebkau is another giant serpent who guards the Duat and aided Ra in his battle against Apep. It was also believed that the whole of the Earth rested on its coils.

Denwen is a giant serpent mentioned in the Pyramid Texts whose body was made of fire and who ignited a conflagration that nearly destroyed all the gods of the Egyptian pantheon. He was ultimately defeated by the Pharaoh, a victory which affirmed the Pharaoh's divine right to rule.

The ouroboros was a well-known Egyptian symbol of a serpent swallowing its own tail. The precursor to the ouroboros was the "Many-Faced", a serpent with five heads, who was said to coil around the corpse of the sun god Ra protectively.

The ouroboros was adopted as a symbol by Gnostic Christians and a chapter of the Pistis Sophia, an early Gnostic text, describes "a great dragon whose tail is in its mouth". In medieval alchemy, the ouroboros became a typical western dragon with wings, legs, and a tail.

Mesopotamian dragons.

The mušḫuššu is a serpentine, draconic monster with the body and neck of a snake, the forelegs of a lion, and the hind-legs of a bird.

References to dragons of both benevolent and malevolent characters occur throughout ancient Mesopotamian literature. In Sumerian poetry, great kings are often compared to the dragon ušumgal. The dragon is usually shown with its mouth open. It may have been known as the (ūmu) nā'iru, which means "roaring weather beast", and may have been associated with the god Ishkur (Hadad). A lion-dragon with two horns and the tail of a scorpion appears in art from the Neo-Assyrian Period.

The mušḫuššu, meaning "furious serpent", was used as a symbol for particular deities and also as a general protective emblem. The attendant of the Underworld, the god Ninazu was associated with serpents, later became the attendant to the Hurrian storm-god Tishpak, as well as Ninazu's son Ningishzida, and the Babylonian national god Marduk, the scribal god Nabu, and the Assyrian national god Ashur.

Tiamat, the Babylonian goddess personifying primeval chaos, has the form of a giant serpent, described with horns, a tail, and a hide that no weapon can penetrate.

Levant dragons.

In the mythologies of the Ugarit region, is the sea-dragon Lōtanu, the twisting serpent, is "the powerful one with seven heads." In some cases, Lōtanu is slain by the storm-god Baal, but, in others he is instead slain by the virgin warrior goddess Anat.

In the Hebrew Bible, in the Book of Psalms, the sea-dragon Leviathan, is slain by Yahweh, God of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, as part of the creation of the world. Isaiah describes Leviathan as a *tanin* (תנין), which is translated as “sea monster”, “serpent”, or “dragon”. In Isaiah Yahweh’s destruction of Leviathan is foretold as part of his impending overhaul of the universal order:

Original Hebrew text

בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִפְקֹד יְהוָה בְּחַרְבּוֹ הַקָּשָׁה וְהַגְדֹּלָה וְהַחֲזָקָה, עַל לִיָּתָן נָחֵשׁ
בָּרָם, וְעַל לִיָּתָן, נָחֵשׁ עֲקָלְתָּו; וְהָרַג אֶת-הַתְּנִין, אֲשֶׁר בַּיָּם

English

“In that day the LORD will take His sharp, great, and mighty sword, and bring judgment on Leviathan the fleeing serpent — Leviathan the coiling serpent — and He will slay the dragon of the sea.”

Job: contains a detailed description of the Leviathan, who is described as being so powerful that only Yahweh can overcome it. Job states that the Leviathan exhales fire and smoke, making its identification as a mythical dragon clearly apparent. The prophet Daniel sees a dragon being worshipped by the Babylonians. Daniel makes “cakes of pitch, fat, and hair”; the dragon eats them and bursts open.

Iranian dragons.

Azhi Dahaka (Avestan Great Snake) is a dragon, a demonic figure in the texts of Zoroastrian Persia, where he is one of the subordinates of Angra Mainyu. The name also migrated to Eastern Europe, assumed the form “azhdaja” and the meaning “dragon”, “dragoness” or “water snake” in the

Balkanic and Slavic languages. Despite the negative aspect of Aži Dahāka in mythology, dragons have been used on some banners of war throughout the history of Iranian peoples.

The Azhdarchid group of pterosaurs, flying dinosaurs, are named from a Persian word for “dragon” that ultimately comes from Aži Dahāka.

In Persian Sufi literature, Rumi writes in his *Masnawi*, an extensive poem written by Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi, that the dragon symbolizes the sensual soul (*nafs*), greed and lust, that needs to be mortified in a spiritual battle.

The Iranian hero Rostam must slay a dragon, which renders itself invisible to human sight, with the aid of his legendary horse, Rakhsh. As Rostam is sleeping, the dragon approaches; Rakhsh attempts to wake Rostam, but fails to alert him to the danger until Rostam sees the dragon. Rakhsh bites the dragon, while Rostam decapitates it. This is the third trial of Rostam's Seven Labors.

Rostam is also credited with the slaughter of other dragons in Iranian oral traditions, notably in the myth of Babr-e-Bayan. Rostam kills a dragon by forcing it to swallow either ox hides filled with quicklime and stones or poisoned blades. The dragon swallows these and its stomach bursts, after which Rostam flays the dragon and fashions a coat from its hide called the *babr-e bayān*.

Chinese dragons.

The word “dragon” has come to be applied to the legendary creature in Chinese mythology, loong , 龍, 龙, in Japanese. 竜, Pinyin *lóng*, which is associated with good fortune.

Dragons were also identified with the Emperor of China, who, during later Chinese imperial history was the only one permitted to have images of dragons on his house, clothing, or personal articles. The Chinese dragon is the highest-ranking creature in the Chinese animal hierarchy. Its origins can be found on Neolithic pottery as well as Bronze Age ritual vessels.

In a story a man named Dongfu, a descendant of Yangshu'an, who loved dragons and because he could understand a dragon's will, he was able to tame them and raise them well. He served Emperor Shun, who gave him the family name Huanlong, meaning "dragon-raiser". In another story, Kong Jia, the fourteenth emperor of the Xia dynasty, was given a male and a female dragon as a reward for his obedience to the god of heaven, but he could not train them, so he hired a dragon-trainer named Liulei, who had learnt how to train dragons from Huanlong. One day, the female dragon died unexpectedly, so Liulei secretly chopped her up, cooked her and served it to the king, who loved it so much that he demanded Liulei to serve him the same meal again. Since Liulei had no means of procuring more dragon meat, he fled the palace.

One of the most famous dragon stories is about the Lord Ye Gao, who loved dragons obsessively, even though he had never seen one. He decorated his whole house with dragon motifs and, seeing this display of admiration, a real dragon came and visited Ye Gao, but the lord was so terrified at the sight of the creature that he ran away. In Chinese legend the hero Fu Hsi is said to have been crossing the Lo River, when he saw the lung ma, a Chinese horse-dragon with seven dots on its face, six on its back, eight on its left flank, and nine on

its right. He was so moved by this sight that, when he arrived home, he drew a picture of it, including the dots. He later used these dots as letters and invented Chinese writing, which he used to write his book, the I Ching.

In another Chinese legend, the physician Ma Shih Huang is said to have healed a sick dragon. Another legend reports that a man once came to the healer Lo Chên-jen, telling him that he was a dragon and that he needed to be healed. After Lo Chên-jen healed the man, a dragon appeared to him and carried him to heaven.

In the Shanhaijing stories various deities and demigods are associated with dragons. One of the most famous Chinese dragons is Ying Long (“responding dragon”), who helped the Huangdi, the Yellow Emperor, defeat the tyrant Chiyow. The dragon Zhulong (“torch dragon”) is a god who created the universe with his body. In the Shanhaijing many mythic heroes are said to have been conceived after their mothers copulated with divine dragons, including Huangdi, Shennong, Emperor Yao, and Emperor Shun. The god Zhurong and the emperor Qi are both described as being carried by two dragons, as are Huangdi, Zhuanxu, Yuqiang, and Roshou. According to the Huainanzi text an evil black dragon once caused a destructive deluge, which was ended by the mother goddess Nüwa slaying the dragon.

The Houhanshu text tells of a woman named Shayi who lived in the region around Mount Lao who became pregnant with ten sons after being touched by a tree trunk floating in the water while fishing. She gave birth to the sons and the tree trunk turned into a dragon, who asked to see his sons. The woman showed them to him, but all of them ran away except

for the youngest, who the dragon licked on the back and named Jiu Long, meaning “sitting back”. The sons later elected him king and the descendants of the ten sons became the Ailaoyi people, who tattooed dragons on their backs in honour of their ancestor. The Miao people of southwest China have a story that a divine dragon created the first humans by breathing on monkeys that came to play in his cave. The Han people have many stories about Short-Tailed Old Li, a black dragon who was born to a poor family in Shandong. When his mother saw him for the first time, she fainted and, when his father came home from the field and saw him, he hit him with a spade and cut off part of his tail. Li burst through the ceiling and flew away to the Black Dragon River in northeast China, where he became the god of that river. On the anniversary of his mother's death on the Chinese lunar calendar, Old Li returns home, causing it to rain. He is still worshipped as a rain god.

So, in China, a dragon is thought to have power over rain. They are the source of the Chinese customs of dragon dancing and dragon boat racing. Dragons are closely associated with rain and drought; it is thought drought is caused by a dragon's laziness. Prayers invoking dragons to bring rain are common in Chinese texts. The Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals prescribes making clay figurines of dragons during a time of drought and having young men and boys pace and dance among the figurines in order to encourage the dragons to bring rain. Texts from the Qing dynasty advise hurling the bone of a tiger or dirty objects into the pool where the dragon lives; since dragons cannot stand tigers or dirt, the dragon of the pool will cause heavy rain to drive the object out. Rainmaking rituals invoking dragons are still very common in many Chinese villages, where each village has its own god said

to bring rain and many of these gods are dragons. The Chinese dragon kings are thought of as the inspiration for the Hindu myth of the naga. According to these stories, every body of water is ruled by a dragon king, each with a different power, rank, and ability, so people began establishing temples across the countryside dedicated to these figures.

During various holidays, including the Spring Festival and Lantern Festival, villagers will construct a sixteen-foot-long dragon from grass, cloth, bamboo strips, and paper, which they will parade through the city as part of a dragon dance. The purpose of this ritual was to bring good weather and a strong harvest. During the Duanwu festival, several villages, or even a whole province, will hold a dragon boat race, in which people race across a body of water in boats carved to look like dragons.

Korean dragons.

The Korean dragon is in many ways similar in appearance to other East Asian dragons such as the Chinese and Japanese dragons. It differs from the Chinese dragon in that it developed a longer beard. Very occasionally, a dragon may be depicted as carrying an orb known as the Yeouiju (여의주), the Korean name for the mythical Cintamani, in its claws or its mouth. It was said that whoever could wield the Yeouiju was blessed with the abilities of omnipotence and creation at will, and that only four-toed dragons who had thumbs with which to hold the orbs were both wise and powerful enough to wield these orbs, as opposed to the lesser, three-toed dragons. As with China, the number nine is significant and auspicious in Korea, and dragons were said to have 9x9 scales on their backs, representing yang essence. Dragons in Korean

mythology are benevolent beings related to water and agriculture, often considered bringers of rain and clouds. Hence, many Korean dragons are said to have resided in rivers, lakes, oceans, or even deep mountain ponds. And human journeys to undersea realms, and especially the undersea palace of the Dragon King (용왕), are common in Korean folklore.

In Korean myths, some kings who founded kingdoms were described as descendants of dragons because the dragon was a symbol of the monarch. Lady Aryeong, who was the first queen of Silla, is said to have been born from a cockatrice, a two-legged dragon, wyvern, or serpent-like creature with a rooster's head, while the grandmother of Taejo of Goryeo, founder of Goryeo, was reportedly the daughter of the dragon king of the West Sea. And King Munmu of Silla who, on his deathbed, wished to become a dragon of the East Sea in order to protect the kingdom. Dragon patterns were used exclusively by the royal family. The royal robe was also called the dragon robe (용포). In the Joseon dynasty, the royal insignia, featuring embroidered dragons, were attached to the robe's shoulders, the chest, and back. The King wore five-taloned dragon insignia while the Crown Prince wore four-taloned dragon insignia.

Korean folk mythology states that most dragons were originally Imugis (이무기), or lesser dragons, which were said to resemble gigantic serpents. Koreans thought that an Imugi could become a true dragon, yong or mireu, if it caught a Yeouiju which had fallen from heaven. Another explanation states they are hornless creatures resembling dragons who have been cursed and thus were unable to become dragons.

By other accounts, an Imugi is a proto-dragon which must survive one thousand years in order to become a fully-fledged dragon. They are said to be large, benevolent, python-like creatures that live in water or caves, and their sighting is associated with good luck.

Japanese dragons.

Japanese dragon myths amalgamate native legends with imported stories about dragons from China. Like some other dragons, most Japanese dragons are water deities associated with rainfall and bodies of water, and are typically depicted as large, wingless, serpentine creatures with clawed feet. A story about the samurai Minamoto no Mitsunaka tells that, while he was hunting in his own territory of Settsu, he dreamt under a tree and had a dream in which a beautiful woman appeared to him and begged him to save her land from a giant serpent which was defiling her. Mitsunaka agreed to help, and the maiden gave him a magnificent horse. When he woke up, the seahorse was standing before him. He rode it to the Sumiyoshi temple, where he prayed for eight days. Then he confronted the serpent and slew it with an arrow.

It was believed that dragons could be appeased or exorcised with metal. Nitta Yoshisada is said to have hurled a famous sword into the sea at Sagami to appease the dragon-god of the sea and Ki no Tsurayuki threw a metal mirror into the sea at Sumiyoshi for the same purpose. Japanese Buddhism has also adapted dragons by subjecting them to Buddhist law; the Japanese Buddhist deities Benten and Kwannon are often shown sitting or standing on the back of a dragon. Several Japanese sennin “immortals” have taken dragons as their mounts. Bômô is said to have hurled his staff into a puddle of

water, causing a dragon to come forth and let him ride it to heaven. The rakan Handaka is said to have been able to conjure a dragon out of a bowl, which he is often shown playing with on kagamibuta, a metal disc serving as a lid to a shallow bowl, usually of ivory. The shachihoko is a creature with the head of a dragon, a bushy tail, fishlike scales, and sometimes with fire emerging from its armpits. The fun has the head of a dragon, feathered wings, and the tail and claws of a bird. A white dragon was believed to reside in a pool in Yamashiro Province and, every fifty years, it would turn into a bird called the Ogonchô, which had a call like the “howling of a wild dog”. This event was believed to herald terrible famine. In the Japanese village of Okumura, near Edo, during times of drought, the villagers would make a dragon effigy out of straw, magnolia leaves, and bamboo and parade it through the village to attract rainfall.

Vietnamese dragons.

The Vietnamese dragon (Vietnamese: rồng) was a mythical creature that was often used as a deity symbol and was associated with royalty. Dragons in Vietnamese culture represent yang and godly beings associated with creation and life. In the creation myth they are descended from the dragon lord Lạc Long Quân and the fairy Âu Cơ, who bore 100 eggs. When they separated, Lạc Long Quân brought 50 children to the sea while Âu Cơ brought the rest up to the mountains. To this day, Vietnamese people often describe themselves as “Children of the dragon, grandchildren of the fairy” Con rồng cháu tiên.

Indian dragons.

In the Rigveda, Indra, the Vedic god of storms, battles Vṛtra, a giant serpent who represents drought. Indra kills Vṛtra using his vajra, a thunderbolt, and clears the path for rain, which is described in the form of cattle: “You won the cows, hero, you won the Soma, You freed the seven streams to flow”. In another Rigvedic legend, the three-headed serpent Viśvarūpa, the son of Tvaṣṭṛ, guards a wealth of cows and horses. Indra delivers Viśvarūpa to a god named Trita Āptya, who fights and kills him and sets his cattle free. Indra cuts off Viśvarūpa's heads and drives the cattle home for Trita. In another story the hero Thraētaona, the son of Āthbya, slays the three-headed dragon Aži Dahāka and takes his two beautiful wives as spoils. Thraētaona's name, meaning “third grandson of the waters”, indicates that Aži Dahāka, like Vṛtra, was seen as a blocker of waters and cause of drought.

Bhutan.

The Druk, Dzongkha: འབྲུག་, also known as “Thunder Dragon”, is one of the national symbols of Bhutan. In the Dzongkha language, Bhutan is known as Druk Yul “Land of Druk”, and Bhutanese leaders are called Druk Gyalpo, “Thunder Dragon Kings”. The druk was adopted as an emblem by the Drukpa Lineage, which originated in Tibet and later spread to Bhutan.

Proto-Indo-European dragons.

The tale of a hero slaying a giant serpent occurs in almost all Indo-European mythology. In most stories, the hero is some kind of thunder-god. In nearly every version of the story, the serpent is either multi-headed or “multiple” in some other way. In nearly every story, the serpent is always somehow

associated with water. A Proto-Indo-European dragon-slaying myth goes as follows: First, the sky gods give cattle to a man named Tritos, “the third”, who is so named because he is the third man on earth, but a three-headed serpent named Ngwhi steals them. Tritos pursues the serpent and is accompanied by Hanér, whose name means “man”. Together, the two heroes slay the serpent and rescue the cattle.

Ancient Greek dragons.

The ancient Greek word usually translated as “dragon”, δράκων drákōn refers to a kind of giant serpent that either possesses supernatural characteristics or is otherwise controlled by some supernatural power. The first mention of a “dragon” in ancient Greek literature occurs in the Iliad, in which Agamemnon is described as having a blue dragon motif on his sword belt and an emblem of a three-headed dragon on his breast plate. The poet Hesiod writes of the Greek god Zeus who battles the monster Typhon, who has one hundred serpent heads that breathes fire and makes many frightening animal noises. Zeus scorches all of Typhon's heads with his lightning bolts and then hurls Typhon into Tartarus, the deep abyss that is used as a dungeon of torment and suffering for the wicked and as the prison for the Titans. In other Greek sources, Typhon is often depicted as a winged, fire-breathing serpent-like dragon. In the Homeric Hymn to Apollo, the god Apollo uses his poisoned arrows to slay the serpent Python, who has been causing death and pestilence in the area around Delphi. Apollo then sets up his shrine there.

The slaying of the Hydra was the second of the Twelve Labors of Heracles. During the battle, a giant crab crawled out of the marsh and pinched Heracles's foot, but he crushed it under his

heel. Hera placed the crab in the sky as the constellation Cancer. One of the Hydra's heads was immortal, so Heracles buried it under a heavy rock after cutting it off. For his Eleventh Labor, Heracles must procure a golden apple from the tree in the Garden of the Hesperides, which is guarded by the dragon Ladon.

The hero Jason seeks the Golden Fleece which is in a copse guarded by a dragon. Jason slays the dragon and makes off with the Golden Fleece together with Aeëtes's daughter, Medea.

In the founding myth of Thebes, Prince Cadmus, a Phoenician was instructed by Apollo to follow a heifer and found a city wherever it laid down. Cadmus and his men followed the heifer and, when it laid down Cadmus ordered his men to find a spring so he could sacrifice the heifer to Athena. His men found a spring, but it was guarded by a dragon, which had been placed there by the god Ares, and the dragon killed them. Cadmus killed the dragon in revenge, either by smashing its head with a rock or using his sword. Following the advice of Athena, Cadmus tore out the dragon's teeth and planted them in the earth. An army of giant warriors known as *spartoi*, which means “sown men”, grew from the teeth like plants. Cadmus hurled stones into their midst, causing them to kill each other until only five were left. To make restitution for having killed Ares's dragon, Cadmus was forced to serve Ares as a slave for eight years. At the end of this period, Cadmus married Harmonia, the daughter of Ares and Aphrodite. Cadmus and Harmonia moved to Illyria, where they ruled as king and queen, before eventually being transformed into dragons themselves.

In the fifth century BC, the Greek historian Herodotus reported in Book IV of his *Histories* that western Libya was inhabited by monstrous serpents, and in Book III, he states that Arabia was home to many small, winged serpents, which came in a variety of colours and enjoyed the trees that produced frankincense. Herodotus remarks that the serpent's wings were like those of bats and that unlike vipers, which are found in every land, winged serpents are only found in Arabia. The second-century BC Greek astronomer Hipparchus listed the constellation Draco, "the dragon" as one of forty-six constellations.

In the New Testament, Revelation written by St John of Patmos, describes a vision of a Great Red Dragon with seven heads, ten horns, seven crowns, and a massive tail, an image which is clearly inspired by the vision of the four beasts from the sea in the Book of Daniel, and the Leviathan described in various Old Testament passages. The Great Red Dragon knocks a third of the sun ... a third of the moon, and a third of the stars out of the sky and pursues the Woman of the Apocalypse. Revelation declares: And war broke out in Heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the Dragon. The Dragon and his angels fought back, but they were defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in Heaven. The Great Dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent who is called Devil and Satan, the one deceiving the whole inhabited World – he was thrown down to earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Then a voice booms down from Heaven heralding the defeat of "the Accuser".

According to a collection of books by Claudius Aelianus called *On Animals*, Ethiopia was inhabited by a species of dragon

that hunted elephants and could grow to a length of 180 feet, which had a very long lifespan.

Germanic dragons.

In the Old Norse poem *Grímnismál* the dragon *Níðhöggr* is described as gnawing on the roots of *Yggdrasil*, the world tree. In Norse mythology, *Jörmungandr* is a giant serpent that encircles the entire realm of *Miðgarð* in the sea around it. Thor, the Norse god of thunder, went out in a boat with the giant *Hymnir* to the outer sea and fished for *Jörmungandr* using an ox-head as bait. Thor caught the serpent and, after pulling its head out of the water, smashed it with his hammer, but the blow was not fatal.

Towards the end of the Old English epic poem *Beowulf*, a slave steals a cup from the hoard of a sleeping dragon, causing the dragon to wake up and go on a rampage of destruction across the countryside. The hero of the poem insists on confronting the dragon alone, even though he is of advanced age, but *Wiglaf*, the youngest of the twelve warriors *Beowulf* has brought with him insists on accompanying his king into the battle. *Beowulf's* sword shatters during the fight and he is mortally wounded, but *Wiglaf* comes to his rescue and helps him slay the dragon. *Beowulf* dies and tells *Wiglaf* that the dragon's treasure must be buried rather than shared with the cowardly warriors who did not come to the aid of their king.

In the Old Norse *Völsunga saga*, the hero *Sigurd* catches the dragon *Fafnir* by digging a pit between the cave where he lives and the spring where he drinks his water and kills him by stabbing him in the underside. At the advice of *Odin*, *Sigurd* drains *Fafnir's* blood and drinks it, which gives him the ability

to understand the language of the birds, who he hears talking about how his mentor Regin is plotting to betray him so that he can keep all of Fafnir's treasure for himself.

The motif of a hero trying to sneak past a sleeping dragon and steal some of its treasure is common throughout many Old Norse sagas.

Welsh Dragons (Y Ddraig Goch).

The twelfth-century Welsh monk, Geoffrey of Monmouth, recounts the story in which the child prophet Merlin witnesses the Romano-Celtic warlord Vortigern attempt to build a tower on Snowdon to keep safe from the Anglo-Saxons, but the tower keeps being swallowed into the ground. Merlin informs Vortigern that, underneath the foundation he has built is a pool with two dragons sleeping in it. Vortigern orders for the pool to be drained, exposing a red dragon and a white dragon, who immediately begin fighting. Merlin delivers a prophecy that the white dragon will triumph over the red, symbolizing England's conquest of Wales, but declares that the red dragon will eventually return and defeat the white one.

European dragons.

The thirteenth-century Golden Legend is the story of Saint Margaret of Antioch, a virgin martyr who, after being tortured for her faith and thrown back into her cell is said to have been confronted by a monstrous dragon, but she made the sign of the cross and the dragon vanished. In other versions of the story, she is actually swallowed by the dragon alive and, after making the sign of the cross in the dragon's stomach, emerges unharmed.

The most famous version of the story of Saint George and the Dragon is that a dragon kept pillaging the sheep of the town of Silene in Libya. After it ate a young shepherd, the people were forced to placate it by leaving two sheep as sacrificial offerings every morning beside the lake where the dragon lived. Eventually, the dragon ate all of the sheep, and the people were forced to start offering it their own children. One day, the king's own daughter came up in the lottery held to choose the victim and, despite the king's pleas for her life, she was dressed as a bride and chained to a rock beside the lake to be eaten. Then Saint George arrived and saw the princess. When the dragon arrived to eat her, he stabbed it with his lance and subdued it by making the sign of the cross and tying the princess's girdle around its neck. Saint George and the princess led the now docile dragon into the town and George promised to kill it if the townspeople would convert to Christianity. All the townspeople converted, and Saint George killed the dragon with his sword.

The Catalan dragon is an enormous serpent-like creature with four legs and a pair of wings, or rarely, a two-legged creature with a pair of wings, called a wyvern. Catalan dragons are fire-breathers, and the dragon-fire is all-consuming. Catalan dragons also can emit a fetid odour, which can rot away anything it touches.

Dragons are prominent in medieval heraldry. Uther Pendragon was famously said to have had two gold dragons crowned and standing back-to-back on his royal coat of arms. Originally, heraldic dragons could have any number of legs, but, by the late Middle Ages, due to the widespread proliferation of bestiaries, heraldry began to distinguish between a "dragon" which could only have exactly four legs

and a “wyvern” which could only have exactly two. In myths, wyverns are associated with viciousness, envy, and pestilence, but, in heraldry, they are used as symbols for overthrowing the tyranny of Satan and his demonic forces. Late medieval heraldry also distinguished a draconic creature known as a “cockatrice”. A cockatrice is supposedly born when a serpent hatches an egg that has been laid on a dunghill by a rooster. It is so venomous that its breath and its gaze are both lethal to any living creature, except for a weasel, which is the cockatrice’s mortal enemy. A basilisk is a serpent with the head of a dragon at the end of its tail. It is born when a toad hatches an egg that has been laid in a midden by a nine-year-old cockatrice. Like the cockatrice, its glare is said to be deadly.

Slavic dragons.

In Albanian mythology and folklore, stihi, ljubi, bolla, bollar, errshaja, and kulshedra are mythological figures described as serpentine dragons. It is believed that bolla, a water and chthonic (from the underworld) demonic serpent, undergoes metamorphosis passing through four distinct phases if it lives many years without being seen by a human. The bollar and errshaja are the intermediate stages, while the kulshedra is the ultimate phase, described as a huge multi-headed fire-spitting female serpent which causes drought, storms, flooding, earthquakes, and other natural disasters against mankind. She is usually fought and defeated by a drangue, a semi-human winged divine hero and protector of humans. Heavy thunderstorms are thought to be the result of their battles.

In Slavic mythology, the words “zmey”, “zmiy”, or “zmai” are used to describe dragons. These words are masculine forms of the Slavic word for “snake”, which are normally feminine, like Russian zmeya. In Romania, there is a similar figure, derived from the Slavic dragon and named zmeu. In Polish and Belarusian folklore, as well as in other Slavic folklores, a dragon is also called variously, смок, цмок, or smok. In South Slavic folklores, the same thing is also called ламја, ламя, ламја, lamja.

In Russian and Ukrainian folklore, Zmey Gorynych is a dragon with three heads, each one bearing twin goatlike horns. He is said to have breathed fire and smelt of sulphur. It was believed that eclipses were caused by Gorynych temporarily swallowing the sun. According to legend, Gorynych's uncle was the evil sorcerer Nenal Chelovek, who abducted the daughter of the Tsar and imprisoned her in his castle in the Ural Mountains. Many knights tried to free her, but all of them were killed by Gorynych's fire. Then a palace guard in Moscow named Ivan Tsarevich overheard two crows talking about the princess. He went to the Tsar, who gave him a magic sword, and snuck into the castle. When Chelovek attacked Ivan in the form of a giant, the sword flew from Ivan's hand unbidden and killed him. Then the sword cut off all three of Gorynych's heads at once. Ivan brought the princess back to the Tsar, who declared Ivan a nobleman and allowed him to marry the princess.

A Polish folk tale is the legend of the Wawel Dragon. The dragon appeared during the reign of King Krakus and demanded to be fed a fixed number of cattle every week. If the villagers failed to provide enough cattle the dragon would eat the same number of villagers as the number of cattle they

had failed to provide. Krakus ordered his sons to slay the dragon. Since they could not slay it by hand, they tricked the dragon into eating calfskins filled with burning sulphur. Once the dragon was dead, the younger brother attacked and murdered his older brother and returned home to claim all the glory for himself, telling his father that his brother had died fighting the dragon. The younger brother became king after his father died, but his secret was eventually revealed, and he was banished.

Etymology.

An early appearance of the Old English word *dracan* in *Beowulf*, from Latin *draco* meaning “huge serpent, dragon”, from Ancient Greek *δράκων*. Something with a “deadly glance”, or unusually bright because a snake’s eyes appear to be always open; each eye actually sees through a big transparent scale in its eyelids which are permanently shut. The Greek word probably derives from an Indo-European base *derǵ-* meaning “to see”; the Sanskrit root *द्रश्* (*drś-*) also means “to see”.

Draconic creatures are Jungian archetypes present in the collective unconscious of all human beings. The psychic counterpart of instinct, therefore being related to ‘The Real’.

Billy had spent many hours in Birmingham’s central reference library, often just thinking about ‘dragons’ and making notes in his faithful Moleskine notebook. He had a laptop where all the detail regarding dragons and much else was stored, but his notebook was the way he could focus.

He was sat at a table in the library, his laptop open displaying the text regarding dragons in human cultures. Outside it was

raining, a grey early spring day. Not raining hard, it was probably early afternoon, only a few people could be seen walking across Centenary square.

And the thought struck him that if Jungian archetypes are the counterpart of human instincts there must be a real source of these.

So, in his notebook he wrote.

* Are Dragons real

He would often break in his thinking and note taking in the library. When exhausted he would sometimes visit the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. He enjoyed some time looking at the Pre-Raphaelite paintings.

So, as a break on this afternoon he packed up his laptop in his Berluti leather travel bag and walked out of the library, in its vestibule putting on his Anthony Eden hat from Lock and Co, and his Mackintosh. He was of course wearing his Anderson & Sheppard suit and John Lobb shoes.

His first thought was to go back to the hotel across the plaza, but then he thought maybe a quick stroll first through the Art gallery. So, he turned left, crossed the bridge into Chamberlain Square and entered the Museum and Art Gallery. He remembered an incident he had in the Museum, in the Natural History section, and had a strange thought, so skipped the Pre-Raphaelites and decided to take a look once again at the natural history section.

So, it was perhaps by chance or not on this dull afternoon that he wandered into the natural history part of the Museum, and

a display regarding pterosaurs, “flying” dinosaur’s he thought, but it seems not, more like flying reptiles.

The room was dominated by a reconstruction of one of the “giant” pterosaurs, it hung over the gallery the size of a light aircraft. He realised with a shock he was looking at what could be the origin of real animal dragons. They certainly looked like dragons to him, the one giant above him with its huge mouth and flame coloured red head crest.

So, he concluded that maybe unlike Jung, that dragons appear in nearly all cultures because humans have an innate fear of these monsters which would have preyed on small early mammals. Winged monsters with massive jaws and brightly coloured head-dresses, which swooped from the sky without any prior signs or warning given by land-based predators.

He left the Museum and walked back across Chamberlin square, past the fountain with its spire, crossed Victoria square and walked down New Street, he had a plan. There was a Pret there so he could buy sandwiches, but no need of a drink. He walked back a few steps to Bennetts Hill, and up the hill and crossing Waterloo Street and so into the Wellington public house, his destination.

The Wellington is “A Specialist Real Ale Pub”, typically having a choice from 27 hand pulls with 4 permanent Black Country Ales, 5 other regular beers and 9 ever-changing guest beers, as well as 8 keg beers and 3 traditional ciders. It does not serve food, only bar snacks, hence the prior visit to Pret.

“... leaving us free to concentrate on what we do best: serving quality beer. Instead, we provide plates, cutlery and

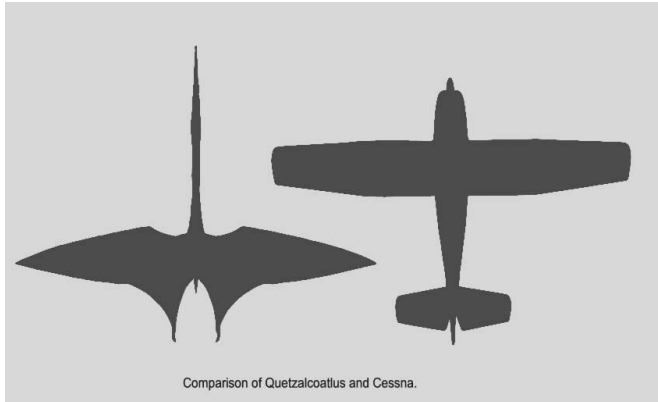
condiments, leaving you free to bring your own food in, or order a takeaway directly to the pub.”

As stated on the pub’s website, which also displays the current choice of beers, their names, the brewery, alcohol present, colour and price.

He was served with a pint of Fireside and decamped to a corner seat. The pub cat watched with perhaps some recognition, obviously not his first visit.

He opened his sandwiches, a BLT, and took a sip of beer. All was well with the world; he could now tackle dragons. So, he opened his laptop, found the pub’s Wi-Fi, opened it and tapped in “Pterosaur”.

CHAPTER III: THE TRUE ORIGIN OF DRAGONS



Pterosaurs are an extinct group of flying reptiles of around 130 different species which existed between 228 million to 66 million years ago. Pterosaurs are the earliest vertebrates known to have evolved powered flight and were generally large. The smallest species had a wingspan no less than 10 inches, the largest, are the largest known animals ever to fly, with wingspans of up to 33–36 feet. Standing these would reach the height of a modern giraffe. The braincase was relatively large for reptiles. Their jaws had horny beaks, and some groups developed elaborate head crests, possibly brightly coloured, with sexual dimorphism. (Females and Males have a different appearance)

Pterosaurs sported coats of hair-like filaments known as pycnofibers, which covered their bodies and parts of their wings. Pycnofibers grew in several forms, from simple

filaments to branching down feathers. They were warm-blooded (endothermic), active animals.

List of pterosaurs with estimated maximum wingspan of more than 5 meters (16 feet):

Hatzegopteryx thambema 10–12 m (33–39 ft)

Quetzalcoatlus northropi 10–11 m (33–36 ft)

Cryodrakon boreas 10 m (33 ft)

Undescribed specimen from Mongolia 10 m (33 ft)

Thanatosdrakon amaru 9 m (30 ft)

Arambourgiania philadelphiae 8–9 m (26–30 ft)

Tropeognathus mesembrinus 8.26–8.7 m (27–29 ft)

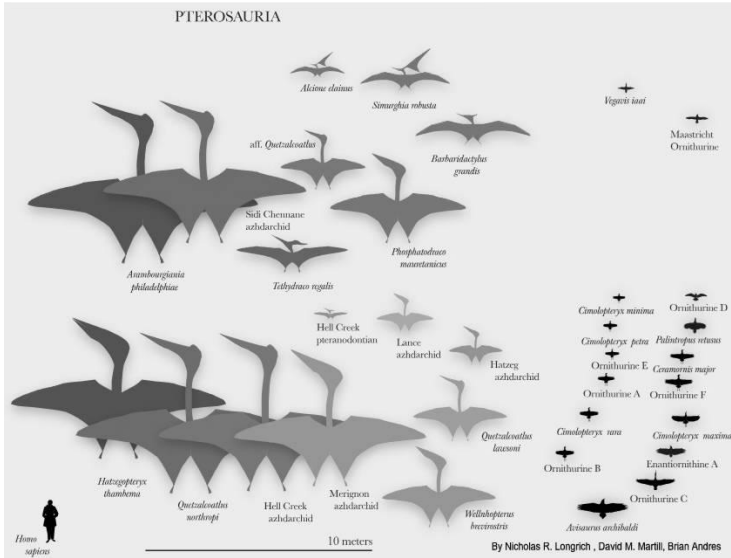
Pteranodon longiceps 7.25–7.6 m (23.8–24.9 ft)

Thapunngaka shawi 6–7 m (20–23 ft)

Alanqa saharica 6 m (20 ft)

Santanadactylus araripensis 5.7 m (19 ft)

Cearadactylus atrox 5.5 m (18 ft)



Billy stared at the screen of his laptop, had the feeling that he should tell people about these creatures, but what would they care.

Then the old Billy was thinking, he, like many might think such creatures as dragons impossible, but here was evidence that things very much like dragons actually existed and actually flew. The idea that myths, imaginations, desires could and are actualised he had long believed, it was just the shock of seeing the thing above his head in the museum when he wasn't expecting anything like this.

And so, he thought there are good and bad dragons, and these are somehow deep within the human psyche, and being again made real, how, by who and why?

CHAPTER III: OF EXTINCTION

That dragons appear in nearly all cultures because humans have an innate fear of these monsters which would have preyed on small early mammals. Was this the case or was there more, he thought.

He sipped from his second pint, and opened the second sandwich, Tuna.

‘Or’ he thought, ‘Or are they associated with bad things?’

Billy thought, wrongly as it happened that these ‘dragons’ were wiped out in the great extinction of the late Cretaceous, and not mammals and not even birds. So, his focus shifted from the reality of these beasts to the great extinction in which they and many other species perished. Or did they?

He briefly studied the great extinction, feeling he was on the trail of something, something very real.

It soon became clearer that there are agreed to have been five major extinction events, and an ongoing sixth.

The first, the Ordovician–Silurian extinction event around 445 million years ago. This killed off 27% of all families, 57% of all genera and 85% of all species.

Species are grouped into genera, examples being Canis: Contains species like wolves (*Canis lupus*) and domestic dogs. Rosa: Contains over 100 species of roses. Gorilla: Contains the western gorilla and the eastern gorilla. Homo: Our genus. Families are related genera, the genera of walnut trees and genera of hickory trees belong to the family Juglandaceae, or the “walnut family”.

In biology, the tree of life is classification from species, genus, family, order, class, phylum, kingdom, to domain. In simple terms there are things with cells or bacteria in a domain, viruses are a problem in classification! Kingdom, such as Animals, Plants, Fungi. Phylum such as the type of animal. Class such as mammals. Order, such as carnivorous mammals. Family as in family Juglandaceae, or the “walnut family”. Genus, walnuts, gorillas, the Homo genus has in it humans and are the only surviving member, others like Neanderthals now extinct.

The cause of the Ordovician–Silurian extinction is contested, from global warming, related to volcanism, as opposed to another possible cause, cooling and glaciation.

The second, was the Late Devonian extinctions around 360 million years ago, and consisted of a series of events that occupied much of the Late Devonian up to the Devonian–Carboniferous transition. These two closely spaced extinction events collectively eliminated about 19% of all families, 50% of all genera and at least 70% of all species.

There is no agreed cause, so ideas range from biological changes in plants causing pollution, global warming or cooling, an impact event from a meteorite, and radiation from a nearby star exploding in a super nova.

The third, the Permian–Triassic extinction event around 252 million years ago. The End Permian extinction is called the “Great Dying”. 53% of marine families died, 84% of marine genera, about 81% of all marine species and an estimated 70% of terrestrial vertebrate species. This is also the largest known extinction event for insects. The highly successful marine arthropod, the trilobite also finally became extinct. No clear

cause is known, those mentioned above are possible candidates.

The fourth, the Triassic–Jurassic extinction event around 200 million years ago. About 23% of all families, 48% of all genera (20% of marine families and 55% of marine genera) and 70% to 75% of all species became extinct. Most non-dinosaurian archosaurs, most therapsids, and most of the large amphibians were eliminated, leaving dinosaurs with little terrestrial competition. Non-dinosaurian archosaurs continued to dominate aquatic environments.

Causes include global cooling, warming, pollution from biological decay, metal poisoning from volcanoes, wildfires, radiation from ozone depletion due to ozone layer damage caused by volcanic aerosols or meteorite impact.

The fifth great extinction was the Cretaceous–Paleogene extinction event around 66 million years ago. About 17% of all families, 50% of all genera and 75% of all species became extinct. In the seas all the ammonites, plesiosaurs and mosasaurs disappeared, and the percentage of sessile animals, animals that can't move such as sponges, was reduced to about 33%. All non-avian dinosaurs became extinct during that time.

As originally proposed in 1980 it is now generally thought that the K–Pg extinction was caused by the impact of a massive asteroid 10 to 15 km (6 to 9 miles) wide, 66 million years ago causing the Chicxulub crater, which devastated the global environment, mainly through a lingering impact winter which halted photosynthesis in plants and plankton.

By now he had finished his sandwiches and beer, he noted a sixth extinction, wrote in his notebook and left for his hotel.

He had a nap in the afternoon. Had a shower and then resumed work in his room, looking out on the city as night approached.

CHAPTER III III I: ~~THE ANTHROPOCENE~~

He opened his laptop, and browsed, and noted ‘The Sixth, Holocene extinction and Biodiversity loss is ongoing.’

Research completed after the seminal 1982 paper (Sepkoski and Raup) has concluded that a sixth mass extinction event due to human activities is currently under way: Extinctions have occurred at over 1,000 times the background extinction rate since 1900, and the rate is increasing. The mass extinction is a result of human activity driven by population growth and overconsumption of the earth's natural resources. A 2019 global biodiversity assessment asserts that out of an estimated 8 million species, 1 million plant and animal species are currently threatened with extinction. If humans had never existed, it would have taken 18,000 years for the same genera to have disappeared naturally, the report states.

‘Interesting,’ he thought.

The Anthropocene period, now rejected by geologists but not others marks the end of the Holocene period, dating from the commencement of significant human impact on Earth up to the present day. The geological records of the pollution in rock strata from the industrial revolution are seen as its beginning. The radio activity and its atomic elements created by atomic weapons use and testing also mark the event.

Under this model, the Anthropocene would have many events marking human-induced impacts on the planet, including the mass extinction of large vertebrates, the development of early farming, land clearance in the Americas, global-scale industrial transformation during the Industrial Revolution, and the start of the Atomic Age.

James Lovelock a founder of environmentalism proposes that the Anthropocene began with the first application of the Newcomen steam engine in 1712. The Great Acceleration has a proposed a start date for the Epoch in the mid-20th century, as that period saw a rapidly rising human population.

The eighteenth century saw the British Agricultural Revolution, or Second Agricultural Revolution, and also the Industrial Revolution from early in the eighteenth, spreading to continental Europe and the United States from around 1760 to about 1820–1840.

The French Revolution was a period of major societal and political upheaval in France that began in 1789 and ended in the late 1790s, and continued in the Napoleonic wars, and wars of the twentieth century. At the same time the world population increased from 600 million in 1700, 1 billion in 1800, 1.6 billion in 1900, 6.1 billion in 2000.

Billy's great leap, the Dragons of the sixth great extinction, the industrial revolution, the monstrous machines which breathed fire, the enlightenment, and succeeding wars, the population explosion and global warming. From the invention of the steam engine and use of coal and fossil fuels, the philosophies and sciences of the Enlightenment. From Hegel to Marx, Newton to Einstein, global wars and globalization.

Billy often liked making crazy thoughts,

‘All these ideas and machines are Dragons!’

Then as he often did, he often reversed this,

‘No, dragons are at war with us!’

Dragons it seems in western culture are not good, unlike those of the east. They are at war with heaven, and heaven or heavens are behind human invention and expansion, religious or not, the desire for future perfection. The idea of accelerationism, the technological singularity and A.I. being seen as contemporary examples. The technological singularity which would ultimately result in a powerful superintelligence, qualitatively far surpassing all human intelligence and power. Such a singularity, it is posited by Frank Tipler would have all the attributes of the Abrahamic God and grant human's immortality and resurrect the dead as perfect immortal emulations.

His mind was now in turmoil,

So, the dragons appear to begin a war. And now the idea he had, the terrifying idea that dragons are at war with heaven, and so he was wrestling with a problem, perhaps made more acute by being originally helped by a Christian minister of the church, Lisa. Who should win?

The philosopher Nick Bostrom discusses human extinction scenarios and lists superintelligence as a possible cause: that a super AI would, to be perfect, need the entire resources of all that is available, the earth, solar system and universe, to become Frank Tipler's Omega Point.

And what is possibly preventing this,

'Enter the dragons?' he thought.

Billy's thought revolved around these ideas, his mind in confusion.

The impossibility of a flying reptile the size of a light aeroplane, these ‘dragons’ appear at the last great extinction, and the first extinction to have a definite cause, the meteor impact.

‘Yet,’ he thought, ‘was the meteor the cause of the dragons, or the dragons a cause of the meteor, just a coincidence? Or a sign?’

The phrase “correlation does not imply causation” refers to the inability to legitimately deduce a cause-and-effect relationship between two events or variables solely on the basis of an observed association or correlation between them.

Meteor = Extinction.

Dragons = Extinction.

‘What of the other extinctions?’

He read from his laptop aloud,

‘The idea that “correlation implies causation” is an example of a questionable-cause logical fallacy, in which two events occurring together are taken to have established a cause-and-effect relationship. This fallacy is also known by the Latin phrase *cum hoc ergo propter hoc* (“with this, therefore because of this”).

I like this expression, “*cum hoc ergo propter hoc*.”...’

He continued,

‘This differs from the fallacy known as *post hoc ergo propter hoc* (“after this, therefore because of this”), in which an event following another is seen as a necessary consequence of the

former event, and from conflation, the errant merging of two events into one.'

Billy thought to himself,

'I must get back to Woodbridge and think, but I'll go via Nuneaton and see Lisa'

He then took out his Moleskine notebook and wrote.

* LOOK BACK AT EXTINCTION IDEAS

* CORRELATION

* WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DRAGON

* MEETING WITH LISA

And

* STAR WARS!

* ALIENS?

So, he had his evening meal, but before doing so telephoned the Hamton hotel in Nuneaton and checked that a room was free the following evening and booked it for one night.

He then telephoned Reverend Lisa Phillips and arranged a meeting the next day at 11 o'clock in the Hilton Hamton Hotel, Nuneaton.

'At last, I can have supper.' He thought to himself, not knowing where his thoughts were going, but they were on the move. The killing of Mr Atkins was either the very small tip of a massive iceberg, and or the sign of things to come, more dragons?

For supper to begin he had, chalk stream smoked trout, confit baby potato, heritage beetroot salad, sour cream. Followed by King prawn and monkfish Malabar curry, toasted coconut rice, coriander, crispy samphire. And finally, Cherry, almond and coconut crumble, white chocolate custard. Despite fish, a bottle of good red, and finally in the lounge to ensure a good night's sleep, dragon free, a large Laphroaig Single Malt.

The next day, early morning, he took the train from New Street Station to Nuneaton. The day was still grey, the train followed an all too familiar route, first north and following the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal, crossing the river Tame underneath Spaghetti Junction, he knew so well and what was there, and wondered if it was significant? Then the line turned east towards Coleshill and North Warwickshire, with just a brief glimpse of the row of terraced houses along Church Lane in Old Arley before passing the sandstone escarpment with its claw marks and into the Ansley Tunnel.

He walked the short distance from the station to the hotel, he had arranged for his room to be ready early morning, an additional cost, and for a breakfast. His usual full English.

In his room he looked at his notebook, 'Correlation implies causation? Certainly not.' he thought.

CHAPTER ### II: OF RELIGION

Billy was waiting in the lounge area when Lisa arrived. She was wearing all black and a dog collar.

'I'm at a funeral later so in uniform, hope you don't mind.' she said on seeing him.

'It's that a colleague who was going to officiate in Bedworth can't so I'm having, well wanting to take his place, it's one of my ex-parishioners, not a church attendee but, but, too much detail, please hope you understand.'

'Fine,' said Billy, caught off guard, 'tea?'

'That would be good.' Lisa said sitting.

Billy had planned some pleasantries and then that his work might cut across conventional Christian beliefs, make some more, be thankful and so on.

The tea arrived, so they stopped the meaningless conversation about the weather.

'You see I think this event; the death of Mr Atkins is part of something much bigger.' Billy said.

'I agree.' said Lisa.

'Well, it might cut across conventional Christian orthodoxy...' he went on,

'Concerns over where this might be going with the theology, especially in Revelations and the symbolic dragon...'

'Can I stop you there,' Lisa interrupted,

There was a brief pause, she looked at her watch,

‘Sorry it’s time, as in not enough, so here goes,’ she said and then,

‘I’m a Christian existentialist, much influenced by Paul Tillich. God is not a being but the ground of being, and this is always a mystery, why are we here, why is there something and not nothing. God is the god that is not the all-powerful being, God, this God is not a being. The theological being which is God is the cause of modern doubt, how could such a creature be, and in being create. This is the God that Nietzsche kills, a monster. A justified cause of atheism.

Because God is the ground of Being and not “A Being” there is no “I” and “God”, God is not me, but the ground of me, God as the ground of me is nearer to me than me. To have an I – God relationship is to insult and a limit of God.

This other God, not the ground of being but a God which is an all-powerful being would also make me into a subject of God, deprives me of my subjectivity, makes me a puppet. A determinate being a being for... An object of God, Religion or of Capitalism, or of the proletariat revolution of Marxism, a means to an end, not a thing in itself. If you like Bad Faith.’

She paused to sip some tea, then continued after looking at her watch,

‘Tillich says God as a ground of my being, power, but also an Abyss, Sartre’s Nothingness if you like. This God precedes any relationship, is beyond being. And so, beyond reason, beyond comprehension, the experience of nothingness is given to me as my feeling of being. So, any statements about God are beyond comprehension, are simply sacred symbols.’

Billy was frowning trying to follow,

‘My radical doubt is my faith. It is the affirmation of my belief. Tillich, I think, well I know, goes much further, but was a theologian and I am not. For me the image is that of not just the God of God but the God of Man. Which is why I am a Christian Existentialist. Remove all the material stuff, and see what remains, something, maybe a nothing, maybe a doubt but a God remains.’

There was a pause, then she added,

‘Sorry to go on like this, but I’d very much like to be kept in the picture, because you see I have some ideas of my own, and well some which might surprise you, are you familiar with Apocalypse, D.H. Lawrence’s book on The Revelation of St John?’

‘No.’ said Billy, and for once he really couldn’t add more, then he did,

‘Thanks for that background, so maybe we could work together on this by email when I get back to Woodbridge?’

‘Yes, I’d very much like this.’ Lisa said, continuing,

‘Especially Revelation and that dragon. You know the connection with Satan and the Morning Star, and William Blake, the God of the Old Testament and Jesus in the New Testament. I think I can talk openly here, so yes, I’d very much like to keep in touch... do you zoom?’

She paused,

‘It’s the people here and the landscape, I love them both... maybe I shouldn’t say.’

There was a silence, Billy wasn't expecting this, just a few pleasantries he thought, but this, and the ideas re Revelations and Blake had quite taken him by surprise.

'Now I've embarrassed you I think,' Lisa said, 'So I'll bid my adieu and see who emails first.'

So, she gave a disarming smile and left.

'Amazing.' Billy said to himself, 'And now trains...'

CHAPTER ### III: CUM HOC ERGO PROPTER HOC

Billy caught the one o'clock train to Euston.

A journey through a grey and dismal early English spring of muddy and flooded fields and grey sombre towns.

In London before heading to Liverpool Street Station he visited St Pancras where he knew of several second-hand bookshops, his second attempt was a success.

He arrived at Woodbridge station early evening, before walking to the house he shared with Catherine Mulberry he took the steps to the footbridge which crossed to the other platform. He often did this on his arrival, he didn't cross over but stood on the bridge which gave him a fine view of the Deben Estuary, and across to Sutton Hoo. The lines of bare trees and the conifers across a grey horizon, the silver of the water, the tide was part out so wading birds, and maybe the distant call of a curlew.

Back in the house in Cumberland Street Billy took a shower and dressed in more casual clothes and was now sat at the kitchen table. Catherine Mulberry was cooking, being helped by Emily Clarke who was a retired pathologist now living in the guest cottage which was in the garden of the Woodbridge house.

'Supper in an hour.' said Catherine Mulberry.

Ignoring this Billy spoke, 'Can anyone tell me what zoom is and how to use it?'

Catherine gave him a look, but Emily said, 'I can, it's easy, I'll show you.'

‘Use the library, not here, you’ll be in my way.’ said Catherine Mulberry, so they ‘decamped’ to the library. After a phone call to Lisa, she was home and alone, they set up the link.

Emily ‘left them to it’.

Arranging a regular slot each evening, texting or telephoning any changes. Time was now nearly supper time,

‘One last thing,’ said Billy, ‘Mr Atkins death, three possibilities, outside source, Mrs Atkins, or suicide.’

‘Suicide?’ thought Lisa, ‘suicide, I never thought of that.’ She missed the “outside source”.

The supper was as ever excellent, matching the season, steak and kidney pie, cabbage and root vegetables, now fresh from a small vegetable plot Emily had made in the garden. She no longer had an interest in pathology, but in Gnosticism and vegetable gardening. And of course, with the meal, beer. And for pudding, apple crumble and custard.

Billy woke in the morning, pulled back the curtains to reveal a blue sky at last, and said in a loud voice to no one, ‘Correlation implies causation? Certainly not!’

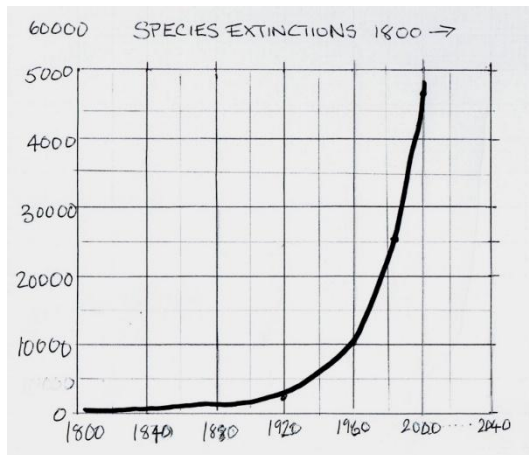
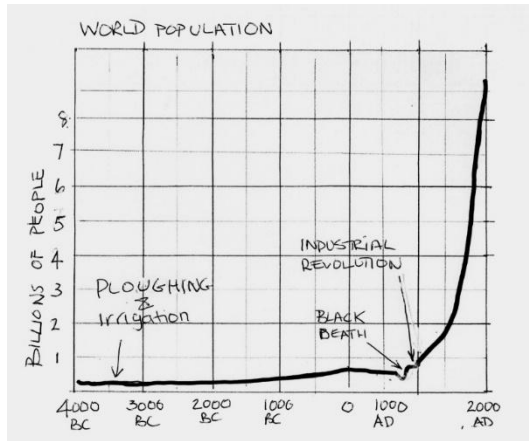
Suicide being the most ridiculous idea of Mr Atkins’ death and applying the idea to the mass extinctions more so, Billy, a fan of Albert Camus’ Absurdism decided to apply it as the most likely scenario, only after breakfast, full English, and a river walk.

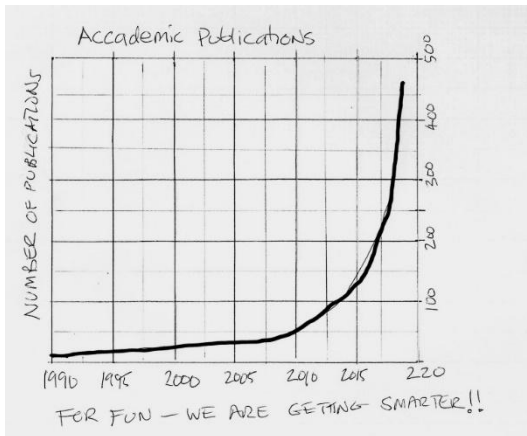
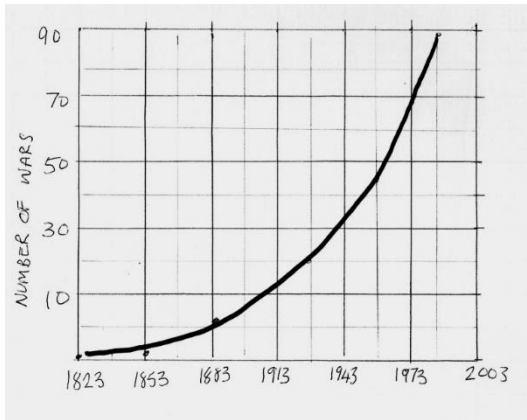
Now in his study he had printed out the 5 extinction scenarios, and the ongoing sixth. He liked hard copy.

4 billions = 4000 millions First Life.
2400 Million years ago Pre Cambrian Rise of Oxygen, end of Early Life.
445 Million years ago Late Ordovician mass extinction.
73 (difference in M yrs.)
372 Million years ago Late Devonian extinction.
122 (difference in M yrs.)
250 Million years ago Permian–Triassic extinction.
50 (difference in M yrs.)
200 Million years ago Triassic–Jurassic extinction event.
134 (difference in M yrs.)
66 Million years ago Cretaceous–Paleogene extinction.
66 (difference in M yrs.)
Now = Holocene extinction.

‘There seems to be a kind of pattern of gaps of small and large intervals.’ he thought.

He then drew a human population graph. And then other graphs.





That evening Billy and Lisa had a conversation via zoom. A precis something like,

Billy, 'First I'm looking at your revelation of St John as the end of things, the final extinction. There is it seems a battle between earthly civilizations and heavenly forces. But our current state of global warming we are doing this to ourselves, hence suicide. You could say this and certainty in the case of the current and sixth extinction, the Holocene, or Anthropocene as I like to call the present time. But maybe just maybe suicide in the other mass extinctions, crazy, how, but a thought?

Suicide as it's a possible in the Atkins murder, he simply brought it on himself, summoned his devils, his hatred not just for his life, but the whole of existence, very existential, and for once they appeared, but it didn't destroy everything just him.'

Lisa said, 'I'm finding this hard to follow, but you are saying that thoughts can become materialised?'

She thought for a while then said,

'And so, the idea that life itself, here and now pollution, it's byproducts, in the past more oxygen, or some forms of pollution causes life's own demise.'

'Yes, the death drive in Freud, good!' interrupted Billy, Lisa continued,

'Which could be called suicide. Yet in Revelation there is no suicide but a conflict.'

'And we seem to be given the dragon metaphor, and Revelations involves a dragon in the conflict.' she added.

‘What of Mrs Atkins materializing a dragon?’ Lisa was thinking aloud, ‘no that can’t relate to mass extinctions. She’s not the kind.’

‘Agreed.’ Billy said.

Lisa continued, ‘What if it’s a third party behind the extinctions, let’s say some evil force, and now at the sixth attempt we might have something like Armageddon?’

‘Well technology itself could be being driven by more than humanity, some alien force.’ This was Billy.

‘Need to think.’ said Lisa.

They agreed to talk the following evening.

CHAPTER III III: THE MORNING STAR

'Lisa321---@yahoo.co.uk> to B---@gmail.com'

Billy Hi

Sending you this email, couldn't sleep so did an all-nighter,
here are my notes, talk tonight on zoom. – L.

The Book of Revelation AKA “Apocalypse of St. John”.

The Dragon and conflict, some heretical notions!

Revelation and the morning star first appears in John 2:28
(see below for the nature of ‘The Morning Star’!)

“2:25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. 26
And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the
end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27 And he shall
rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall
they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. 28
And I will give him the morning star. 29 He that hath an ear,
let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

Now what is odd, more than what ‘And I will give him the
morning star.’ means, is that the internet seems, from my late-
night searches, to avoid Revelation 22:16.

Here – from 22:13

“13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the
first and the last.

14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

Before we unpack what ‘The Morning Star’ is, I suspect you well know, look at 22:19 – no editing!

OK so now to the OT.

“Isaiah 14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!”

I guess you are well aware of this... and Job

“Job 38:7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”

OK, I know the idea that the morning star -Lucifer, was one of the angels who fell from heaven, but in revelation this seems not to be the case or is it in Job.

Here we need to link Satan and the definitive devil,

“Revelation 20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years...”

So, we now have the dragon and the Devil, definitive, and whose name is Satan.

So, what of Job in the OT.

“Job 1:6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.

7 And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

8 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?”

So here Satan has not fallen. Wiki [sorry]

‘The most common meaning for Lucifer in English is as a name for The Devil in Christian theology, not a devil or a demon. It’s use appears in the King James Version of the Bible, in Isaiah, and before that in the Vulgate, the late-4th-century Latin translation of the Bible, not as the name of a devil but as the Latin word *lucifer*, meaning “the morning star”, “the planet Venus”, or, as an adjective, “light-bringing”. It is a translation of the Hebrew word *הִלֵּל*, *hêlêl*, meaning “Shining One”.

As the Latin name for the morning appearances of the planet Venus, it corresponds to the Greek names *Phosphorus* *Φωσφόρος*, “light-bringer”, and *Eosphorus* *Ἑωσφόρος*, “dawn-bringer”. The entity’s Latin name was subsequently absorbed into Christianity as a name for the Devil. Modern scholarship generally translates the term in the relevant Bible passage, Isaiah 14:12, where the Greek Septuagint reads *ὁ ἑωσφόρος ὁ πρωὶ ἀνατέλλων*, as “morning star” or “shining one” rather than as a proper noun, *Lucifer*, as found in the Latin Vulgate.’

OK, so it looks like the war in heaven in The Apocalypse of St. John has at minimum an ambivalence.

Here is where I segue to William Blake and Gnosticism, your territory? [It’s 3 in the morning.]

Blake rejected the Old Testament's God, emphasizing the Holy Spirit's presence in individuals and seeing religion as a personal relationship with God. For me reminiscent of Tillich!

In Blake's original myth, Urizen is the representation of abstractions and an abstraction of the human self.

And here I mean, from Blake's idea, Newton, mathematics, logic, geometry, numbers are abstractions.

Urizen [AKA Yahweh, God of the OT] is the first entity.

(Remember, by Paul Tillich. God is not a being but the ground of being- and for me!)

He (Urizen) believes himself holy and he sets about establishing various sins in a book of brass. Urizen has clear similarities with the creature called the Demiurge by Gnostic sects. The compass and other drafting symbols that Blake associates with Urizen borrow from Masonic symbolism for God as the "Great Architect of the Universe"... The demiurge is given many names in the Gnostic scriptures, but the three most common ones are Yaldabaoth, Samael, and Saklas. "Saklas" comes from the Aramaic word for "fool," and "Samael" is Aramaic for "Blind God" or "God of the Blind". The meaning of "Yaldabaoth" is uncertain, but it could be a condensed form of "Yahweh, Lord of Sabbaths".

So, we have the idea of the difference between a radical messiahship of Christianity, in the human, and another - a superhuman, transcendental being of absolute power, omnipotent, with absolute knowledge, omniscience, who is everywhere, omnipresent.

From this being comes the power of The Church and its authority. The need to keep the laity ignorant, demurring to an unquestioned hierarchy of the church's interpretation of Power in God and so Power in the Church.

And rightly, especially in the secularism of modernity, rejected by many as a cruel and evil being.

The problem of theodicy, theodicy "vindication of God", attempts to resolve the problem of evil that arises when all power and all goodness are simultaneously ascribed to God. Leibnitz's idea, the nonsense that this is 'The Best of all Possible Worlds'.

[Edit: sorry looking back, this was maybe now 4 in the morning, much you obviously know, but the mood was important, my mood.]

OK it's six, and still dark, no stars, or Venus, but I'll get some sleep, best, L.

Over breakfast in Cumberland Street Billy was sat at the kitchen table, Catherine Mulberry was as usual drinking coffee and eating her scrambled eggs and smoked salmon. Emily Clarke had cooked breakfast, she though only having fruit juice and a croissant with butter and jam. She had cooked Billy's "full English".

In this case bacon, sausages, fried eggs, baked beans, tomatoes, mushrooms, toast, fried bread and tea. Not coffee, not hash browns, this is not the USA, not black pudding. One expects black pudding in the North of England, and when in Scotland a full Scottish would of course have haggis.

However, he was struggling, having printed off Lisa's email, he preferred hard copy, and was trying to eat, read and make notes at the same time. This behaviour would normally have not been tolerated but since the arrival of Emily Clarke the rules had changed.

Emily would now often cook breakfast for all three, but she would read her newspaper. Which in itself first aroused Catherine's curiosity, because she took a different paper each day, cycling through the 'red tops', The Mirror, Mail, Express, Sun, and even the Star, then the broadsheets, Times, Guardian, Telegraph, and then the "I", and even the Financial Times and Socialist Worker. And Catherine's curiosity meant she would now spend mornings reading whatever the paper once Emily had finished, in the garden room.

'It's remarkable work from the Reverend Lisa Phillips.' he had said, only to no one. Emily had gone for her morning walk and Catherine Mulberry was in the garden room, reading The Daily Star.

CHAPTER ### ### ###: THE SECOND ZOOM

Billy's work for the day was on the six extinctions and the ridiculous ideas about suicide.

The first mass extinction event was in the Late Ordovician period followed by the Late Devonian extinction event where some species barely survived, the jawless thelodonts but here was the first example of 100% extinctions, among freshwater and shallow marine tetrapodomorph fish.

However, the Permian–Triassic extinction event saw the total extinction of Eurypterids, Trilobites, Acanthodians and Blastoids.

The Triassic–Jurassic extinction event saw nothing like this but the following Cretaceous–Paleogene extinction event is perhaps the most well-known, the event caused the extinction of all non-avian dinosaurs. Most other tetrapods weighing more than 25 kg (55 lb) also became extinct.

‘But Not the flying dragons?’ Billy thought, ‘What happened to them?’

That evening he was talking to Lisa on zoom,

‘So, what if “suicide” applies to a species or life, a kind of Freudian death wish?’ she was saying. ‘An implicit drive in all life, no different from the other drives, sex and food?’

‘Go on.’ said Billy.

‘Well, that could account for these extinctions in terms of suicide. Even, or especially Mr Atkins, these drives are kept constrained but over time they accumulate into a catastrophic event.’

‘Go on, this sounds promising.’ said Billy.

‘And dragons, we have two types it seems, the bad ones in the West, and the good ones in the East. Again, primitive symbols of these drives, like the serpent in the garden of Eden as the manifestation of a desire or drive.’

‘Please keep going.’ said Billy.

‘Well, the East has the idea of a circular creation, the West of a teleological, a beginning middle and final end.

And the Ouroboros, the snake or dragon eating its tail, consuming itself which connects to both East and West. In Gnosticism and In Norse mythology, Indian Vedic texts, the thought of the human mind devouring oneself and turning oneself into a circulatory process, the Möbius strip, eternal repetition, so maybe that is the model, not static, a progress and collapse then a repetition anew.’

‘Very good,’ said Billy, ‘But there might be only one problem, a problem with the current idea of an extinction event, if you look at the graphs this could be the case but I’m thinking of Accelerationism.’

‘Yes!’ said Lisa, ‘I see, the cycle speeds up, gets more severe then ends in...’ she paused, then continued, ‘... an infinity of change, chaos. All becomes nothing and nothing becomes all.’

‘Well said.’ said Billy.

‘In an attempt at the absolute, everything goes, quantity, quality, time, and space, things and nothings.’

There was a pause.

‘We would have to stop the war in earth and heaven, the war without and within, which is impossible.’ she said.

‘Maybe.’ said Billy. ‘And,’ he paused, ‘assisted suicide?’

‘By that you mean the possibility of another force pushing humanity, or creation towards its demise? I’m finding all this difficult so after the coming Sunday I’m going on a silent retreat.’ Lisa said.

‘Sounds good, be in touch afterwards maybe.’ said Billy.

And Lisa was thinking,

‘The explanations of science are all correlations. As is all our understanding, even reason, even from childhood learning how to write and count. They correlate to our world, and now, well we can think it is they that have made our world. Not an easy thing to change, as it, our correlations have the power to change even the past.

Is this true of all thoughts, but not emotions.

Am I Lisa Phillips? Two Ls?

Is 6 real as is IIIII as real?’

The following Monday morning Lisa Phillips packed and drove in her Land Rover to St. Davids in Wales, the retreat, silent, was at a large house near St Non’s ruined chapel, about half a mile from the Cathedral, she would spend five nights in silent contemplation.

Billy was also thinking, looking at his Moleskine notebook, reading his notes,

‘Permian-Triassic Extinction 252 million years ago: This event wiped out around 96% of marine species and 70% of terrestrial vertebrate species. The fossil record from this period shows a sudden and massive drop in biodiversity.’

And then the thought struck him, ‘But not a sudden rise in dead species at the event...’

He continued reading,

‘Cretaceous-Paleogene Extinction (about 66 million years ago): Famous for ending the reign of the dinosaurs, this event also left a significant amount of fossil evidence, including a layer of sediment rich in iridium, a rare element on Earth but common in asteroids, suggesting a massive impact event.’

‘But not a sudden rise in dead species at the event... so where are the remains of these events, the bodies!’

CHAPTER ### ### ### I: LISA AND SAINT DAVIDS

The drive was long, across North Warwickshire to Coleshill where she picked up the M42 south, skirting Birmingham to pick up the M5, also south. Around Worcester leaving the motorway and heading towards the town of Leominster, then to Hay-on-Wye. Here she had to stop not being able to resist the small town and its castle, and famous for its innumerable bookshops. She found an old copy of Lawrence's Apocalypse, though she had one back home she had forgot to pack it, so decided to buy another copy. She had tea outside, just bearable in the early spring.

Then a short run on the A470 to the A40 which would take her to Carmarthen, and then Haverfordwest, not able to avoid the town and pick up the A487 which at Newgale runs along the beach. Another stop, the wide expanse of beach and sky, distant hills and the sea, for anyone living in the midlands the sea is always exciting, she could not then resist a barefoot walk on the sand. Then on to Solva and finally a short drive to the destination of St Davids.

St Davids, the town or to be correct the city, and Cathedral nestles inland from the sea on three sides, the town and Cathedral therefore not being visible, the story goes from threats from the sea. The Cathedral and ruins of the Bishop's Palace dates from 1181, the monastic community was founded by Saint David, Abbot of Menevia, who died in 589. An earlier Cathedral was begun in 1123. The present Cathedral has a large magnificent square central tower, and on entering has a definite upwards slope.

St Davids having a Cathedral is a city, however, is the size of a small town or large village. The sea is always near, the

shortest walk of a sixth of a mile to St Non's chapel, the well and retreat centre. A 15-minute walk from there to the Cathedral, or a longer coastal walk to Whitesands bay and then 2 miles to the city.

Lisa had fixed a routine; she would not take part in any organised services. In the early morning, she would meditate in the chapel for an hour, then have a simple breakfast. Followed by a longer walk around the coast, and back for lunch. Another walk in the afternoon, again either spending an hour in the chapel or in the Cathedral. In the evening, after a frugal meal, reading, thinking and writing.

The coast path around the cliff tops has expansive sea views, the cliffs are of geological significance showing clearly the folded strata. Walking west from St Non's chapel for half a mile along the cliff top, the route turns north and descends to Porthclais harbour, the path having stunted oaks decked in lichens, and in early spring the iridescent flaming yellow of the broom in full flower. The harbour itself a simple stone affair, the narrow inlet about 400 yards from the sea. There paths and roads lead back to St Davids, or the route climbs the opposite side of the inlet and follows the zig zag coastline with dazzling views of seas and rocks.

There is a small bay, Portlysgi, often empty, in late spring almost always. A good place to sit and meditate and shelter from any wind. The path then rises high with views now across the bay of the peninsula. From Pen Dal-aderyn, Ramsey Island can be seen, home of ravens, common buzzards, peregrines, northern wheatears, gulls, auks, Manx shearwaters, razorbills and guillemots. And a grey seal breeding colony, the island has a permanent population of

just two human residents, the RSPB Warden and Assistant Warden.

Walking past the St Davids Lifeboat Station around the headland you come to Whitesands Bay and its sandy beach. Here you will see Carn Llidi, a hill east of St Davids. The 594 feet rocky hill stands in a prominent and isolated position dominating Whitesands Bay and looks far taller than its 594 feet. On clear days, from the top of the hill there are views west towards Ramsey Island and the Bishops and Clerks islets, and north towards Strumble Head, on clear evenings, in mid-summer at sunset, glimpses of the Wicklow Mountains in Ireland. It appears in many paintings of the area made by the English artist Graham Sutherland, as do parts of the hedgerows and lanes of this part of Pembrokeshire. Though the artist made it clear, not just any part of the hedgerow, but very particular parts.

The area is rich in archaeology. Two burial chambers, presumed to be neolithic, are located on the higher southwest slopes of the hill.

It is here that Lisa walked, a shorter version at times, with an ancient landscape all around her, a time to empty her mind from the clutter, and think from a blank page.

CHAPTER ### ## II: THE SEVEN SEALS

MONDAY – LISA + BILLY

After arriving Lisa went for a short walk along the coast path then had supper and retired to her room. Trying to keep her mind clear she now sat and opened a King James Bible, turning to the last book.

It begins “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him... Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.”

This beginning of the book of Revelation entered the blank page of Lisa’s mind and was a puzzle. There seemed a difference between this God and Jesus Christ. For a non-blank mind of a Christian they would believe that Jesus was the Christ and the Christ was God, one of the Trinity, so here was a puzzle.

Then the thoughts. A precis of what she read entered the space in her mind...

‘The message to the seven churches, hence seven stars in the hand of the figure who identifies as *everything*, Alpha Omega, A to Z, the first and the last, that is alive and was dead. And the seven candlesticks, so the messages to the seven churches.’

She sat in a small room, a table and chair and single bed. A window which looked onto a grassy slope, but now night and a deep darkness, the room lit only with a small lamp, outside she could hear a gentle breeze and the crash of waves on the rocks.

‘Now a door opens in heaven, revealing a throne with a seated figure and 24 elders sitting around it, also four beasts like a lion, a calf, a man, and an eagle. They each have six wings, wings which are full of eyes within and the beasts call Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. The 24 elders casting down their crowns and saying to the effect all things were created for this figure, Lord God Almighty.

The Lord God on the throne is holding in the right hand a book which has seven seals. An angel asks who is worthy to open the book, an elder spoke of the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, and there appeared the Lamb that had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And then came praise for the lamb from those around the throne and thousands in heaven.

And the seals are opened by the lamb, first a bowman on a white horse, a conqueror, then a rider on a red horse removing peace from the world, a rider on a black horse holding a pair of balances, it seems for fairness? The fourth the pale horse ridden by death who killed a fourth of the living. The Four horsemen of the Apocalypse.

With the fifth seal the souls of those that were killed for their faith wanting vengeance appear but are told to wait. At the sixth a cosmic cataclysm, and then those believers come before the throne. And at the seventh seven angels appear, and we have seven more cataclysmic events.’

Lisa was thinking to herself,

‘The Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, is Jesus? And elsewhere is the morning star, and is the lamb of God the sacrifice for our sins? Having seven horns and seven eyes, the dragon has seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns?’

I should try to make some sense of this tomorrow.’

And so, Lisa slept.

The same day that Lisa travelled to St Davids Billy began as normal with a breakfast, a walk along the river and then back to the house in Cumberland Street.

‘I’ll be in my study most of the day, I’ve a book to read, Lawrence’s, D.H. that is, Apocalypse.’ he announced to Catherine Mulberry.

‘Why?’ she replied, ‘you’ve already read it?’

‘Have I? I don’t remember, odd.’ he replied.

‘Very.’ she said. With which Billy disappeared into his study.

In his study he opened the book, skipped through the opening pages, still no recollection, and began making notes.

He read, made notes and thought...

‘Lawrence saw the Christian text, written by a Jew, using imagery from the Old Testament, notably the vision of the chariot with the wheels and angels in Ezekiel.

Note: he, Lawrence, thought the Jews obtained their imagery from older texts from such as those of Mesopotamia. In the introduction a reference to the seven seals, as an act of liberation and “nerve centres or chakras”. Kundalini Yoga

again, just as in the Eve Sharif affair. Who or what is provoking this Apocalypse? An Eagle?

The Jewish god being invisible, hence the use of other forms.

Then the number 7, seven stars seven candle sticks 7 churches.

Lamb that had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes...

In Kundalini Yoga! The 7 chakras, and the Sanskrit word Kundalini means “ring, bracelet, coil of a rope”, and of a serpent-like power in Tantrism...’

He wrote “7, In Kundalini a serpent - enter another dragon.”

Now he took a mid-morning break, not liking coffee and not wanting tea he drank some sparkling water, took a walk around the garden, noticing the buds on the trees, and the approach of another summer he thought. Catherine Mulberry was in the garden pruning rose bushes, as he passed, she said,

‘Lunch?’

To which he replied, ‘I’ll just make some sandwiches, and I’ll cook supper.’ Emily Clarke was digging in the vegetable patch; she had also lit a bonfire, and the smoke rose in lazy patterns, the sky a steel grey, winter fighting its losing battle.

He went back to his study, read some more then thinking,

‘So, Kundalini Yoga. Chakras, the locations in the human body, 1st chakra, Muladhara, the root or anus. Then to the second just above, Swadisthana, the base of the spine where

the coiled serpent, kundalini, awakes. It rises up the spine to the 3rd Manipura chakra, where the prana life force radiates. 4th chakra, Anaata, the Heart, 5th chakra, Vishudda, the throat, the 6th Ajna, is the Third Eye, finally the 7th, Sahasrara, the crown, where self-actualization and liberation from karma takes place.

Yes, as found in some Gothic Cathedrals, interesting.'

Billy had discovered that some of the Gothic Cathedrals, notably Chartres had clear indications in the architecture of the passage of the snake in Kundalini Yoga. And that this wasn't such a fantastic fiction as these Cathedrals would have been visited by the Knights Templars who had also travelled to India.

He then broke off from Lawrence to look at some books on Kundalini Yoga and Gothic Cathedrals. He wondered about St Davids. Then he left for the kitchen to fix some sandwiches and tea. Catherine and Emily were just leaving,

'Going shopping, will get some lunch out, what's supper?' asked Cathrine Mulberry.

'I think soup, Spag Boll, salad, and maybe a tarte tatin.' was Billy's reply.

'Yummy!' said Cathrine Mulberry, and they left.

Billy went back to his study and read, then continued his notes:

'From the throne cosmic noises – Lawrence uses the phrase "of The Almighty or Demiurge" – So the demiurge, in some gnostic texts the creator of a botched universe. The OT god of Blake.

Also, the seven planets, Sun, Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, and here the Moon, and the days of the week?

So, the book with seven seals should be opened by the Lion of Judah, is now opened by the lamb.

Now the horsemen who Lawrence thinks are pagan. And we have the mystical 7 seals of Kundalini again. And the old Adam replaced by a new, in the process?

The four natures of man, sanguine white, choleric red, melancholic black and phlegmatic pale. Four natures, jovial, martial, Saturn and mercurial. Lawrence says Jove is the Sun not Jupiter, and white, Mars is red! Saturn black and gloomy, yes, and mercury.

The white rider, conqueror is the triumph of the ego, the next the inner battle of the psyche, the third the materiality of the body starved of sustenance or of passion so the fourth enters hades, but only a partial death.

Lawrence now sees the Jewish and Christian idea is of the spirit and not the flesh of the pagan. So, the fifth seal the souls have to wait for the physical destruction of the flesh. With the destruction in the sixth the living "I" is removed in a cosmic calamity for the entry of the souls. And at seven the six stages over and a new and lesser cycle is prepared.

So, we can read it literally, or as Lawrence is, and like the Cathedral see the hidden texts, fantastic!

He read some more, the decided to go shopping for what was wanted for supper, and prepare for this, then maybe a nap.

All agreed Billy's supper a success, with red wine being appropriate. He was complemented on his tarte, and homemade soup, parsnip and lots of garlic and cream.

'Especially the tarte.' Emily said.

'A recipe he was taught by Albigensian Gnostics when in the Languedoc southern France.' Catherine Mulberry replied before Billy could.

And so, eventually he too slept. Whilst Lisa dreamt a strange dream, as in she had a conversation with Billy, the topics ranging from cooking to Cathedrals, Yoga and The Book of Revelation.

CHAPTER ### ### ### III: THE SEVEN TRUMPS

When Lisa awoke on Tuesday, as the early dawn lit her room, she had forgotten to close the curtains, she remembered immediately her vivid dream, found her notebook and pencil and jotted down a summary. Far too early for breakfast yet, she found the copy of Lawrence's Apocalypse she had bought in Hay-on-Wye and read the first part.

She had a simple breakfast of tea with no milk and toasted whole meal bread baked in the retreat house kitchen the previous day. She then spent an hour in the chapel. Afterwards taking a small ruck sac with the Bible, Lawrence's Apocalypse and her notebook she went for a walk. She walked east towards Solva, Caefai Beach was less than half a mile, where she descended from the cliff path and found a place to sit and read. But she didn't, just mulled things over in her mind for what must have been hours, coming to no particular conclusion. Walking back along the cliff path she noticed the birds, and the light sparkling on the sea, she couldn't name the birds but the feeling she had was just the un-named reality of the experience. She took the path back to the retreat and sat awhile in the ruin of the original chapel, now just three remains of the walls, then decided, after a lunch, just bread and cheese with water, to visit the Cathedral.

The Cathedral inside has a sparse feel, like the landscape, with rounded Norman arches with dog tooth patterns and simple oak pews, more like benches. The alter hidden by a rood screen in a yellow stone carved with three saints to the left and a bishop to the right, the mild yellow stone in contrast to the grey granite stone of the rest of the building. Yet there was still a feeling of light, an echo of the cliffs and sparkling

sea and sky. Lisa sat four hours, as she had at Caefai Beach, again there were no thoughts just the feeling more than ever of the reality of what? The stone, the light, the sea?

After walking back to the retreat and another frugal meal, soup, bread and water, she meditated in the chapel, then took to her room to continue reading from The Revelation of St John.

She read from her KJV Bible, starting at chapter 8, and thinking as she read,

‘So now seven angels stand before God and are given seven trumpets, an eighth lit incense in a censor, then filled it from fire from the alter, throwing it to earth, giving earthquakes and thunder.

Each angel sounded their trumpet, at the first a third of vegetation is burnt up, at the second a third of sea creatures and ships are destroyed. The third and a third of the waters becomes wormwood and many die. The fourth a third of light from the sun, moon and stars is darkened.

The beginning of the Apocalypse,’ she thought.

‘Do these numbers mean something, yes they must, the fifth trump sounded and smoke came from the pit with creatures like an army, locusts, scorpions, and were ordered not to harm those humans with the seal of God on their foreheads. And they had to torment men four five months. Their king was Apollyon. Who is? I’ll look this up.’

Then remembered she had no laptop,

‘Silent study and meditation.’ she thought,

‘So, at the sixth trump four angels bound to the river Euphrates are loosed. Their army destroys a third of all men but those remaining continue in idolatry.

Now a great angel comes with a little book, and John eats this. He then has to measure the temple? Two Prophets are appointed, they will be ignored by the people of the earth who will make merry, the beast from the pit will kill the Prophets, then they will be brought back to life and raised to heaven. And then more earthquakes befell the earth.

At the seventh trump the kingdom of Christ is announced, but the nations of earth were angry. The temple in heaven is opened.’

She read on, stopping at nearly every verse to let it fill her mind, with a disquieting feeling, that was the unreality of what she read and the reality outside in the sounds of the waves in the darkness of the night.

‘Now the pregnant woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars appears, as does the red dragon from the pit.

So, the dragon appears!

It has seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns, its tail drew a third of the stars and cast them to the earth, and now it’s standing before the woman in order to eat her child as it’s born. She flees, and the child, who would rule the earth is brought to the throne of God. Christ? Jesus? Is she the Virgin?

Then the famous war in heaven, Michael and his angels against the dragon and his angels, the dragon, who is the

Devil, who is Satan, with his angels are cast into, or maybe onto, the earth. Into? Underground?

Then there is general rejoicing in heaven but not on earth because the devil is now present, but it stays only for a short time.

And here the dragon persecutes the woman, but she is given wings and escapes, which brought forth the man child.

The dragon tries to drown her with a flood, but the earth swallows the water. So now the dragon makes war with the faithful, the remnant of her seed. Is then the woman the church?’

Now tired, Lisa slept and dreamt.

Billy would spend some of Tuesday reading Lawrence’s Apocalypse.

Others have said of him that he could read minds, which he could not, or that he had “helpers”, the use of dowsing, a púca (a shape changing spirit) or some shamanistic help, which he did have. But he also had a sense of synchronicity, of correlationism. So, he spent some of the morning in research regarding trilobites and helping in the garden. Spring bulbs, snow drops still flowering and now daffodils. Lunch was soup, but unlike Lisa he had a beer with it. So, it was afternoon when he picked up the Lawrence and began, reading, thinking and note taking. He now had a new Moleskine notebook for this ‘case’, the term he used.

‘D.H. seems to think the book of revelations now departs from older pagan sources for more Jewish themes. He seems to relate the former with the earth and nature, the latter with

the more spiritual. And no need to guess where his sympathies lie.'

he thought, reading,

'And then the now-Jewish Apocalypse starts to unroll its second cycle of the Seven Trumps.

Again, a division into four and three.'

Now writing,

1st 1/3 vegetable life destroyed.

2nd 1/3 marine life destroyed.

3rd 1/3 fresh water embittered.

4th 1/3 heavens destroyed.

'The material cosmos, Lawrence writes, has been destroyed, "a little death" and now three woes for the soul of the world, symbolised as men. The angel descends to open the abyss, Jewish Hell, Hades. The underworld of the cosmos, not of the self in the prior seven. The underworld is the suspended powers of creation.'

In his notebook Billy makes notes and writes, "powers of creation? By a demiurge?"

Looking up he noticed through the windows clouds.

'Lawrence thinks the old pagan nature of man must give way to the new, but it lives on undying in the underworld. Yes, the world of dragons, caves, and mines, coal mines, the world of the sources of power for the industrial revolution.'

He looked up, and saw it was raining and heard noises in the kitchen. So, he closed his notebook and investigated and so joins the two women for tea.

‘Going well?’ asks Emily, Catherine knowing better,

‘I’m underground.’ he replied, ‘Where dragons live.’

Back in his study he continues his reading,

‘Lots of stuff about ancient powers, man’s old, suspended self, and the two woes? In the first he has the army of locusts led by Apollyon, who Lawrence claims is Apollo, The Greek Sun God, but here he is the hellish sun. Interesting.’

Billy rose and got out his KJV Bible and a reference book,

Looking up he finds Apollyon is the Greek word for Abaddon, the Hebrew term אַבְדֹן ’Āḇaddōn, meaning “destruction”, “doom”.

He read quietly aloud from the KJV Bible,

‘Verse 11, And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.’

‘So,’ he thought, ‘Lawrence want’s a Greek god of light and reason, not the destroyer from the dark pit. Why?’ He continued reading and thinking,

‘Now the next woe, the sixth Trump, a voice from the alter of gold says to free the four angels bound to the river Euphrates, the evil river of Babylon, and the four waters under the earth of hell. But Hell, actually has five’,

He continued reading,

‘Now a new army issues from the pit and kills a third of all men, Lawrence claims the conflicting texts are down to two writers misunderstanding each other, which accounts for the weird mix of animal forms that these creatures have. That the eternal lake of brimstone rather than a dismal Hades is required as the saved cannot be happy unless they know of the unhappiness of the fallen in hell. The two thirds of men left continue to worship idols. There is a pause, as before with the seals. The mighty angel like the Son of Man, but not? Then seven thunders and the angel, using a Greek oath swears that the old Time is over. The little book is eaten. The temple is measured, a Jewish interruption says Lawrence, and then the two witnesses, Moses and Elijah, who were at Jesus’ transfiguration. Though Lawrence departs again from this traditional interpretation, he writes that the prophets actually represent twins. From Greek twins, Castor and Pollux and from deep in human consciousness, from 4,000 years before. Lawrence is presenting in these two, a Samothracian cult of Kabeiroi? Need to look this up?’

Here Billy stopped to look this up in his shared library. Normally he might expect to find Emily or Catherine Mulberry or both in the library, but none this afternoon.

He found some reference to obscure Greek cults, and so began writing in his notebook,

“Kabiri were a group of deities associated with the underworld, fertility and death, from Samothrace a Greek island in the northern Aegean Sea. Relates to twin pillars of brass...”

‘So, phallic statues, though the pillars are also described as the twin pillars of Heaven and Earth. Where is Lawrence going

with this? This is deep,' he thought, 'like it. Now back to Lawrence...'

So back in his study and reading,

'Now he picks up something of this myth, but he is vague, mentions black thunder fertility gods of gateposts, guards of the altar, secret lords of sex, then brings up the two candlesticks in the Apocalypse. Two streams, dual consciousness, the Tree of Life with earthly roots, and gods of limits, the twin testes, and Lawrence concludes the earth and body cannot die until these twins have been killed. Well,' Billy thought, 'a buckshot, hitting some target, but more important for Lawrence than in the Book, but then maybe not.'

Now the seventh trump and Lawrence says this ends the first part, the old part. Now the myth of the "sun-goddess, and her pursuit by the great red dragon" is left as the centre piece he says, and this is the birth of the Messiah. So, he says this is a pagan myth, interesting. Lawrence then uses direct quotes from St John, the dragon wanting to eat the child when born, St Micheal and his angels fighting the dragon. The identification of the dragon with the Devil and Satan who gives power to Nero.'

He made some more notes then decided to quit for the day, it seemed a good place to stop, though for no good reason.

He found Catherine Mulberry and Emily Clarke in the garden room,

'Tea?' he asked to a reply of 'Yes please.'

They looked onto a grey garden, the rain had stopped,

'Well?' asked Emily.

Billy had to think, 'Oh the book, OK I suppose, very Lawrence, he dwells on sex, though strange misses the phallic in favour of the testes?'

He paused, then,

'In relation to two prophets, he jumps to a conclusion about this from some link to a Greek cult, Kabeiri deities and twins. Seems to overplay this, and ignore the phallic?'

'Sounds interesting, could I borrow your copy after you've done with it?' Emily asked.

'No need,' said Catherine Mulberry, 'there's one in the library or you can borrow mine.'

'I didn't know you had a copy?' asked Billy.

'Yes, it was yours, you gave it to me.' she replied.

Billy looked crest fallen,

'Cheer up, we will go for a curry tonight at Shapla's, King Prawn Vinderllo for you, my treat.' Catherine said, and Billy beamed.

CHAPTER ### III: NAME OF THE BEAST

Lisa's dream the night before was now just about Lawrence's Apocalypse, out of focus figures and the soft voice of Billy's thoughts.

So, on waking she made some notes, showered, dressed then went into the chapel for an hour, though she could not clear or still her mind. She had a simple breakfast of porridge oats and drank only water. Her plan was to spend the day outside, she would take a water bottle, bread and cheese, nothing else. The sky was clear, and the sea sparkled once again. She had decided to walk to Portmelgan Beach, around a mile north of Whitesands Bay, which was a three and half mile walk from the retreat via the city. Taking it very easy, deep in thought, maybe stopping for a while in the Cathedral, so around 2 hours or so to get to the beach. She was attracted by the promise of a more windswept coast dominated by Carn Llidi. From Whitesands Bay the path steadily rose but still rough farmland on her right, the wide expanse of sea on the left, the distant Ramsey Island, and the sea with outcrops of rock. Now the fields gave way to moorland scrub, windswept grass and gorse in full bloom of dazzling yellow, stones and small boulders. In front she saw her destination, the small v shaped bay and beach. It was empty, the top of the beach had lighter coloured rocks than the blacker cliffs and boulders at the side, the sea was calm, small waves drifting in onto the sand. The dark stones were those which were underwater at high tide, black because of seaweed. She scrambled down to the beach and found a spot on the sand with a rock for a backrest, and simply sat, gazing out to sea. Hours passed, around midday she ate some bread and cheese, her mind clearing with the waves. And so, at mid-afternoon she walked

slowly back, not stopping in St Davids. She went to her room and slept. Then repeated her nightly routine, three days she hadn't spoken any word to anyone, when needing anything at the retreat simply pointing. This was not strange, it was how things were done, many came for silent retreats which purges the mind of the clatter, of idle chatter, now made worse by the mobile phone.

Sitting at the small table in her room with just the small lamp for light, she opened the KJV Bible, found the page and read, thoughts came into her head...

'So now John sees a beast rise up out of the sea, like a leopard with feet of a bear, his mouth of a lion, having seven heads and ten horns, and on the horns ten crowns, and on his heads the name of blasphemy. And the red dragon gives him his power, and his seat, and authority.

One of the heads of this beast has been fatally wounded by a sword, but it is healed. All the world worships the beast and the dragon who gave it power, except those in the book of life of the Lamb.

Another beast, this time from the sea,' she thinks, 'this leopard like thing, interesting, with ten horns, the lamb had seven. I think it could represent another dragon; it causes miracles such that the people make an image of this beast which had a head wounded by a sword. And life was given to the image and those who did not worship it are killed. And those that do worship the image of the beast receive the mark 666, on their right hand, or on their foreheads. And no man might buy or sell, without the mark, name or number.

The 666 thing.’ she thought. ‘Numbers, technology, images, more and more images, everywhere.’ A picture in her mind of people in the streets, shops and restaurants, always looking at their smart phones, she felt sick. And a terrible fear rose inside her.

‘Now the lamb appears on mount Zion with a great multitude, they are virgins, having the lamb’s Father’s name written on their foreheads. singing... More angels, and warnings, the fall of Babylon, the hour of judgement, and the mark of the beast.

The Son of man on a cloud appears with a sickle, the earth is reaped.

Also, an angel with a sickle, another has power over fire, there is the metaphor of vines and the wine press as the wrath of God.

The temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened, out came seven angels having the seven last plagues.

One of the four beasts gives them seven vials full of the wrath of God. The temple fills with smoke.

So, we seem to be reaching some climax’ she thought,

‘The first vial is poured on the earth, second on the sea, third on the rivers and fountains of waters, all turn to blood. The fourth poured onto the sun scorching men, the fifth vial poured onto the seat of the beast, the sixth poured on the Euphrates, drying it up.

Three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon. Now the beast, and the false prophet are gathered at Armageddon.

So, this is a climax', she thought.

And again, went to bed and fell asleep expecting to hear Billy's thoughts on Lawrence's interpretation of this.

Tuesday morning after the usual breakfast and walk along the river Billy retired to his study and picked up Lawrence's story of the Apocalypse. Before he did it struck him that the reason Lawrence gives of using this particular book of the bible was his non-conformist Christian childhood, that the Bible was a second nature to Lawrence, Billy wondered if this might not have been true of the Atkins, either of them, or both? Did they somehow summon a dragon from under the earth.

So, he made a note, then opened his new, yet second hand copy of Lawrence's book.

'So, Lawrence thinks there now is a great change in the Revelation, and finds the change uninteresting, as it's from the pagan, obviously he likes, visceral, to the Jewish, spiritual. Apart from the "Scarlet Woman" obviously. The seven vials are a clumsy copy of the seven trumps. The visions of the wine press obvious. He sees a Jewish envy of Babylon. The Cosmic Woman "wanders" with her child, she is driven into the desert, escapes the dragon's floods and is seen no more.'

He looked out of the window, a cloud drifted by, he felt strangely empty.

'So now he explores dragons, symbol of fluid movement of life, passion and power, very Lawrence. For some reason men today lack the great cosmic dragon. He name checks the Chinese dragon and Hindu yogic dragon. The green dragon becomes the red of evil. Women today trapped in the evil demon of the old Logos? Maybe Nietzschean here? The Green

dragon was never that of Europe, the red and now the grey off white, of the dirty white dragon. Finally Lawrence returns to the book, the dragon destroys a third of the cosmos and is cast down. "... the great cosmic mother has no place in the cosmos of men any more... she must hide in the desert." Reading on he seems to depart even more from the text, gets into numerology, I'll stop here. Maybe read the KJV version.'

He joined Emily and Catherine, they were having morning coffee, he had tea,

'I'm more or less finished for the day, maybe a walk and think in the afternoon, so do you need any help in the garden?'

'Yes please.' said Emily.

CHAPTER ### ### ### ###: CARN LLIDI

Very early Thursday morning Billy couldn't sleep so he decided to tackle Lawrence's numerology.

'So, his basis is on seven, four and three, then he adds ten and twelve. Three, the trinity is obvious. He seems to be taking liberties with the binary ideas, so Anaximander's two, and any binary has a separator, the third? And he thinks the ancient world was entirely religious but godless. So, I see he wants to place nature and man, as in man in nature, against man in the supernatural. Natural opposed to super natural. Ah! So, the Tree of Knowledge does this act of separation. We learn of our animal nature, our nakedness, so we clothe ourselves in gods. And a brief mention of the Orphics, which makes sense for Lawrence, Orpheus, who descended into the Greek underworld and returned. Orphics revered Dionysus, wine women and song! And of course, so did Nietzsche. And also escaping the wheel of birth, I guess Eastern ideas were known at the time of Lawrence's writing, but not as dominant, certainly to fundamental Christianity. Now we get God, Maker, Ruler, Demiurge, and then an interesting mention of the morning-star, that was always a god when gods began, though not in Job? Interesting. He says it is symbolic of the new god, twilight between day ... and night, and so back to three?

Now four, he says is the number of creation, mentions the four creatures in Ezekiel, but that he thinks they were beings pre monotheism. A bit of a stretch I think, as elsewhere with the twins? Not much more here, the four Evangelists obviously, and the four elements, Earth, Fire, Wind, Water.

Was numerology popular in Lawrence's time? Certainly, in the early 20th century it, along with occultism, was popular. He adds three to four and gets seven. And lists the seven ancient planets, then something about layers of consciousness, the lowest crudely active, "especially down among the common people." I'm finding Nietzschean overtones? He gets ten from $4+3+2+1$, though why? And the ten horns on the creatures, then the final number, twelve. The Zodiac, months in the year, and perfect, not the unlucky 13, but no mention of the 12 disciples! and the link to the 12 tribes of Israel. Which is maybe a deliberate omission.'

He paused, then made some notes, and said quietly to himself,

'Seems almost as if this is just a filler, very unrelated, was numerology some fashion in late the 1920s? or a particular thing of his?'

Billy decided to spend the rest of the day, apart from breaks, rowing his skiff round and round the pond, or small lake, in the garden.

Catherine Mulberry and Emily Clarke were gardening, and at some point, Emily asked,

'Why is he just rowing round and round, is he thinking?'

To which Catherine replied, 'No, he does this when he can't think!'

Lisa woke, remembered her dream and as before decided to spend the day alone, so took food and water as she did the day before, her aim was to climb Carn Llidi.

It was another fine day, it took her again a couple of hours or so to walk to the hill, and then not a very difficult climb. She did however need to avoid some others in order not to break her silence, she reached the summit and took in the view, which was remarkable, she could see the whole of the peninsula and seas around it, the rocks, Ramsey Island and fields below stretching endlessly inland. It was almost like a vision of the planet she thought.

She climbed down a little way and found a spot looking out to sea, there she spent the day lost in the vastness.

Again, she returned back to the retreat house, a meditation in the chapel, a meagre meal then in her room with the book and her thoughts.

‘So, the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air, and there was a voice from the temple saying, “It is done.”

Thunder, lighting, hail, fall of Babylon.’

She reads and finds this difficult, re reading, whispering then thinking,

‘One of the seven angels comes to St John and says,

“Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore.”

... drunk on the blood of saints with whom the kings have committed fornication, and the people have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. She sits on a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. Her sins written on her forehead.

The angel explains; the beast from the pit, it is, and it is not. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sits. There are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come.

“And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.”

Eternal punishment! The ten horns which are ten kings, which have received no kingdom and will make war with the Lamb who will overcome them.

The ten horns will hate the whore, make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her.

“For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast”

Which all means what?’

She thought, and re-read, twice.

‘Oh! the woman is the great city, Babylon, Rome?’

Now the 24 elders and the four beasts fall down and worship God.

The marriage supper of the Lamb is announced.

A white horse appears and sitting on it is The Word of God, and with it an army, to fight the beast, false prophet and kings and armies of the world. The beast and false prophet are thrown alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. The rest killed with the sword which came from the mouth of The Word of God. And their bodies are eaten by birds.

The Word of God - Jesus? My Jesus?

An angel binds the dragon /Devil / Satan and throws it into a pit for 1000 years. And martyrs live and reign with Christ a thousand years. The first resurrection.

After 1000 years Satan is released, deceives the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog? for battle. But fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them all. The devil that deceived them is thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and are tormented day and night for ever.'

At this point she closed the book.

'Very confusing.' she said to herself, I must sleep.

CHAPTER ### ### ### I: ST GOVAN'S CHAPEL

Lisa was woken by the sound of rain beating on the window, a storm had blown in from across the Irish Sea in the night. Again, she had dreamt, this time about Lawrence's numerology which was of no use to her confused mind from her reading the night before. She was confused and distraught.

She made the short journey to the chapel through the sheets of rain in her cagoule, she knew the weather could change quickly on the peninsula. After her meditation she had the same breakfast and again had intended to spend the day outside, this time going inland, but now this plan would need to change. She had prepared for such, and so after breakfast set off in her Land Rover for St Govan's Chapel, Bosherton, 31 miles away through driving rain. The route taking her back through Haverford West, Pembroke then lanes to Bosherton. A wide and very bleak and flat landscape of driving rain, green and grey. The chapel is built right into the cliff, but fortunately there is a car park above at the end of the lane that leads to it.

Leaving her Land Rover, only now could she make out the sea, wild waves and stinging rain with no horizon, just a chaos of sea, wind and rain.

Unsurprisingly the car park was empty, she would be alone as long as the storm raged, which it did, all day. The chapel lies in a narrow cleft in the cliffs, halfway down a steep set of steps cut into the rock, the chapel itself looking like it was also hewn out of the cliff. Lisa could taste the salt of the spray being blown from the sea. Inside was a stillness, the space being only 17 feet by 12, a stone slab step along the walls for a seat. There she sat.

Now the outside world that had been so benign and pleasant, was a violent chaos which roared around her, but in here was a stillness, a great stillness which overwhelmed her.

‘As the violence outside might overwhelm, like last night’s reading?’ she thought.

‘No, it too is real.’

The thought struck her that the chapel was her mind, and the storm was the world, and she could see how she loved both. She understood neither.

Slowly after most of the day had gone she climbed back up the steps to her Land Rover and drove, still through rain, though now easing, to the retreat house.

Now in her room, her last night and last part of the Revelation of St John.

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.”

‘Jesus!

The judgement of the dead takes place from the books of life according to their deeds. Death, hell, and those not in the book of life are thrown into the lake of fire.

A new earth and heaven and New Jerusalem, come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride.

And he that sat upon the throne said. “Behold, I make all things new.... I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the

end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.”

John is shown the bride of the Lamb, The New Jerusalem.

And he that sits on the thrown...

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last... I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star... If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book...”

So, there we have it, and a strange prior mention in Chapter 2 ...

“And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things... And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star...”

So, it ends.’ She formed an idea and then slept.

After breakfast and a river walk Billy settled down to read the last part of Lawrence’s Apocalypse. He read it all through, sat for a while, then spoke to himself.

‘Well, he departs from the book, he does talk a little about it but then presents his own philosophy.’

‘Ok,’ he thought, ‘the first part, he thinks is now Jewish and moralistic. He thinks the dragon here is the watery dragon of chaos. He gives his power to the beast from the sea and explains this is all allegory and refers to earthly kingdoms, Persian, Macedonian, and of Rome. Then a note that modern men and women are only half alive, typical Lawrence, we come back to this. 666 is Nero, the beast from the earth, an Antichrist. Martyrdom, and at last the great battle and fall. All of the world is destroyed after a thousand years for a New Jerusalem. The saints gloat over the fallen.

Lawrence then begins his diagnosis, man is not an individual, but a communal creature, and though communal, it is not right for humanity to be ruled over by a Lenin, Mussolini or a God who destroys nature.

“The Apocalypse shows us what we are resisting, unnaturally... our connections with the cosmos.... The Apocalypse too chose suicide, with subsequent self-glorification.”

So, he sees the alternative in the passion of the dragon and nature, of which we are part, maybe?’

He paused, took out his notebook and made notes, then went outside to row.

Lisa on waking and remembering the dream thought, ‘So, interesting, where do I stand, in The New Jerusalem or in nature with the dragon?’ And remembered the sublime day before in the chapel.

Now the retreat over she could thank the people who looked after her, she ate a large breakfast, visited the chapel and the ruins of the other chapel of St Non, walked to take one more

look at the sea, now again calm, then packed and drove back to Warwickshire.

When Lisa arrived back in her house in Old Arley she caught up with emails and texts, and before preparing her sermon and material for Sunday's services, she would mention her retreat, she sent an email to Billy,

'Hi – busy getting ready for Sunday, will Zoom on Monday, say 10.30?'

She got a 'Fine' in reply.

CHAPTER III III III II: STAR WARS

The Strategic Defence Initiative [SDI] of 1984 by the US Department of Defence was a plan to use advanced weapon concepts to shield America from any nuclear attack from the USSR. Including lasers, particle-beam weapons, and ground and space-based missile systems along with sensor, command and control, and computer systems. These would control a system consisting of hundreds of combat centres and satellites spanning the globe in order to combat an ICBM attack in the USA. Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles carrying nuclear warheads.

SDI was derisively nicknamed the Star Wars program and criticized for threatening to destabilize the MAD-approach, Mutually Assured Destruction, in the event of a full nuclear war. Also, that it was technically impossible, and like Star Wars the movie, a fiction.

On March 23, 1983, the US President Ronald Reagan announced SDI in a nationally televised speech.

Some 40 years later another incumbent of the Whitehouse reintroduced the project, though this time, as was his style, called it Star Wars.

Technologies explored in SDI included Exoatmospheric Reentry-vehicle Interceptor systems, High Endoatmospheric Defense Interceptors. Nuclear reactor pumped lasers, chemical hydrogen fluoride lasers, and Hypervelocity Railguns. Space-based programs with groups of interceptors housed in orbital modules,

Brilliant Pebbles, a non-nuclear system and Neutral particle beams.

The new administration, noting the Israeli “Iron Dome” and remembering Reagan’s programme had decided to develop such a system. The jargon of the previous ideas would be changed, SDI, became Star Wars, and the seemingly ineffectual sounding “particle beam devices” would be renamed ‘Dragons Breath’. The source of this re naming was not to be challenged.

The New Star Wars programme developed space-based particle beam devices, ‘Dragons Breath’, the project being managed from The Facility, many hundreds of feet underneath the Pentagon, entered by a spiral driveway, via three sets of blast doors, and eventually ending in a large parking bay, again after another three large blast doors was the nerve centre of The Facility, a large circular room with an illuminated ceiling of artificial daylight, called The HUB. It had been used by prior administrations as a world crisis nerve centre, now it was the control centre for the Star Wars project. Here military and civilian contractors could control and monitor the vehicles of the project which were in orbit. Other rooms and facilities in The Facility were now being used by technicians engaged with controlling of handling, repair, maintenance and construction of the orbiting devices which would use a particle beam technology, Dragons Breath, to destroy hostile missiles. The whole space-based side was performed by satellites and robotic devices controlled from The Facility.

The SBPB – Space Based Particle Beam devices, Dragons Breath, were in final test phase. This included taking out multiple ICBMs, not in this case launched from the ground for obvious reasons, it might be seen as “provocative”. One such test took place on the night of Mr Atkins’ death. It caused a

panic in The Facility, because for some reason a beam was deflected, split into over 1,000 smaller beams, some of which clearly hit the Earth. Most hit the sea, some the land, one hit England, Nuneaton and the sleeping Mr Atkins.

The original idea was the cause of the spit was the beam hitting the solar panel of another satellite of unknown origin, this had to be dumped as the power of the Dragons Breath would just punch a hole in any panel.

‘What the hell could deflect it then?’ a military asked to which one of the science team joked,

‘A real dragon?’

No one was amused. The Earth hits were all quickly tracked, and it became immediately known that part of the beam had hit an inhabited town in North Warwickshire. Monitoring of emergency services in the area it soon became clear that a one in a billion chance, perhaps much much higher, had occurred. Whatever had caused the deflection had caused the death of Mr Atkins.

Those in the facility had to think fast. The technicians informed the military that the heat blast of over 1,000 Celsius degrees needed explanation. Someone still in the military from the Übermensch affair suggested the idea of an alien UFO being responsible. Someone else remarked, ‘or a fire breathing dragon’, which is what they went for. Within two hours a crater had been manufactured on ‘Mount Judd’ which was subsequently filled in over the following nights by special ops teams. Though the hill was cordoned off by Warwickshire police such teams could and did work undetected. Once those in The Facility were informed that Billy Taylor was on the case,

with a crazy woman vicar they were convinced it was a success. Here they learnt of Billy's ideas regarding dragons, but not his motivation, he after all had had dealings with the American military before. They wanted a fake dragon, he gave them one, at the same time he now thought things were far more complex.

CHAPTER ### ### ### ### III: 173

Lisa's Sunday, or now The Reverend Lisa Phillips, was very busy, as usual being responsible for 6 parishes, two of which had 2 churches. She would be officiating at 4, at the others this Sunday there were 'Readers'.

Dating from the third century the office of reader, or lector in The Church of England is a person authorised by a bishop to lead certain services of worship, they are formally trained and admitted to the office, but they remain part of the laity, not of the clergy.

On Sunday Catherine Mulberry and Billy would be taking Emily Clarke to Snape Maltings, a music venue first established by Benjamin Britten, the composer, in 1967. They were going to attend a concert performance by John Tavener, Emily expressed a liking for early English Renaissance music, Billy was about to answer when Catherine put her finger to her mouth and gave a smile and a wink. Emily Clarke, she guessed as a retired pathologist of some renown, now studying Gnosticism, might not know much of modern music and that of Sir John Tavener, 1944 – 2013, and his work *The Protecting Veil*, a dramatic choral piece of modern Orthodox music. She soon did as the performance began, with a sharp look at Catherine who returned a smile. The piece lasts 45 minutes, and by the interval Emily was the first to speak to a calm looking Catherine Mulberry and a demure Billy,

'Well, you two! Really, that was fantastic.'

And Billy went to get some drinks.

So, at 10.30 on Monday the Zoom conversation between Lisa and Billy took most of the morning.

That it seemed Lisa had dreamt Billy's musings on Lawrence's Apocalypse, and in long conversations the more totalitarian aspects of the Biblical Apocalypse were mitigated. It came round to Lisa expressing two things, first an agreement with Lawrence regarding nature, and passion. This had been the reality of her retreat, even the terrifying power of nature, its chaos, mitigated by faith in the form of St Govan's Chapel. And then for her Christianity, this is exemplified in the figure of Jesus, not the cosmic figure, but the person, and so her commitment to the people of her parishes.

As for the death of Mr Atkins and the dragon, she had no idea, to which Billy said she might soon know more. He would not elucidate, because he couldn't.

At the Facility things were not settled. A physicist, Dr Kannaur Rahul, had been missing, he had been in Europe on a short break, and in doing so had stayed a few nights with an old colleague and friend Dr Nigel Summers, a 3 times Nobel prize winning physicist, and his old teacher. Nigel Summers now retired and living in a Victorian Mansion in Edgbaston, Birmingham and a very close friend of Billy Taylor. Kannaur had been updated on the event of the test and so urgently travelled back to the USA. He had first talked in abstract terms to his prior tutor, Nigel, as he insisted on being called.

'It can't have been a solar panel... or any known material used in any satellites from any nation...' Kannaur said as he addressed the meeting in The Facility, he then went on to prove this, which involved physics that the politicians and military could not follow, but the others, physicists and technical guys from Lockheed Martin could. He had worked this out from some "general remarks" that Nigel had made.

There was much head shaking. The other two groups, the politicians and military could not see why. Then the head guy from Lockheed Martin, a Shelia Harris, said,

‘So, it, whatever it is, can stop the beam...’ still some puzzlement, ‘as in break it up,’ less puzzlement, ‘as in make it ineffective!’

Glum faces, ‘So what do we do?’ this was a five-star general.

‘We need to find what it was, and what it is made of.’ Kannaur Rahul said, and under his breath, ‘To confirm Nigel’s crazy idea.’

‘What was that, what’s crazy?’ Shelia Harris asked, to the reply,

‘Oh nothing.’

‘Well, we know where the object of whatever broke the beam is in orbit, so let’s go get it.’ Shelia Harris said, thinking, ‘it’s got to be very special, very valuable...’ adding,

‘We don’t need a manned mission; we have a mule that will do the job.’

Multi-purpose Unmanned Logistics Equipment-delivery.

Used in building and servicing the orbiting SBPBs – Space Based Particle Beam devices AKA Dragons Breath. So, within two days a military launch had a MULE in orbit tracking down the object, the control of this done remotely from a control room next to the central hall, The HUB of The Facility, the event being watched in the HUB by all those in charge of the project.

MULEs for use in construction and repair in space were relatively easy to develop and far less costly than using humans. From the late 1940s techniques for remote handling of dangerous radioactive substances had been developed. This progressed in the making of devices for undersea exploration and repair. It was a simple matter to use these technologies with only the need for weight reduction. And so, for the STAR WARS project not only existing MULEs were available but new and specific ones could soon be constructed.

Now operators in the Ops Room at The Facility were manoeuvring a MULE to the estimated position of the object which blocked and fragmented the beam from the SBPB device. They were in contact with those in The HUB, they could see the same visuals, and voice contact with Kannaaur Rahul and Shelia Harris.

The MULE, this one was called Daisy, they all have names like this, was sending back images but nothing could be seen. Daisy not only had visual cameras but others, including radar.

‘Still nothing.’ came the voice of the technician piloting Daisy from The Facility.

‘Try infrared.’ Kannaaur said.

‘We have something, a vague silhouette.’ came back the technician.

Miles above the Earth Daisy slowly approached the object.

‘No radiation.’ This was the technician monitoring Daisy’s telemetry.

‘None, zero, that’s odd, not possible.’ Kannaur was saying to agreement from the technician and Shelia Harris.

Some of the military needed telling that there should be some minimal radiation, even humans are slightly radioactive.

‘Not Russian or Chinese then.’ Shelia Harris said.

‘Not of this Earth.’ Kannaur was thinking remembering his conversation with Nigel Summers.

‘Try the Summers device.’ Kannaur was asking the technician.

Again, some in the military had this explained, the Summers device was an invention of Dr Nigel Summers, it allowed the detection of the atomic number of an object. Explaining, it could count the number of protons in the atoms of an object, and so as to what it’s made of, like Hydrogen has 1 proton, Iron has 26, they didn’t go into the detail of isotopes.

‘173!’ the technician shouted, Shelia and all the scientists gave an audible gasp, and some ‘impossible!’, all except the military, some politicians and Kannaur Rahul.

A scientist was explaining, ‘There is no such element! The highest is Oganesson, the highest at 118, and it doesn't occur in nature, it was manufactured, is highly unstable as is all elements with high atomic numbers, like Uranium, this brought some understanding. And Uranium is the highest naturally occurring element.’

Someone in the military asked,

‘What about Plutonium, we use that in bombs?’

‘It’s synthesized in nuclear reactors.’ came the answer.

The military then asked if some ‘son of a B, like the Russians or Chinese could have synthesized it?’

Face palms from the science team.

Shelia Harris had now noticed Kannaur Rahul’s desk and on it a piece of paper, he had been writing on it before the 173! that the technician had shouted.

“173 = Unsepttrium”

Others were now looking, frowning Shelia said, ‘Explain?’

Dr Kannaur Rahul gave a sheepish smile, he now had the attention of everyone in the room and the technicians in the control room, he cleared his throat, took a drink of water and then spoke.

‘Unsepttrium is the name for an element whose atomic number is 173, and well Feynman relativistic Dirac equations have problems, also instabilities that may hint that the periodic table ends soon after the island of stability at unbihexium, 126 and number 173 is way way beyond this, my former tutor - the guy who invented the probe happened to mention this...’

He was stopped not by anyone who could follow but this time a politico,

‘English please.’

So, Kannaur continued, ‘It’s the highest number possible and even then, it is fantastic, and if made it would exist for nano seconds as a single atom. And,’

Again, he paused, drank some water,

‘Dr Summers mentioned it in conversation, that he had come across the material, in quantities, I laughed thinking he was joking, but then he added that it was of alien origin.’

‘Impossible!’ remarked another physicist with nods of approval, ‘Any such element would be so volatile it would decay violently immediately.’

Again, some explanation was given as to the instability of such elements... and what decay violently immediately meant in military terms,

‘One big F’ing Bang that made the H bomb look like a firecracker.’

The military were now very interested.

Kannaur continued ‘Oganesson, number 118, highest made so far is highly radioactive, with a half-life of 0.7 ms and, as of 2025, only five atoms have been successfully produced! So, this thing would exist for milliseconds before giving off massive radioactivity, but here in orbit it looks like something is made of the stuff and it is emitting nothing. And yes, if, a big if, it existed, apart from giving big bangs its density would make titanium look like tissue paper.’

Kannaur was using terms which he thought the military would understand.

And yes, they did, and the military were now very interested, they had a potential super bomb and super armour in one package.

‘I’ll talk to Nigel.’ Dr Kannaur Rahul said.

Immediately the chief politico said, ‘No you won’t this is not public domain...’

And some in the military were uttering, ‘Aliens?’

Dr Kannaur Rahul explained he would simply ask Nigel for more details about the unsepttrium he had found and why it did not decay in a massive radioactive explosion?

He was given a green light.

CHAPTER ### ### ### ### IIII: BILLY AND THE DREAMS OF THE
TRILOBITE

The night after the Zoom meeting on the Monday with Reverend Lisa Phillips Billy had a dream in which he was in conversation with a Trilobite. He had a similar dream the next few nights but told no one.

On Thursday morning he received a call from Lisa Phillips,

‘Hi Billy, this is Lisa, something very strange has happened, there is, sorry, there was no Mr Atkins or any Mrs. I was talking about his death and asking about the funeral with a colleague who knew nothing about it. And so, checking in the Nuneaton library, nothing in the local papers for that day or after. So, I called at the house, no fire damage, a young couple lives there I was told by a neighbour, they were not there, both were at work.’

She paused, Billy said nothing,

‘What’s going on?’

Another pause then Billy spoke, a usual phrase of his,

‘Absolutely no idea.’

Another pause, then ‘Leave it with me, I’ll see what the trilobite says.’

Lisa was obviously speechless, Billy said,

‘Let’s Zoom tomorrow afternoon, threeish.’

Lisa gave a nervous ‘OK’.

It was late on the Thursday that Dr Kannaur Rahul telephoned Dr Nigel Summers to enquire about the properties of unsepttrium and how it came to be in existence. On the same day Nigel had received an email from Billy, it simply said ‘Tell the story, the boy, the garden and time, and then tell them to check and re check any data of any event. He won’t mention any event, and anyway it seems it never occurred.’

Nigel being good friends with Billy understood that not understanding Billy was not unusual.

And so, Nigel told Dr Kannaur Rahul the story, in great detail, a summary being that he was involved with a Billy Taylor in an investigation in which they found images of tiles with strange marks. They visited a house in Birmingham, but not as it was in the present, but as it was in the late 1950s. There was a boy who had made a strange device out of these tiles which turned out to be made from unsepttrium, and that the reason they did not immediately decay in a massive radioactive explosion was that the house was outside of our normal time. The origin of the tiles was from aliens who had the bad intent of creating a technological acceleration towards oblivion on the Earth as part of an experiment to see if it might happen to them, the Earth was in fact their experiment, a virtual creation, a cyber–Guinea pig. That this was no longer the case, he with the boy had managed to materialise the virtual. And now that any data regarding any recent events around unsepttrium should be thoroughly re checked.

After the call Dr Kannaur Rahul was stunned, he couldn’t believe any of this, maybe his distinguished tutor was now mentally ill he thought. Yet he was due to present his findings in the morning at The Facility. He had decided to tell what

Nigel had said, and that he suspected Dr Nigel Summers was delusional. He slept badly, but the next day he was in The Facility and was prepared to give his report, before he could the General who was in command of the project introduced a “guest speaker”. The speaker was obviously CIA or some such. He took to the rostrum and began,

‘It would be foolish of me to deny that the distinguished professor’s conversation with his ex-tutor was not monitored...’

‘They bugged my phone,’ thought Kannaur, ‘of course they would.’

‘... and that we wouldn’t check out the story. We did, and though very difficult as much evidence was unavailable, [had been removed or didn’t exist] we had rumours, totally insufficient for any credibility.’

Kannaur felt a sigh of relief.

‘However, the insistence on checking the data regarding the event, the event in England...’

‘He won’t say the death of a civilian!’ thought Kannaur.

‘... was acted on by Ms Shelia Harris and other personnel, and large inconsistencies, large and the totally unexplainable were found, or rather not. We have sworn testimony that the incident of the beam splitting occurred, and evidence. We have sworn testimony that a person was killed, and a cover up took place, yet there is no factual or physical evidence now in existence. No death, no fire, no use of special forces to fabricate a fairy story. However, the testimonies are such that this has presented a problem, one that higher agencies will

debate an appropriate response, in the meantime this whole event is classified, you may continue to work on the project as if it never took place. I thank you.'

He left the podium and the facility to the sound of much fervent and confused discussion amongst the various members of the project. This was silenced by the General, it became a murmur, then the engineers resumed planning the next phase of the project under the science and military directors.

The same Friday at 3.30 Billy began his Zoom meeting with Lisa, a puzzled looking Lisa.

He began as only Billy could,

'OK let me tell you about the trilobite. I've been having dreams in which there is the image of a trilobite, but before I go into what I think this might be about first you now know something about dreams, maybe you or I can't explain, in that you seemed to dream about my reading the D. H. Lawrence Apocalypse book while on retreat, yes?'

Lisa answered, 'Yes, and that was weird.'

'OK, dreams can be weird, my trilobite dream was about the great extinctions, at first it wasn't clear. I saw the big five, ignoring the present one, and in particular how this trilobite survived the first two until the third, the Permian-Triassic. I then had other dreams where it died out in the first, second, fourth and fifth, then one where it didn't. With me so far?'

'Sure,' said Lisa, 'you had five dreams, in four the trilobites became extinct at different times, in one they did not.'

‘OK, now the first question, at each extinction, rather like some event which kills lots of things, trees, plants, people even, we would expect to find evidence of the cataclysm in the amount of dead remains at the time, but we don’t.’

‘That seems not to make sense, I mean you’ve only got to see the records of the Black Death and the mass graves, places like Blackheath in London.’ said Lisa.

‘So, I’m shown six scenarios, and one where they never died out, and no evidence of mass extinction events where they did, no fossil record, they simply were not then around in the next time period.’

‘OK?’ Lisa said.

‘Well to keep it short and simple, in physics there are two explanations when an event occurs, the famous Schrödinger’s cat thought experiment. Have you heard of it?’

‘Yes,’ said Lisa, ‘the cat is strangely both alive and dead in the box, then this is resolved in opening it and observing.’

‘Right,’ said Billy, ‘and the other account, MWI, Many Worlds Interpretation, you know of this?’

‘No, what is it?’ she replied.

‘It’s an idea that when the experiment occurs the world splits into two, one in which the cat is alive the other dead.’

‘OK, and so?’

‘Well in the MWI we see either a dead or a live cat depending in which world we are in, but what if in the case of the

extinction, where there are no dead remains, they, the trilobites, are just living in another world? No extinction.'

'So,' Lisa said, 'in the last scenario we have the trilobites still alive.'

There was a pause then she said,

'We jumped worlds, from one in which the Atkins existed and one where they didn't, or lived, but lived elsewhere, it makes weird sense.'

'There's a catch, in the MWI there are billions of new worlds every second, in this one we see only a certain significant few. And the question is...' here Billy was interrupted by an excited Lisa,

'Why or how do we find ourselves in which? Who or what decides?'

'Well, many things could, I think this can also account for your dreams of my reading.'

Lisa had caught on, 'In one world I was with you reading the Lawrence!'

'Yes,' said Billy 'and we remembered that world of reading together as in your dream in the other world. Why do you think this is so?'

'We or I, wanted to know both accounts at the same time.'

'Yes, maybe, or maybe some thing or some one wanted us to know, and this might be not a good thing.' said Billy.

'How so?' asked Lisa.

‘If different contradictory worlds meet, we get chaos’. was the reply.

‘And the dragon and the Atkins?’ Lisa asked.

‘Could be part of this. I think that might be explained or made more clear by my coming to Birmingham and paying someone a visit, I’m coming up on Monday, could you help me, tag along?’ Billy replied.

‘Certainly.’ Lisa said with a worried tone.

‘OK, I’ll be in touch Monday morning can you be around in Birmingham, say around 11 o’clock?’

‘Sure, where?’

Billy was thinking, ‘I want to keep Nigel out of this.’ then said,

‘I’ll be outside the Hyatt Hotel in Bridge Street.’

‘Fine.’ was the reply.

‘Oh, and bring say 6 bibles, I’m sure you can lay your hands on 6. More if you like, well I’m done and need a walk’. Billy said.

‘Me too, see you Monday.’

The Zoom meeting finished.

Friday evening Billy cooked supper, Bruschetta to start, a roast Sutton Hoo chicken with home grown root vegetables followed by Apple Tatin, all with red wine of course. Over dessert he addressed Emily and Cathrine Mulberry,

‘I’m going up to Birmingham tomorrow, will visit Nigel and stay Saturday night, then spend Sunday night at the Hyatt, so

as not to involve him in this dragon thing.’ at which Catherine gave him a look, he continued,

‘You and Emily you might have to decamp to Arcadia.’

‘Arcadia, that would be good.’ said Emily.

They enjoyed the rest of the meal, in the morning Billy travelled to Birmingham via London Liverpool Street and Euston.

CHAPTER ### ### ### ### ###: BIBLES

From New Street station in Birmingham Billy took a taxi to Nigel's Victorian Mansion in Edgbaston where he lived with his partner, Kate Moore, a senior lecturer in The University of Birmingham's Department of Comparative Religions. The house was one of the finest examples of high Victorian architecture, and Nigel being fairly wealthy from helping a multi billionaire, in fact saving his life, had filled the house with genuine art of the period. In particular the work of Burne-Jones, a Birmingham Pre-Raphaelite painter of renown. And in creating this collection had often competed at auctions with another famous collector who was also an "Artist" from Birmingham, the guitarist from Led Zeplin, Jimmy Page. Nigel's house also housed his extensive N gauge model railway layouts, a set of sea water aquaria, and a large astronomical telescope in a domed building in the grounds.

After the welcomes and tea Nigel prompted Billy for the reason for the visit, they went over the affair at Tuttle Hill in Nuneaton, and the visit from Dr Kannaur Rahul. As they were talking Nigel's phone rang, and it was the very person, Nigel switched to speaker phone. There were some pleasantries then a question regarding some equation, an obvious 'ploy' and then the reason, slipped in as casually as Kannaur could,

'Oh, and by the way, your tall story about that boy in Birmingham and the unsepttrium', a false chuckle, 'whereabouts in Birmingham, just out of curiosity?'

Nigel looked at Billy, who nodded and quickly wrote on his notebook, "The full address- yes!".

‘Oh, let me think,’ replied Nigel, ‘oh yes, Bordesley Green, a road,’ he feigned memory loss, ‘yes an 85 Colonial Road.’

And then added, ‘Why?’

‘Oh, I thought I might know of it, some family connection, but no, I don’t’.

The call ended with more pleasantries.

‘You and Kate might be best going to Arcadia next week, and not try returning until I see you there, Emily and Catherine Mulberry will probably join you.’ Billy said.

Nigel knew from his experiences with Billy when to and when not to ask for explanations. A certain look from Billy which might have said, ‘Too complex, too fantastic’. Or that he had a premonition, had used dowsing or been told by a púca, but the point was of great importance and possibly great danger.

They spent a quiet evening, the next day Billy took a taxi and checked into the Hyatt Hotel. As usual had a fine A La carte supper and slept well. And also, as usual at the Hyatt in the morning his “full English” was excellent. He then messaged Lisa,

‘Slight change of plan, meet me in lounge at 11, Billy.’

So, at 11 o’clock Lisa Phillips walked into the lounge of the Hyatt, wearing flat shoes, black slacks, white shirt and jacket and her dog collar. She carried a coat and had a large leather bag. Billy rose to greet her, just a handshake, and asked, ‘coffee?’ which she declined. They sat, Lisa looking around at the lounge.

‘I’ve never been here.’ she said.

‘Oh, I use it all the time, expensive but it’s paid for by a company I do some work for. Anyway, I just wanted a quick chat to soften the blow so to speak.’

She looked puzzled, Billy continued, ‘We are going to Bordesley Green, a Colonial Road, number 85. Now how did you get here? Train, it looks like.’ noticing the coat and bag.

‘Yes train.’ she replied.

‘OK, we’ll take a taxi.’

‘Now the house, how do I say, it will seem normal until we enter the garden, well you won’t see that until we enter...’ he paused, ‘well anyway, the house we will enter, house and garden are not in this time, but actually fixed in some time warp or such in the late 1950s, maybe 60, 61? No matter, just to prepare you for the shock, it can do this, have you the bibles?’

‘Yes, in the bag, six.’ was the reply.

‘Excellent, then shall we go?’

‘Sure.’ said Lisa, a very puzzled sure.

Billy led the way, Lisa looked cool, but then there was the dream thing and the Atkins’ death and none death, she was already getting to grips with this new reality. Outside there was a waiting taxi,

‘Bordesley Green, Colonial Road, 85, in the dip.’ Billy instructed the driver, who was a little surprised at the destination for a gentleman in an obvious expensive suit and shoes, and a woman vicar, an attractive woman vicar. The drive took them around the inner ring road, then through

Digbeth, old buildings, many daubed with remarkable graffiti, the new coach station, The Birds Custard Factory, now an arts centre, and then through Small Heath, down Bordesley Green Road, now mostly an Asian population. Some scrap metal yards, small grocery shops and kebab fast food cafes. They took a left down the hill of Colonial Road, into the dip, stopping outside a paved area of block tiles, 3 cars parked. A BMW, a Volvo and Micra, none very new. They got out, Billy saying to the driver,

‘Please wait, will be back in an instant.’

Then he walked towards the entrance, this way he said, though shepherding Lisa first, and though being warned, to the shock.

She walked through the gap into what she thought would be block paving and three parked cars, Billy had followed, she had crossed into the parking space, but it was now a front garden of lawns and flower beds with a central path. A front door with the numbers 8 and 5 in the centre. Behind Billy was a small wooden gate, painted a pale blue and either side a privet hedge of around five foot high. To the left was a tall flowerless shrub and beyond that a tree with white flowers. The path had lawns either side, each with a flower bed, the one on the left having a few rose bushes. The garden had a fence of wooden palings either side made from split wood and wire. The front door had small windows either side. To the left was a large lilac tree, on the right a large brick single story building with two concrete apex roofs, an air raid shelter from the second world war. In front of this was a tall climbing rose. She walked down the path towards the front door, Billy following,

‘Go in,’ he said, ‘it will be open.’

She pushed gently at the door; it opened onto a hallway. To the left was a staircase, it had a stair carpet with runners. The shelf on the window at the bottom of the stairs had some coins she did not recognise. The door to the right was a toilet. It had no handbasin, a quarry tile floor and painted gloss brickwork walls. The cistern was high up, with a pull chain to flush. The hall had a small bamboo table with a cactus in a pot on top of it.

‘So late 50s.’ she thought. ‘Go straight ahead into the living room then left into the kitchen.’ Billy said.

The hall led to this door and the living room. It had French windows which looked onto the back garden. A fireplace was on the right, with two large red armchairs either side, and a small settee on the opposite wall. In the left corner was a large deep brown table with an old black and white television set on it. Above this on a small shelf was a cream-coloured Bakelite radio. Opposite it was a bird cage on a stand with a green budgerigar in it. To her left a door led to the kitchen. So, they walked into the kitchen, it had a butler sink, a large pine table covered in oil cloth, an old gas stove and a gas boiler in the corner for washing clothes. Like the toilet the walls were painted brick, but with linoleum stuck onto the walls around the lower part to about 5 feet, patterned with imitation tiles.

There was no one in the room,

‘As I half expected,’ Billy said, ‘Let’s sit at the table and then you can get out those bibles.’

This Lisa did, looking puzzled and glancing around the room.

‘Yes, it’s real,’ he said, ‘now let’s open the first and scan the Book of Revelations.’

He found the book at the end of the bible, holding it open so Lisa could see,

‘Looks familiar,’ he flicked pages, 24 elders, ‘candlesticks, plagues, ah! The dragon, pit and New Jerusalem, yes, the same. Now the second.’

Again, he found the first page,

‘Ah! As I thought,’

Lisa looked and in an astonished voice said, ‘It’s not right, it’s not right, but, but they are all the same.’

She stared at the opening verses,

“1. The Revelations of The Christ, who is God, to shew unto his servants things which will come to pass; sent by his angel unto his servant John:

2 Who is The Word of God.

3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this book, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time to come.”

‘It’s all wrong.’ she was saying.

‘Is it?’ asked Billy, ‘Christ who is God, The Word of God?’

‘Well, no, but not right, these are six King James Bibles, they are the same, that is they were... I don’t understand?’ Lisa said.

‘I think you might, remember the MWI I talked about, we had five different extinction scenarios, well I think now we are seeing similar.’

He flicked through some pages noting differences,

‘Look 12 elders, not 24, The four living creatures, yes, scroll, with seven seals, same, four horses, but all white,’

He flicked some more pages,

‘Ah, The Twelve Trumpets, not seven, A Woman “clothed with a red robe”... enough.’ He took the third copy and did the same, and yet more differences, more than the others.

‘They seem to be similar but getting more different.’ Lisa was saying, now more calm, and examining the second bible,

‘And different throughout.’ she said. Adding, ‘Different as in different in the different many worlds.’

‘Maybe.’ said Billy, ‘Or something like it.’

‘So not one Jesus?’ she said.

‘Maybe, or maybe one Jesus but different accounts, that’s more likely.’

‘Why?’ she asked.

‘Well for one reason, that’s what you believe, for another in the MWI the cat or you or I is the same thing in both worlds, if you like the same characters in different stories.’ he said, adding, ‘Let’s pack these up, you can browse them then at your leisure, try not to get too distracted with the other books in the bibles, not yet anyway, it’s revelation and the dragon we are interested in, see if it gets to be anything like

Lawrence's account, I bet it does, and more in line with your faith, are the damned in hell forever, and things like that.'

Just then an old woman came into the kitchen, she was very thin with wiry white hair. She wore a dark dress and pinafore of dark maroon paisley patterns.

'No tea for us thank you very much.' Billy said,

'Oh, just me then.' she replied.

She took a kettle from the stove and filled it with water, lit a ring on the gas stove with a flint lighter and waited for the kettle to boil.

'Thank you,' said Billy, 'we're going now', he rose, and they left the house and walked back to the taxi through the garden, Lisa following.

'That was an instant!' the Taxi driver said.

Lisa looked puzzled, 'Oh, there is often no time in that place.' said Billy, 'I should have shown you, made you look at your watch, never mind.'

'Back to the Hyatt please.' Billy said to the driver.

In the taxi Lisa looked at a few of the six bibles,

'Still different.' she said and wondered why she felt both excited and happy.

Back in the Hyatt they had lunch,

'On me.' said Billy, 'Or Marvel films.'

'Marvel?' Lisa questioned,

‘Yes, the film studios, they have me on a retainer, I give advice. What would you like, something light?’ he replied.

‘I’ve no idea, not being used to these kinds of venues, you choose for me?’

So, Billy ordered, a bottle of red wine, to share, Lisa said she only wanted a glass, but she did have a top up. Then just the main, a salad, Roasted squash and chickpea, charred onions, superstraccia, puy lentil dressing, followed by Cherry, almond and coconut crumble, white chocolate vanilla bean custard.

‘Wow, thanks, that was excellent, gosh what a day, now what?’ said Lisa.

‘Well maybe take a look at the six versions and we can talk on Friday? Zoom, or we could do lunch here?’ Billy said.

‘Zoom is tempting,’ she replied, ‘but I suppose lunch could be managed.’ She laughed, Billy smiled and said, OK we can share a taxi to New Street, if that’s OK?

‘I think I’ll walk, need some air.’ she replied.

‘Fine, see you Friday, 1.30’.

CHAPTER III III III III I: THE END OF DAISY

Billy was waiting in the lounge of the Hyatt, Lisa Phillips entered and sat, and they talked. She had copies of all 6 versions of The Apocalypse and summarized them in how that each moved away from the didactics of the 'original' which she now thought non-Christian. Eternal suffering with no hope she could not equate with the person of Jesus Christ in the gospels. They discussed this in detail. Then she turned to something else which bothered her, the attitude to nature, nature in general and the human.

'Jesus for a Christian was Christ made flesh who experienced not just truth but the nature of human existence, in this suffering, joy, love...' and she added, 'So at some point I re-read the sermon on the mount and was reduced to tears. The incarnation and creation are for me an impenetrable mystery, I don't know why there is suffering, I believe Jesus as God experienced this too.' she paused, 'And I love the people of my parish, and the countryside.'

Billy was silent. They both were in the strange setting of a luxury hotel.

'I was going to mention gnostic ideas,' Billy said, 'but you have said all there is to say for now, though enjoy your Sunday...' a strange thing to say she thought, then as if snapping out of a dream he said, 'Let me buy you lunch, and I won't offer a lift to the station, I'm staying here for a week.'

Lisa also couldn't see the relevance of this but would soon. They had lunch, she returned to North Warwickshire.

In the meantime, the military in The Facility had been 'pumping' both Shelia Harris of Lockheed Martin, Dr Kannaur

Rahul and others about the ‘military’ uses of unsepttrium, Dr Rahul was reluctant to commit himself to anything even remotely definite, Shelia Harris pointed out that it looked like the material could deflect an extremely powerful particle beam. Having been given what the military thought was a positive response they asked about it’s potential as a weapon, she replied that though the Trident Missile was a Lockheed Martin built device the warhead was not, and anyway not in her division, though through the Trident division she gave a name from which they tracked down someone at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory who had worked on the W88 warhead, and eventually after asking for the potential as a bomb,

‘... but in English!’ received an ‘Awesome.’

So, the die was cast, they wanted a piece of unsepttrium, and such was their urgency they wanted it rapidly, before any other nation.

Shelia Harris was tasked with getting a MULE which might do this, try to take a sample, and using a capsule return it to Earth. She was asked if in the meantime she could think of anything, she replied with a ‘yes’, they might try to knock a chunk of unsepttrium off the object with the probe on the MULE Daisy.

For want of safety this would take place over the Southern Ocean, low population, and low or no monitoring going on. This would occur on the Sunday at 10 A.M. local time, late afternoon in Washington, late evening in England.

On Sunday the Facility was minimally staffed on the basis of who would want not to know. So, no politicals, a couple of

‘Agents’, most of the military and both Shelia Harris of Lockheed Martin and a very reluctant Dr Kannaur Rahul, the latter as the physics was beyond anyone else. Obviously, the tech guys, only two, in the control room. The others watching in The HUB. Shelia Harris directing the tech guys and monitoring telemetry and all watching on visuals.

The images were beautiful, all of Antarctica could be seen and the vast and empty Southern Ocean. Then the black mass of the alien object, Daisy was manoeuvred towards a weak looking aerial-like structure and approached with a probe extended, the Dr Summers device, which would if damaged be a worthwhile sacrifice.

‘Just give it a gentle nudge fellas’ this was Shelia Harris. A sharp eye might have caught the moment of impact, or better a gentle “touch”, but didn’t, the video re-runs did, at the moment of contact the screen and telemetry went dead. Very distant monitoring devices also went dead, the NEMP, Nuclear Electromagnetic Pulse, NEMP flash took out all power below, even in New Zealand, though far enough away to have it easily restored, circuit breakers reset. There, the flash was bright but not blinding, unlike those few islands or in boats below the source, that was Peter Island and two research stations on Antarctica. They had by any estimate received a massive amount of radiation, in excess of a million rad. All animal life, birds, seals, humans, even fish to a certain depth would be dead.

From some very distant satellite monitors and ground base observations, once they had reset, the full extent of the explosion could be seen and calculated. The cover up story, they had plenty of stories set up and ready to go as in all these

tests, was a large meteor exploding in the ionosphere. This was released within an hour. No politicals involved or above wanted to know anymore.

Knowing the devastating effects Dr Kannaur Rahul resigned immediately after the explosion, well aware of its consequences. He even contemplated suicide, but something stopped him. He had to see his old tutor first, so he left for England, without contacting anyone.

CHAPTER III III III III III II: EATEN

The news of the “Meteor” broke late Sunday night in Europe, and those that were asleep soon woken by those awake. Billy could now act; he took a taxi to Arley and collected a shocked Reverend Phillips.

‘Terrible, but for your own personal safety you must come with me.’

She did, they were driven back to Birmingham, but not to the Hyatt but to Nigel’s Victorian Mansion. He introduced Lisa to Kate and Nigel.

‘Getting to the nub, whatever that means...’ Billy was talking, ‘you three would be best getting to Arcadia now.’

‘Can’t,’ said Nigel, ‘I’ve had a call from a very distraught Kannaur Rahul, seems most important, and...’

‘You have guessed he was involved in the “meteor” incident.’ Billy said.

Nigel nodded.

‘Why did you say “meteor” like that?’ asked Lisa.

‘Because it wasn’t and soon, we will all be quarry, yes for those responsible wanting to cover tracks and get hold of something.’ Billy replied.

‘Unsepttrium.’ Nigel said.

‘What’s that?’ asked Lisa.

‘Nigel will explain once you are all in Arcadia.’

‘And I suppose explain to me what Arcadia is?’ replied Lisa.

‘I’ll wait for Kannaur and send him on to you in Arcadia, I’m staying around to see those people looking for Kannaur, and the rest of us. I’ll try to sort things out. Now you need to use the green door.’

Nigel knew Billy well enough to not argue, and his tone was one he could recall. So, the three left for Arcadia via the green door.

Billy would sleep in the house but first making a phone call to Woodbridge.

Catherine Mulberry hung up and so spoke to Emily, they had both been watching the news,

‘So, the green door.’ she said.

‘The green door?’ asked Emily.

‘To Arcadia.’

‘So back there then.’ Emily said.

Billy would stay in the house until Kannaur Rahul arrived, sometime the following day, send him through the green door, then return to the Hyatt and wait.

Around midday the doorbell rang, and Billy answered to a puzzled Kannaur Rahul,

‘I’m here to see a Dr Nigel Summers.’ he managed to say.

‘Yes, I know, he’s expecting you, he is just in here, down the corridor and through the green door.’

Billy ushered the confused doctor down the hall, gestured for him to step through the green door then closed it behind him. He gave a satisfied smile and said to himself,

‘It looks fine, I think I’ll Walk back to the Hyatt, and wait, what, 3 or 4 days.’ He had to wait less than a day.

A conversation between the “Star Wars” commander and an unnamed, but identified by the voice, in a call asked,

‘Well?’

The reply ‘Not us sir, no evidence.’

‘Well?’ came the response,

‘Vital to proceed.’ was the reply.

The silence meant a “Yes.” Everything deniable.

Shelia Harris had remained at The Facility and her new task; an urgent and immediate task was to manoeuvre another MULE into the area to check for remains of any craft in orbit. She did so as part of her leading role as the main industrial supplier to the project. She was well aware that she was working for a defence manufacturer, the reasons people did are various, some for monetary gain, patriotism, or access to new technologies. Hers was mostly money and new technologies.

So, with the same personal on Monday morning, but without Dr Kannaur Rahul the tech guys had another MULE, Ben, moving towards the site. This whilst another team managed the disinformation side of the event.

Shelia was talking to the technician pilot,

‘Tom, can you turn on the lights please.’

This MULE, Ben, like some deep-sea probes had an array of strong halogen lamps.

‘There!’ said a military guy, and again ‘There.’

He was now standing pointing to a shape in black against a less dark sky.

‘Can you turn off the lights please.’ Shelia continued talking to no one in particular,

‘Dam thing should have been obliterated!’ and looking at the telemetry, ‘No signal, radar, or visual, it just absorbs everything. Tom, no need to remind you, but we don’t touch’.

‘You bet!’ came the reply.

‘Oh my God’, this was Shelia, Tom had manoeuvred the MULE so it the Earth was now behind the alien object and the detail could be seen, still though in silhouette. It looked, if like anything, like a spider, but one whose legs, and there were many, were in proportion to the body immensely long.

Tom was talking, ‘Shelia, I have a thing about spiders...’

‘Arachnophobia, and me too’ Shelia replied.

A calmer member of the military was asking,

‘How big is that thing?’

‘No idea,’ said Tom, ‘can’t bounce anything off it. And the data from poor Daisy was from one of those legs.’

‘Tom,’ this was Shelia, ‘can you get a few data points on the Earth to match its size, then use the altitude to calculate.’

‘Great idea,’ Tom said, ‘but it’s altitude, I need to get level with it and use mine.’

‘You’d think he was up there flying it.’ someone said.

‘He is in his head.’ Shelia whispered, holding her hand over the mic.

Time passed as the MULE moved, and the calculations made.

‘Two thousand feet.’ Tom’s voice trembled, there was a gasp, ‘that’s the body, not those legs.’ he continued, ‘legs, I guess 4 miles, so 8 miles across...’ his voice calmer.

A Navy guy, you could tell by the uniform was saying,

‘That makes the body twice the size of the Nimitz.’

They were just watching awestruck.

The Navy guy asked “The Question”,

‘So? so, what do we do?’

‘Guys, Guys!’ it was Tom, ‘there’s something else out there and I’m getting radar, and infrared, I’m turning on the lights and, Whoa! Guys, I’m hallucinating, I must be’.

After a long pause Shelia answered, ‘If you are Tom so am I, and looking at these guys around me, they are also.’

For a CIA or whatever service, in a dark grey suit, standing looking at the screens, as now was everybody, the remark was very unusual,

‘It’s a fucking dragon!’

‘Don’t be ridiculous,’ Shelia was talking in a hysterical laugh,

‘It’s not a fucking dragon, it’s a fucking plesiosaur, and, looking at some data coming through, a fucking big fucker.’

No one was bothered about this language, even if it was recorded for posterity.

‘How big?’ someone was asking.

Tom was the first to reply, ‘Big enough to eat that alien spider I think.’

Which is what it did, it’s widened mouth was big, but it took maybe ten or twelve bites to cut up the body and swallow, then the legs, and the creature was gone, seemingly swimming away in space.

CHAPTER ### ### ### ### III: ET IN ARCADIA EGO

A shocked Kannaur Rahul was standing in a large domed room decorated in the rococo style, the floor was of various colours of marble tiles in symmetrical shapes, above a candelabra, in the centre a very large circular table with exquisite patterns of marquetry in different tropical hardwoods. At its centre was an elaborately decorated silver urn full of tall flowers. Through the curved windows were views of rolling parkland, a river, lake and distant woods.

In front of him a smiling Dr Summers spoke, with him were his partner Kate and three women he did not recognise.

‘Good to see you are safe and well, we thought it best to meet here, but let’s retire to a drawing room.’

He led the startled Doctor through a door into a room decorated in a similar way to the hall, but now with paintings on the walls in the style of Nicolas Poussin. Kannaur noticed one of the younger women looked a little nervous, Nigel did introductions, Kate you know, Catherine Mulberry and Emily Clarke and last but not least, The Reverend Lisa Phillips, who also is a new visitor, so sit and drink some coffee and I’ll explain.

Nigel gave a similar explanation to that which he gave Lisa Philips, but with some more technical twists. The summary being that this is an artificial world, a palace and estate created by Billy Taylor,

‘The guy who let you in. It’s done by folding space ...’

Some technical jargon here about Einstein, gravity lenses and bending space, and if it can be bent why not folded. Firstly, to

make interstellar travel easy, like double folding a map to make two places appear closer together, only folding space to make far distant objects closer. And then it follows if you can fold you can make stuff, things like you can in origami.

He said the last part with an ironic grin,

‘So, this is basically a kind of white hole, and separate to our universe, but with access via bridges, the green doors’. Nigel concluded, adding,

‘And the house, or should I say Palace, runs itself, and will look after us. We are safe here, at least from most other universes.’

And as Lisa had found out this was true, they saw no one else, yet the place was clean, their food provided, and excellent it was, even their rooms made up somehow without being noticed by what or how.

‘Oh, and I don’t know what Billy is up to.’ added Nigel, which unlike this place, is not unusual.

Meanwhile the Star Wars group were if anything more determined than ever to get hold of some unsepttrium,

‘Our dam futures are hanging on this, that and our knowledge of the “meteor”, so I mean not just our careers are on the line, we know a very inconvenient truth.’

This was the project leader now talking to the group, minus Kannaur Rahul.

He added, ‘Find these people, visit this location, 85, whatever, and we have a cover story, terrorists, and infiltration of Brit intelligence, finally, yes deadly force whenever.’

‘He seems a tad concerned’ joked Shelia Harris.

‘He means deadly force to anyone, including us.’ a military guy whispered, adding, ‘Hence not just our careers are on the line.’

The colour drained from Shelia Harris.

By that night what amounted to a task force was ready, had arrived from US bases in Europe. Monday night would be the time for the operation code named “Black Dog.”

Some asked why, the reply was not because it would be at night, but the late Winston Churchill’s name for his depression was The Black Dog. Why Churchill? was answered by a map being thrown at the questioner, the next street to Colonial Road was Churchill Road, named after the reporter for the Morning Post newspaper who was a hero in escaping his capture from the Borers in the second Boer war. The Winston Churchill who later became Prime Minister, who often suffered from depression, which he called his “Black Dog”.

Undercover the whole area around 85 Colonial Road was now populated by American Special Ops. The contact team would be 6 agents, 3 with trauma skills, there was a family living in 85. And Shelia Harris plus another physicist, this the guy from the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, inducement for him, just money.

The operation went very smoothly, no outside interference, the terrified family woken and taken to the kitchen, guarded while a search was made. The first sweep found nothing, on the second sweep walls were tapped for hidden spaces, one was found in a cupboard downstairs, it was opened, two large

leather-bound books were there containing strange drawings, and nothing else. No unsepttrium,

‘Keep the books, seal the wall’ was the order. The mission, a fail, was over.

Back in Mildenhall, the RAF base in Suffolk, which was in effect a US base, a tense meeting was held. Via the “terrorist” cover the CIA at Langley was now using its full computer power to track the “knowns”. Via Kannaur Rahul the links to Nigel Summers and then to Billy Taylor and Lisa Phillips, a “hit”, and then Catherine Mulberry and Emily Clarke, not significant? The need to find out. And locations, the School House, Arley, Edgbaston and Woodbridge.

Billy had waited at the hotel enjoying the Hyatt’s food. He wore no disguise and was using his own name, that would make him easy to find, he wanted to be found. By various means he was aware of the failed mission. And the plan now of the Americans was to find those people involved and search their houses. But these people were impossible to find, all except himself. But allowing the ransacking of his home and the others Billy thought was not on, so they would ransack three creations of his making, again by folding space. So, Monday night three teams thoroughly ransacked the three locations, removing in doing so many boxes of materials, notebooks and computers. These crated up and shipped to the CIA’s facility in Mildenhall. And on opening were found to be empty.

A second attempt to search 85 Colonial Road was put on hold, they now had a location for a target, Billy Taylor who was staying at the Hyatt Hotel Birmingham. Now how Billy knew the CIA had his location was for Billy simple, he let them

know! He had telephoned a friend and old colleague, Ray Wood, who now lived in Chicago. Ray did occasional work for US intelligence, or had for the previous administration, not for this one, but still had contacts. Billy and Ray made a few jokes, and then Billy said,

‘Pass on this message. I’ll take them to the real 85 if they meet me in the morning at 9.30 in the Hyatt Hotel.’

‘Oh, and avoid the Pentagon, and let anyone, friends that is, you know who works there, throw a sicky.’

‘Or?’ asked Ray.

‘They might if things go wrong never be sick again.’ was the reply.

Billy guessed the call had been monitored, so the “they” didn’t contact Ray, they had the information they wanted.

Billy decided as this might be his last night in Birmingham, at least for a while, he just had to make a special effort. Early evening he took a stroll along the canal tow path, leaving it at Newhall Street, which he walked up and into The Wellington, had just a pint of fireside, then walked back to the restaurant in the Hyatt. As he did so he assumed he was being followed and monitored.

Samjang pulled mushroom, sourdough crumpet, spring onion, coriander to start, then King prawn and monkfish Malabar curry, toasted coconut rice, coriander, crispy samphire, finally Vanilla bean panna cotta, Earl Grey whiskey syrup poached prunes.

His normal good bottle of red, and then a good night’s sleep. No Laphroaig, he wanted to be super sharp in the morning.

CHAPTER ### ### ### ### IIII: THE END OF THE BLACK DOG

Tuesday morning Billy had to rise earlier than normal to enjoy his full English Breakfast. The TV news was that the radiated area of Antarctica was still off limits, he showered, put on a clean Anderson & Sheppard suit, Turnbull and Asser shirt and his John Lobb brogues. By 9.30 he was ready for his visitors. The agents, just two, were no longer standard tall black suits with cool shades, one was grey, looked in his 60s, but probably wasn't, wore corduroy trousers and an open neck shirt, with a tweed jacket, his partner was much younger, chinos, polo shirt, brown bomber jacket and deck shoes. They were accompanied by Shelia Harris, expensive trainers, likewise jeans, denim shirt, and fawn waistcoat, her colleague, Dr Lance Bloom, the physicist from the Lawrence Livermore Labs had plain brown leather shoes, cheap chinos, check shirt and light-coloured jacket. Billy being in his Saville Row clothes, the agents couldn't help noticing. Outside was not the black de rigour SUV but a Volvo hire car, and rental van that had seen better days, or looked like it had.

'Shall we go?' said Billy, they followed him out of the hotel, he, the agents and Shelia took the Volvo, the older agent driving. Lance got into the rental van. They knew the way to Bordesley Green, obviously had been practicing, Billy noticed several other vehicles that his senses and púcas were telling him were not cosher. He reckoned the whole area was under surveillance. The car and van pulled up outside 85 Colonial Road, the four got out of the car. Lance Bloom got out of the van, now accompanied by two other men dressed as workmen. Workmen's clothes, hi vis jackets and toolbelts. Lance had a leather bag. 'Six.' Thought Billy, and dozens more nearby? Looking across the road he noticed an Openreach van

and three “telephone engineers” one seemingly absent minded looking across at the seven figures outside number 85. Two women were walking down the road, one pushing a baby buggy.

‘OK, you go first, you have to.’ said Billy as he led them onto the block pavement of 85, but it wasn’t. All six froze, Billy smiled as they took in the scene.

They were now on a path with lawns either side, each with a flower bed, one having a few rose bushes.

‘It’s how it was in the late 1950s.’ Billy was saying, ‘And your comms isn’t dead, it’s just the receivers haven’t been made yet, or the operators born.’ he laughed. The “workmen” fumbled with their tool belts,

‘Don’t worry your Glock 17s will still work, though I’d strongly advise not using or even showing them.’

He had also noticed the two agents had handguns in their back pockets.

‘And for fun check your watches.’

Shelia looked, ‘It’s stopped.’ she said, the others were checking.

‘Now what are the odds of six watches all stopping at the same time, no it’s not stopped, they have not stopped, time here is odd, often there is none, and it really isn’t just 60 or so years ago, I’ve wondered just where and when, but let’s get on, follow me.’

He led them down the path, instinctively the “workmen” drew their pistols, one taking the rear, the other just behind Billy, who gave a tut tut. He couldn’t resist saying,

‘You’re out of your depth guys. I warned you.’

They followed him into the house through the hall into the living room, the boy was sitting on the sofa reading a comic, *The Eagle*.

‘These people want to see the tiles.’ Billy said, as he opened the French windows and led them into the back garden. By now both the two agents and workmen with drawn pistols were looking very nervous, which made Shelia and Lance now very nervous. The boy had put down his comic noticing the Glocks. So, the strange procession followed Billy down the concrete path between empty flower beds, Billy, Workman #1, Shelia, Lance, Agent #1, older, Agent #2 younger, Workman #2 and the boy. They passed the apple tree and approached the cylindrical stack of tiles near the three tall sycamore trees at the end of the garden.

Lance took out a probe from his bag, a Summers device for giving the atomic number of any material. He was now very nervous, his hands trembled, the group now forming a semi-circle, the workmen with guns drawn, standing a little back, the boy’s gaze fixed on the Glocks, which they found strangely unnerving.

Lance knelt his hands trembling even more, he held the device and touched one of the tiles, Shelia closed her eyes in anticipation. The readout slowly climbed.

‘Unsepttrium is extremely unstable,’ Billy was saying, ‘but here there is no time, so it’s very stable, take a piece outside though, and whamo.’

‘That’s just what we have to do.’ said the older agent, he had taken a small bag from the inside of his jacket, the readout had stopped at 173, he reached towards a tile.

‘Excuse me,’ it was the boy, ‘they are mine and you shouldn’t take without asking.’

The younger agent laughed and spoke, ‘So can we pretty please take one?’

‘No, they are all needed you see, in order to make the device work.’

Billy was watching saying nothing.

‘Take one.’ the young agent said. But at that moment there were screams in the air and two giant Pterosaurs flew across the garden each grabbing a “workman” before they could respond. They flew off.

‘Dragons of a kind?’ thought Billy.

The agents hesitated, no training had equipped them for this, then they went for their guns, at the same time Shelia had screamed and ran out of the garden, there was a rear gate and entry, she was followed by Lance, and they were gone.

Billy was speaking, ‘I wouldn’t follow, or show your firearms, those things do not like them it seems. Shall we go inside, we have some explaining to do.’ He walked towards the door, looking back at the boy,

‘Be careful with those they are real.’ he said.

The boy was looking at the lawn where the two Glocks had fallen, dropped by the agents dressed as workmen. He looked up with a look as if to say, ‘of course!’

As if answering an unasked question Billy continued his one-sided conversation,

‘I know, why wasn’t the boy not terrified or even surprised, I think maybe he’s seen such creatures before, and worse, or maybe better for him, bigger ones. How and where they came from, I’ve no idea, but I suspect the boy does. And Shelia and Lance, again no idea of what will become of them. Let’s go into the kitchen.’

The two agents followed Billy into the living room and from this the door into the kitchen. Despite their state of shock or because of it the scene was unsettling. A large and very old pine table was in the centre with four chairs, it was covered in linoleum, in the corner was a gas boiler for washing clothes, a large cylinder that the agents did not recognise, or the meat safe, a small cupboard with a metal grill. The gas stove too was odd, free standing with the pipe work visible, and plate drying rack above. Opposite was a ceramic butler sink with a wooden draining board and two long shelves, with odd saucepans stacked on the top shelf. The floor was quarry tiles, the walls gloss cream painted un-plastered brick, except lino patterned to look like tiles had been stuck around the walls to a height of about five feet. It was totally alien to them. All three sat down around the table. It was by now very familiar to Billy, and for him what occurred next not unexpected.

An old woman came into the kitchen, she was very thin with wiry white hair. She wore a dark dress and pinafore of dark maroon paisley patterns. She took a kettle from the stove and filled it with water, lit a ring on the gas stove with a flint lighter and waited for the kettle to boil. She took a teapot from a shelf and a packet of loose tea, spooned some into the pot and poured in the water once the kettle had boiled. She fetched three mugs from the pantry after waiting for it to mash she poured tea into them. She went back into the pantry and fetched a bottle of milk. The thin neck of the bottle showed that it was sterilized milk. She poured this into the mugs and gave them a stir with a spoon she took from the draw in the table. Then she fetched a bowl of sugar and placed it on the table and then sat on the empty chair.

All this time no one spoke, Billy was just waiting allowing the agents to recover.

Billy put two spoonfuls of sugar and stirred his mug of tea, sipped it then waited. The younger agent sipped his tea, tried not to show his reaction to the taste, the older agent just sat.

The old lady tut tutted then spoke to the agents,

‘You really should not be here, and what happened to those poor others, well you should go now, not come back again and try to behave yourselves.’

Billy finished his tea, gave the two agents a ‘follow me’ look, rose from the table saying,

‘And thank you for the tea, you’ve been most kind.’

The three left, Billy noticed as they entered the living room the boy was sat at the table where the television was, he was

looking at one of the Glocks, he had taken out the magazines and a bullet from one of them and was looking at it carefully.

He was thinking and talking to himself,

‘These need something adding to them.’ He rose and walked out into the back garden.

‘He has a thing about guns,’ Billy said to the agents, ‘and battleships, missiles, dinosaurs, the usual boy’s things.’

The agents still too confused to offer a reply. As they walked down the path Billy turned and spoke to them,

‘You’re very lucky that kind old lady stepped in, otherwise you’d probably have been responsible for the destruction of the Pentagon and The Facility, best keep quiet about what went on here.’

The agents were still silent, passing through the gate they arrived in the present, as they did a confused Openreach engineer was crossing the road, he spoke,

‘So, you are not going in? And hey where are the others, the other four?’

‘See,’ said Billy to the agents, ‘no time has passed.’

At that moment one of the other agents, Openreach engineers, called out,

‘Scratch, we’ve been ordered.’

The older agent finally spoke quietly, ‘It’s over, we’ll give you a lift back to your hotel.’

So, they drove back to the city centre, it was still only mid-morning.

Their coms were now working, the younger agent was talking, so they killed black dog, it came first from the gods.

Someone had shown someone much higher in the food chain the demise of the alien object and realised that tackling a thing, a monster like some dragon, that could eat enormous alien tech was best avoided. The “they”, the “they” higher up, had to check, re check, watch the videos over and the interviews, and in the end not out of believing but just because they wanted the whole US connection forgotten, cancelled the black dog operation and did nothing, or at least for the time being. What needed was “closure”.

CHAPTER III III III III III III: LUNCH AND THE REVELATION

Billy went to his room in the Hyatt. He decided to have an early lunch, then maybe use the green door in Nigel's house to visit Arcadia and update those waiting there out of harm's way. He slipped off his jacket and shoes and turned on the TV for news.

The news was certainly news, ships from New Zealand had begun to enter the Zone, as it was now called. And no radiation was detected, no dead sea birds or seals. Initially good, but then no live birds or seals either. Radio contact was still out, but a plane flying over the Norwegian research station saw no signs of life either. It flew low but could see nothing. Flying inland to where there should have been a noticeable colony of Emperor penguins nothing. Nothing could be seen living in the air, on land in or under the sea. The second aircraft had skis so could land at the Norwegian base. No humans alive or dead could be found. Signs they had recently been there were obvious. The press and newspapers billed it as the greatest mystery ever, that dwarfed the Marie Celeste.

Billy's mind was blank, no astonishment, he was used to such things, and this "missing" could be good or bad, these life forms could be in a hell or heaven or blinked out of existence. Maybe the events of the morning, whatever his mind was blank until somehow a gull, a lesser black-backed gull, these sea birds had become city dwellers, the gull wheeled around his hotel window and gave a loud tap on the glass with its beak, then flew off in silence.

'Not screeching.' he thought, 'Maybe a good sign.'

It broke the dream, his first action was to use his pendulum for dowsing, not to find anything but to answer questions he framed in his mind, it swung in circles for 'no', straight for 'yes'. Finally, he took a leaf from his pocket, placed it in a dish on the floor of the shower in the en-suite and lit it, watched the smoke, its colour and patterns.

'That dwarfed the Marie Celeste, but not the five mass extinctions.' thought Billy in a sudden Epiphany, then aloud, 'No not an Epiphany, a Revelation.' at which he frowned. So still talking to himself,

'Off to tell the others, no lunch at the Hyatt.'

So, he checked out of the hotel and took a taxi to Nigel's mansion and was soon in Arcadia and so he broke the news to those there.

'I hope this is good news; it seems to be. You see we now have access to the Many Worlds Interpretation. It looks good, as the explosion above Antarctica has not killed anything or anyone, they have just shifted into another world. So, I'm sure it must be good news.'

Kannaur Rahul was at first doubtful, but Nigel said he would follow Billy's judgment. Kannaur heaved a sigh of relief realising he had not been a part of the Antarctica deaths, nothing had died. Lisa meanwhile was giving a smile, and quietly saying,

'You never told me of this wonderful place.'

To which Billy said,

'I raced here so missed my lunch at the Hyatt, could we then continue this chat over some food?'

Laughter, and Catherine Mulberry said,

‘Follow me, I expect the place, sorry Palace will put on something special for its creator.’

And it did.

They used the smaller dining room which had a terrace, as here the weather was more like a warm May early summers day, they ate alfresco. As all were now used to the meals, lunch was normally a buffet event, so they served themselves from a mix and match from four menus,

1. Appetizer: Cream Cheese and Walnut-Stuffed Dates, Carrot Ginger Soup, Watermelon Goat Cheese Salad, Entrée: Apple-Brie Tortilla Melt, Dessert: Caramel Brownie with Vanilla Ice Cream.

2. Appetizer: Pita and Hummus, White Bean Soup, Quinoa Tomato-Cucumber Salad, Entrée: Tofu Shawarma, Dessert: Vegan Baklava.

3. Appetizer: American Chips and Guac, Tortilla Soup, Corn and Black Bean Salad, Entrée: Chicken Mole Enchiladas, Dessert: Churro.

4. Hors D'Oeuvre: Italian Meatballs, Appetizer: Rosemary Focaccia, Garden Salad, Entrée: Chicken Parmigiana, Dessert: Sfogliatelle.

There were also cold meats, and somehow Billy's and Nigel's Entrées were large rib-eye steaks.

A selection of wines, fruit juices, and some fine Champagne. And they were now all used to how the used dishes cleared themselves away when no one was looking.

So, with talking and all 5 courses it took two hours.

‘Seven is good for lunch, or any meal...’ Billy was saying at some point, for which Kannaur Rahul was curious, Nigel couldn’t resist,

‘It is the only prime number preceding a cube. Symbolic associations in religion, mythology, superstition and philosophy, 7 classical planets resulted in seven being the number of days in a week and is often considered lucky in Western culture...’

Here he was interrupted by Lisa,

‘Not in Revelations, seven seals and the riders, white horse of conquest, pale horse whose rider is Death, then the seven trumpets. Hail and fire, mingled with blood, are thrown to the earth burning up a third of the trees and green grass. A great mountain, burning with fire, falls from the sky and lands in the ocean. It kills a third of the sea creatures and destroys a third of the ships at sea. A great star, named Wormwood, falls from heaven and poisons a third of the rivers and springs of water. A third of the sun, the moon, and the stars are darkened creating complete darkness for a third of the day and the night. The bottomless pit is opened. Armies kill a third of mankind by plagues of fire, smoke, and brimstone. A great Dragon with seven heads, ten horns, and seven crowns, A seven-headed leopard-like beast. And the seventh Trumpet: The Third Woe that leads into the seven bowls of plagues. Sores, the Sea turns to blood and everything within it dies. All fresh water turns to blood. The Sun scorches the Earth. There is total darkness and great pain in the Beast's kingdom. The final battle at Armageddon, finally an earthquake and heavy

hailstorm destroys all mountains and islands, and the great Harlot who sits on a scarlet dragon with seven heads.'

'Wow,' said Nigel, 'I'm impressed with your memory!'

'Not really.' said Lisa, 'I've been reading Revelations over and over for what seems like an eternity'.

'Sounds like an account of the world's history, I mean plagues and wars.' Kannaur said.

'That's it!' Billy almost shouted, 'And what will be done to change this,' he paused, 'never mind for now let's just enjoy lunch.'

Laughter, then Billy quietly to Lisa, 'We'll talk later.'

After lunch and a stroll, it was decided people would return to their homes.

'It will be safe now, but Kannaur?' said Billy.

'He'll stay with me.' said Nigel.

So, they all said farewell to Arcadia, for the time being, Catherine Mulberry and Emily Clarke went back to Woodbridge via its green door, Kannaur, Nigel, Kate, Billy and Lisa back to Nigel's mansion via his green door. Billy used Nigel's Range Rover SE, Nigel still couldn't drive, to take Lisa back to Arley, where they agreed to Zoom once he was back in Woodbridge.

CHAPTER III III III III III I: RATTLESNAKE

The two surviving agents of the visit to 85 Colonial Road disappeared before any debriefing could take place. What they had witnessed was sufficient motivation. Both knew a search would ensue. The older agent having been not on the receiving end of a search but rather had been part of several such search operations and so was better equipped to know what to do, and what not to do. Setting up false trails was not a good idea; they could be traced; no, it required resources that could not be traced and the ability to go off grid for years if needed. A few sets of aliases and minor cosmetic changes was insufficient. These in fact were always subject to investigation, and exploitation, and such information was valuable. In this case to the extent of a million dollars or more. The younger agent was found but remarkably resisted fierce interrogation. His failure to deny the presence of unsepttrium was taken to be tacit acknowledgement it was present. The idea that another “mission” to 85 even with the forced help of Billy Taylor ruled out for obvious reasons. The disaster of the last attempt, two agents AWL, and two carried off by dragons! Once inside the 85 of the 1950s the agents were on their own, and if what was reported to the interrogators was true, they were at a total disadvantage given the forces found there. Two experienced agents lost, two so scared they disappeared on their return. The agent made this clear.

This state of affairs could not be tolerated, so those of the hard core in the military were tasked. The “Rattlesnake” group would meet, still in The Facilities HUB. It was secure.

‘If we can’t have access to unsepttrium we must make damn sure no one else can.’

‘We can’t gain access to the 85 where it is.’

‘We thus should make certain no one else, no other organisation or nation can.’

‘Ideas.’

‘Create an exclusion zone, and guard it.’

‘A. It’s not US soil, B. any guard or barrier can be breached.’

‘Not if the area is very heavily contaminated.’ was one reply.

This was both barbaric and unthinkable, so the military “Rattlesnake” group set about planning it.

By a careful selection process the co-option of those with the science was sort, which established that an area of highly toxic radioactivity would probably do the trick. This was achieved by simple what if scenarios, then monetary inducements to firm up the practical actuality.

The short list of candidates was...

Polonium-210 a half-life of 138.376 days (about 4+1/2 months)

This has gained a reputation as a killer as it was used to kill Russian dissident and ex-FSB officer Alexander V. Litvinenko in 2006, as well as others.

‘It will do the trick of being scary but a short half life...’

The physics guy said and had to explain the probabilistic nature of radioactive decay, gave up with some and said, the area would safe after a year or so. However, it was pointed out that Uranium-238 has a half-life of 4.468 billion years, and then Plutonium-239 had a half-life of 24,110 years.

‘50,000 years from now we will probably be in another ice age, the Canadian lakes gone, no Niagara Falls, the Sahara is Jungle, North America polar and we probably have had an extinction level event.’

‘Such as?’ asked a military.

Looking at their notes ‘Super volcanic eruption large enough to eject a trillion tonnes of ash, like no daylight, no plants!’

‘Uranium-238 at around four billion years, at that time there would be no life on Earth.’

‘Why?’ asked a military.

‘Earth’s surface temperature is 1,400 K that’s 1,130 °C or 2,060 °F, which is hot enough to melt surface rock.’

‘We go with Uranium-238.’ the military replied.

‘Better choice as it’s a naturally occurring element.’ was the response from the tame physicists.

‘How so?’ asked the military.

‘It makes for an excellent cover story, a meteorite of U238 is possible, using P239 as it’s not natural we’d have to blame it on some others, Russia or China.’ THE SIX, INCLUDING KANNAUR VISITED THE GARDEN IN EDGBASTON. THEY WATCHED THE STARS FALLING ON

The military looked unconcerned, which then asked, ‘So how do we get this spread over an area of a city which is a friendly country?’

There was a long pause, then the tame physicist said,

‘Well, you get a stack of it in orbit somehow, maybe several small flights then send this on a re-entry path to the target, maybe detonating a scattering explosion. I’d say a large enough area, and some buried deep enough to prevent simply somehow removing it.’

They thought,

‘A mile across, or two?’

‘Deaths.’ asked the military?

‘Hard to say, I don’t have the population density, and then there is not a uniform spread, and how fast evac occurs, can you give me a day?’ came the reply.

‘We’ll give you an hour with escort.’ came the reply.

An hour later the physicist said,

‘Rough and ready, 1 mile radius 40,000 deaths, a 2 mile 155,000.’

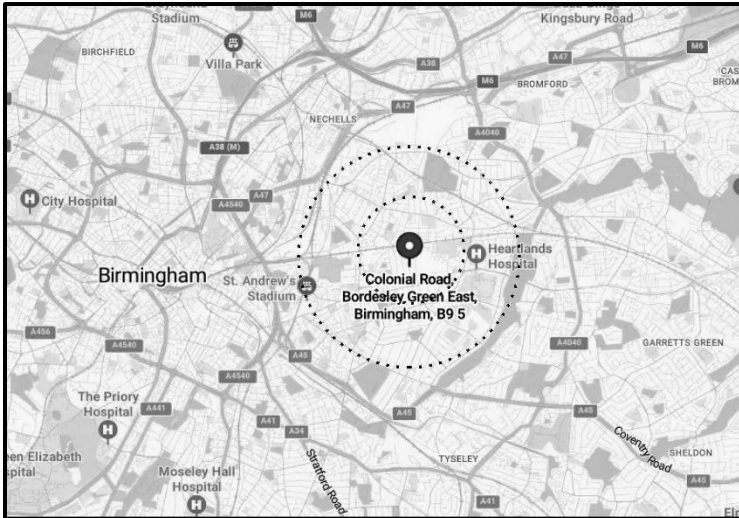
‘Tough call.’ said the military. ‘One or two miles.’

‘Two.’ said the general in command, ‘and now I get this organised.’

‘Permission?’ someone asked.

‘Already have it based on no traceability!’

An emergency meeting was called for the following morning, the general displayed a map and talked for less than a minute.



‘We have an excellent CEP, but the two-mile radius is out, mitigation from some politico no doubt, It’s the hospital, so 1 mile it is. And by May one. Mayday!’

[Circular error probable - CEP a measure of a weapon system's precision in the military science of ballistics.]

‘So, the target would be a one mile no go area around 85, excellent.’

The next few days saw several launches of military satellites and the movement of these in orbit by MULES.

CHAPTER III III III III III II: GROUND ZEROS

Billy and Lisa Zoomed but made no progress on the “dragons” being unaware of the incident in space with the alien object, however Billy was aware of giant Pterosaurs and had told Lisa about these. But they could not link these to the Tuttle hill incident or the Book of Revelations, or what the Americans were up to.

‘Billy, as Easter is approaching, I’m going to be very busy with the churches.’ Lisa was saying, and Billy quite understood,

‘But I can offer some help,’ he said, ‘I’ll let you have a green door, in Arcadia it’s possible to spend time there without it passing here, Kate uses this for studying, and of course no need to cook. How?’

He anticipated the question, ‘You just go into a room and think that’s what you want.’

Lisa forgot to ask about where this green door would be, how she could find it. After the zoom session she had to update the Easter calendars for the churches she was responsible for, luckily, she had help from the readers with the newsletters.

Her yard at the rear of the schoolhouse had a parking place for her Land Rover, a small outhouse, then the garden. Taking the calendars, she had printed off to her Land Rover ready to deliver, she noticed another door in the outhouse, it was green. And going through it she was in Arcadia, smiling, she had a walk around the lawns and down to the river and back, then took the door she had entered Arcadia from and found herself in her yard, and yes, the time in this world had not changed.

‘Thanks Billy.’ she thought.

Meanwhile Billy was worried.

‘Maybe I need to talk to Kannaur?’ Billy felt a sense of urgency, he couldn’t telephone Arcadia as it was not of this universe, anyway a call from any place was out, calls would be intercepted. And he, and all the others were probably being watched.

For reasons of accountability Billy normally travelled to see Nigel by train or sometimes with Catherine Mulberry, when for instance she was lecturing at the University, he would ride with her in her 1950s Wolseley car. A much faster method was by using green doors, which this time he did.

The first person he saw as he entered the corridor of Nigel’s mansion was Kate, she was on her way to Arcadia and carrying a book,

‘Need to read this for a review, it’s new work on Jewish Mysticism, so to save time...’ she paused, ‘sorry me telling you, Nigel and Kannaur are in the garden room.’

With which she left, Billy walked down the hall and into the room,

Billy entered, at which Nigel said, ‘Didn’t here you arrive.’

Billy explained his route and his feeling of urgency, then asked Kannaur,

‘Can you tell us what you were involved with which so disturbed you, I don’t like to ask but I’ve a terrible premonition.’

So Kannaure told the whole story.

‘Great, thanks, the use of the term Dragons Breath for such a powerful weapon might be a mistake, but no thanks, thanks for this, maybe be ready to leave for Arcadia.’ he said, ‘I’m going back to Woodbridge, maybe take the train, I enjoy the thinking time it allows.’

He refused tea and was soon in a Taxi heading for the station.

Easter was in late April this year, and the first of May drew closer.

At a second past midnight GMT on the first of May a collection of space debris containing many kilos of Uranium-238 in orbit around the Earth re-entered the atmosphere. It fragmented above 85 Colonial Road. A series of small detonations produced above ground a covering a mile radius with larger parts of the debris being buried deep beneath the surface. There were no survivors at ground zero, and the burying of deeper radioactive material gave a sharp cut off of radiation at the perimeter of the impact such that the Heartlands Hospital could handle survivors before it’s patients and doctors were evacuated.

The area became known as The Zone and was cordoned off. Attempts were made to discover what had occurred. The story was given that the likely cause was a very rare meteorite impact which contained radioactive uranium. Possibly associated with the Antarctica event. Deaths could only be estimated at around 40,000. Many dying over the following weeks and months.

The UK received worldwide support, especially from the USA. The media’s frenzy picked up the idea and linked it to the

incident in the Antarctic Sea, and comparisons were made with the Biblical events in the Book of Revelations, death raining down from the skies, and speculation about “The End of Days” became prominent. Cults and fringe Churches sprang up, as well as massive increases of congregations in those established churches, temples and other places of worship. There were no riots or panic.

Billy now took the fast method to Edgbaston via Arcadia, from Woodbridge to his Palace and then to Nigel’s Victorian Mansion. There was a brief conversation.

Nigel assured Billy he and Kate were OK, only very shocked, they had stayed in the mansion to wait for more news, being in Arcadia they would be out of contact, but that is where they would now go, away from the terrible reality and mindless media speculation, and yes, Billy was welcome to use the house and his Range Rover SE.

Kannaur was in trauma, he had been quite hysterical, at first in tears saying he couldn’t believe what those at The Facility had done, and then in a rage saying he could believe that’s just what they would do. Now he had been given a brandy, he was not a drinker, so this had calmed him down. He said he wanted to stay in the Mansion. Asked if it would be OK, and of course it was. He wanted to track events. He now seemed more calm, and determined, but to do what and for what he had no idea.

Nigel was assured by Billy that he would take care of Kannaur so, he and Kate went to Arcadia.

It was a day later Billy told Kannaur he needed to go to another part of Birmingham where he might be out of

contact, would he mind 'holding the fort', Kannaar said fine and had now something to do.

Inglefield Road in Birmingham is some two miles from Colonial Road and was the home of the boy's other grandparents which he visited every Sunday. So it was on a Sunday that Billy managed to drive there via a detour around the exclusion zone, from Nigel's mansion, the A4540, A41 and A4040. As Billy navigated around The Zone, the streets were empty, it seemed strange, but for an obvious reason. Anyone that could, had left Birmingham, and those that could not stayed indoors as much as possible, and when venturing out avoiding the city centre.

46 Inglefield Road was a rather dilapidated semi-detached house converted into a maisonette, with a side entrance for the upstairs flat. The houses around it were in a much better state having block paving where a front garden had been for parking, and new entrance verandas. Billy parked and walked towards the gate of the front garden, it was very neglected, no more than dirt and rough uncut grass. On opening it he was not surprised by the tidy front garden behind a neat privet hedge, a lawn on the left with a central flower bed occupied by a huge pampas grass.

Opening the front door, now one of frosted panels, he saw the familiar hallway with its Singer sewing machine. He walked down the hall and into the dining room.

Past the polished upright piano, to the right the dining table which was in front of windows with a view of the back garden. Apple trees and flower beds of purple lupins.

A man was standing over the table looking at a large book, it was a World Atlas, but the pages had been painted black with Indian ink. There were drawings on them of strange shapes, on these two pages in silver and white, verry detailed. The figure looked up,

‘Ah Mr Taylor, I was wondering if I would meet you here, perhaps number 85 is difficult?’

‘Smith!’ Billy replied.

‘Sorry, Billy, I could not resist a tease.’

Mr Smith was familiar to Billy and likewise. Smith looking like, and dressed like, a Victorian Gentleman, this was his preferred avatar, in fact he was an alien being from another now parallel world and his idea of a humorous greeting typical of his total lack of empathy, or so it seemed.

Smith continued, ‘Your world, or your people seem to have got a little out of hand, but we know a trifle in the grand scheme of things. Or is it a trifle, you see the boy is not here, or at 85, and these drawings are rather disturbing. This,’

He pointed to one,

‘it appears to be like a virus, but the inside shows not mitochondrial RNA, but what looks like a serpent of some genus.’

‘I think it’s a dragon and bodes not well.’ said Billy.

‘For who, or is it whom, your language!’ Smith said.

‘Whom,’ replied Billy, ‘and in the short term the perpetrators of the zone and the 40,000 deaths, in the long term...’

He stopped,

‘Bad news?’ said Smith, can we do anything.

‘Depends,’ said Billy, ‘are there blank pages?’

‘I’m afraid not.’ said Smith.

‘Then I’m afraid too.’ said Billy.

Billy drove back to Edgbaston with Mr Smith accompanying him.

A translucent sphere of bright light, rather like the SARS-CoV-2, coronavirus 2, but having a diameter of around 500 feet and the translucence showing internally what appeared like writhing red snakes, serpents or dragons descended slowly over Washington, crossed the Potomac River and came to a momentary stop above the Pentagon Building. It then continued its descent, destroying the building and then moved deep into the Earth’s crust destroying The Facility and other bunkers underneath.

Another Ground Zero, and now there were three Apocalyptic events for the media.

CHAPTER III III III III III III III: TOP TO BOTTOM

On arriving at Nigel's Mansion Billy showed Smith into the Garden Room. Here he made introductions.

'Kannaur, this is Mr Smith, or rather his avatar, he is more like a pan dimensional being from another reality, our history goes back years now through various encounters, and Mr Smith this is Dr Kannaur Rahul a physics professor of late working at The Facility in Washington.'

Kannaur would have been phased by this, and certainly not believe what he had just been told, but having now visited Arcadia, believed the story regarding Smith and took it in his stride.

'Tea.' said Billy.

Billy started to move to get tea.

'Before you leave if you don't know, The Pentagon and I guess The Facility where I worked has been destroyed.'

'By something looking like a giant SARS-CoV-2 virus?' asked Smith.

'Why yes.' was the reply.

'I'll fetch Kate and Nigel, then get tea.' said Billy.

When he returned with Nigel, Kate and tea for five Kannaur was listening to Mr Smith recounting why he dressed so, and some of the physics of pan-dimensionality.

'Good to see you two getting along.' said Nigel.

Then they all sat and watched the videos of the destruction of The Pentagon. Billy explained where he had been and what he and Smith had seen in the book at Inglefield Road.

‘So can we work out what’s going on?’ Nigel asked.

‘Worst case scenario would be what?’ asked Kate.

‘To be blunt, I think if it’s the boy, I think he could destroy everything.’ Billy said.

There was a silence.

‘Why?’ asked Kannaur.

‘I don’t know.’ said Billy.

‘Can we do anything?’ asked Kannaur.

‘Maybe.’ said Billy.

Smith gave a look of disapproval.

‘We can at least try to work out what happens next.’ said Billy.

Nigel, did something typical of Nigel in a crisis, he left the room to return with a flip chart and pens, stood next to it holding a pen and said,

‘Armageddon then, how, bottom up, or top down?’

‘Neither’ said Billy, ‘start at the top, then go to the bottom, and then move towards the middle, that’s where the boy and we are. Well maybe not where the boy is, but where we have access to wherever the boy is.’

‘Top?’ asked Kannaur?

‘Omega points?’ said Nigel.

‘No, the higher planes.’ said Smith.

Kate said, ‘Oh, then my subject!’

‘Mr Smith if you would run through this with Kate’s help.’ said Billy.

Smith stood, took the pen, Nigel sat, and Smith began,

‘The higher planes are hinted at in Earth religions and metaphysics.’ Kate was nodding, then spoke,

‘In Jewish mysticism, the Sephirot, literally emanations, in the form of the tree of life, for the Kabbalists seeing these emanations deriving from the holy Ein Sof, God prior to any self-manifestation... or in Gnosticism the Primal Being or Bythos, from which the emanations of the Aeons descend. These are qualities such as Wisdom, personified as in this case by Sophia. In Hinduism and Buddhism, we have heavens and hells above and below this existence, but we are all familiar with this.’

‘You might be, but I’m totally lost, in the dark and dumbfounded.’ said Kannaur.

‘Just enjoy the ride then for the time being I’m sure one of the others will go into detail, answer any questions.’ said Billy.

‘So, there are more things in heaven and earth, than are dreamt of in my philosophy to paraphrase Hamlet!’ said Kannaur.

‘Astral planes you call them, if I may continue, and I’ll use your terms.’ Interrupted Smith, writing “Heavens” at the top of the chart and “Hells” at the bottom.

‘And not just one of each, many, in hierarchies and planes, or rhizomes.’

Kannaur noticed that Smith’s drawings and lettering were mechanically perfect.

‘I think we can then insert Omega points?’ Smith wrote the words.

‘Omega points?’ Kate asked.

‘My turn,’ said Kannaur, ‘an Omega point is the idea of the cosmologist Frank Tipler, an advanced civilization in a given universe would be concerned for its immortality in a finite world, so it, the civilization, if it could, would become a singularity, if you like a giant computer using all the universe’s matter and energy. And in a certain state achieve immortality, and have the attributes of the Abrahamic God, All knowing, Omniscience, All powerful, Omnipotent, and All presence, Omni present, Tipler further claims this Omega Point would resurrect the dead, crazy I know,’

He paused, then said,

‘Well not so crazy now given all this.’

‘I will continue.’ said Smith, adding ‘Universes [Multiverse], This universe, This Galaxy, This Solar system, This Earth.’

A pause,

‘Well?’

‘That’s the order, from top to bottom moving inwards to where we are.’ this was Kate

‘Well, the world is going to be in a turmoil now, and we hope not, but likely it will get worse, so we need to decide what to do. Where to go.’ said Billy.

Nigel spoke, ‘I’ll stay here and monitor and report to those in Arcadia, Kannaur you should go there you’re not safe here.’

‘I’m staying with you.’ Kate said, adding, ‘And where is Billy?’

They hadn’t noticed he had left.

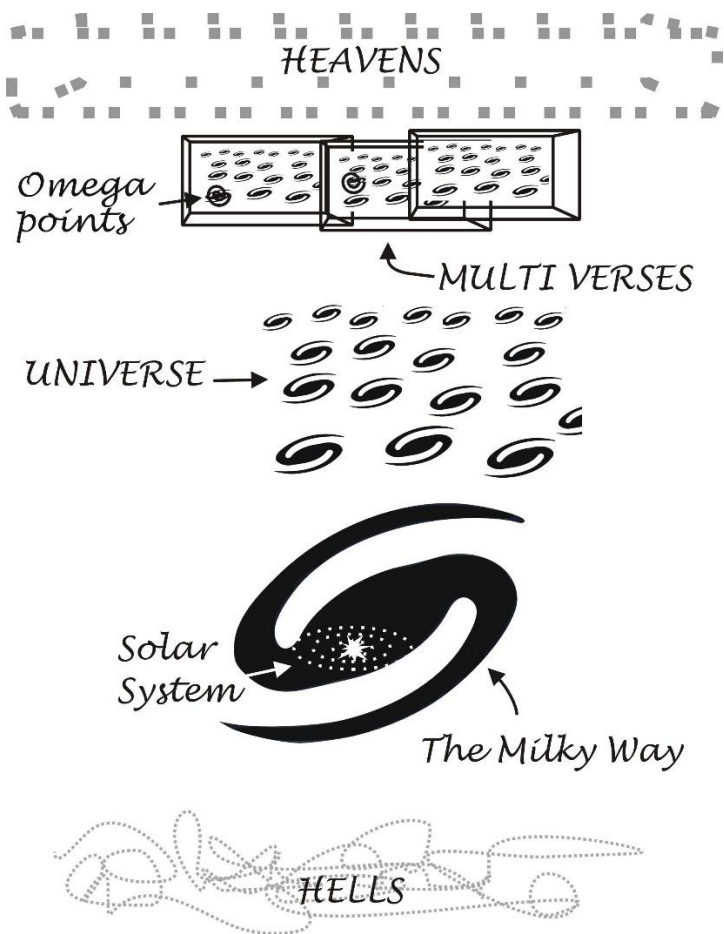
Billy had now re-entered the room and was talking,

‘I’ve been in touch with Lisa, she is staying with her congregations, which are growing, and will remain no matter what, understandable. I will go back to Woodbridge, I can monitor things there, the rest should go to Arcadia, but I suspect Smith will not, he will go to The Hall of The Mountain King.’

Kannaur looked puzzled, Smith explained,

‘It’s a delightful creation of Billy’s, just a single magnificent room, a fine high baroque affair, one that is enough for me.’

And so, it was.



CHAPTER ### ### ### ### ### IIII: THE CHINA SYNDROME

The USA was now on DEFCON 1 signalling the impending outbreak of nuclear warfare, after persuasion and the obvious fact that the “Thing” was not that of any foreign power this was reduced to DEFCON 3, “Increase in force readiness above that required for normal readiness.”

The “Thing” had made a 500-foot hole, any chance of life within this area was zero, outside of this the only casualties were sufferers from shock. Now the authorities needed answers, such as where was this “Thing” from, and now what to do. Many institutions were involved apart from government security agencies. As the “Thing” tore through the earth after destroying the Pentagon the crater or hole seemed bottomless. Blasts of heat and the sound of collapsing rock into magma drowning out the noise of sirens from the emergency vehicles. These subterranean sounds slowly subsided allowing the sirens to replace them as the main feature of the soundscape.

Where the “Thing” was, was now a mystery, at NASA someone joked that it would appear in China, as in the China syndrome. “China syndrome” refers to a fictional scenario in which a nuclear reactor core melts through its containment vessel, the basement of the power plant, and down into the Earth, not possible, but as a weird joke potentially passing through the Earth’s core and eventually reaching China. A scientist in NASA hearing this couldn’t help making calculations. It’s about 4,000 miles to the centre of the Earth, so an 8,000 mile journey. The “Thing” was moving slowly, around 8 M.P.H. So, the calculation was easy, 1,000 hours to make it all the way through, but not to China she thought.

1,000 hours is around 41 days. They thought no more of this until strange seismic data was reported. The scientist half-jokingly remarked that in 41 days the “Thing” should pop up in the middle of the Indian Ocean. The seismic data ceased, but only for a few days, then began again, only now from deep within the other hemisphere of the Earth. Impossible as it was, now the joke needed to be taken seriously. The data showed a moving source, but not relative to the Earth’s surface. The scientist was asked if she had anymore crazy ideas about this, she said only that it’s precise emergence would be at 38 degrees 57 seconds south and 102 degrees 57 seconds east, near the middle of the Indian ocean. She added again,

‘Assume 8 mph 4,000 miles to centre 8,000 miles to exit, 1,000 hours or around 41 days. Now over halfway, around just under 20 days until it pops up.’

The reason the “Thing” gave a stationary position in the seismic data was because it was going down or up, depending on your viewpoint, the silence was maybe it passing through the Earth’s iron core. This was passed on up the food chain, again thought a joke. The other institutions at first hesitantly said it matched the data they were receiving. As did others world-wide studying seismic data. Finally, the Japan Meteorological Agency and J-SHIS responsible for monitoring earthquake activity confirmed this data, and the anomaly was travelling vertically at around 8 M.P.H. which “capped it”. Not just the U.S.A. but the whole world had just under ten days to be in the vicinity of 38 degrees 57 seconds south and 102 degrees 57 seconds east. Survey, military ships, and aircraft were prepared. The United Nations was involved, and a problem discussed over if the US should take aggressive

military action. In the event the US Government said it would make no such undertaking as it regarded the destruction of The Pentagon as an act of war. Things therefore became even more tense.

With 24 hours left and the precise time of the emergence of the “Thing” now known the US Government issued a warning and stated that it had imposed a one-mile exclusion zone around the position of the emergence, it would enforce this with the appropriate action. The general who had chosen the one-mile radius for 85 was worried. The world watched and waited.

The “Thing” emerged at great depth under the Indian Ocean and moved slowly upwards, the American military and hawkish administration were determined to respond. Wiser council was that if the “Thing” was not damaged by any aggressive response from the USA it would make the US look foolish, add to that if it had travelled through the molten iron core what good would TNT or even a nuke do. The response was better foolish than weak and cowardly. At submarine depth a US attack submarine fired torpedoes. The slow movement of the “Thing” allowed it to fire numerous salvos, all to no effect. It broke the water and continued to rise, now gathering speed. Here it was attacked from ship and aircraft launched missiles. The world watched from the numerous media cameras at a distance of only a mile.

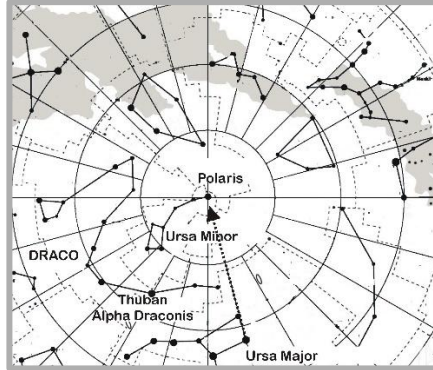
Kannaur wondered if the particle beam would be used when the thing was at an orbital height, the Dragons Breath was used several times as the speed of the “Thing” increased, all to no effect. It was tracked accelerating until it disappeared. Billy was not surprised at the actions of the USA, or the non-

reaction of the “Thing”, ‘payback just for Birmingham maybe?’ was his unspoken thought. It wasn’t. The truth was as before, in the Eve Sharif affair, a small imbalance in a system can cause catastrophic effects, well known as “The Butterfly” effect.

This “Thing” event caused more global disquiet, there were protests and riots condemning the US action, and a silent embarrassment that even The Star Wars particle beam was ineffective. The event added to the general hysteria, for some it was a messenger from God, a harbinger of worse to come. The technological equivalents of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, the bowman on a white horse, a conqueror, or the rider on a red horse removing peace from the world, then others claimed that it was the rider on a black horse sending judgement, and finally the harbinger of the pale horse ridden by death.

Meanwhile Billy stayed in Woodbridge with Emily and Catherine Mulberry, Nigel and Kate with Kannaur returned to their seclusion in Arcadia.

CHAPTER III III III III III III III: FIRST METHOD OF
DESTRUCTION IS THE OUROBOROS.



On a clear night in the Northern Hemisphere if you look at the stars you can find the pole star using the pointers found in the constellation of Ursa Major, The Great Bear, also known as The Plough or The Big Dipper. These point to Polaris or α Ursae Minoris, Alpha Ursae Minoris, alpha the first letter of the Greet alphabet showing it is the brightest star in the constellation of Ursae Minoris, also called the little bear. Polaris, also called the North Star or Pole Star, it marks the position of the north celestial pole, thus for centuries it was used to navigate, such was its importance. Moreover, all the other stars will appear to rotate around it once a day. Thus, it is the fixed point around which the cosmos appears to move. This was not always the case, Thuban or α Draconis, is the eye of the dragon in the constellation of Draco, the dragon which is an ouroboros.



The Egyptians knew of the ouroboros, as they did also know of dragons, Thuban or α Draconis, the eye of the dragon in the constellation of Draco. Thuban is the Arabic word ثعبان *thu' bān* meaning legendary draconian serpent. In Chinese, 紫微右垣 (*Zǐ Wēi Yòu Yuán*), means Right Wall of Purple Forbidden Enclosure.

Significantly, and very significantly, Thuban was the pole star 6,000 years ago. Six thousand years ago it was the fixed point around which the cosmos appeared to move.

The Egyptian Pyramids built around this time and after were designed to have one side facing north, with an entrance passage geometrically aligned so that Thuban would be visible at night down this entrance to the centre of the structure. Due to the effects of precession, Thuban will again be the pole star around the year AD 21000.

One of the first known representations of the ouroboros is in the shrine enclosing the sarcophagus of Tutankhamun, it appears in the Book of the Netherworld as the snake deity Mehen. The whole divine figure represents the beginning and the end of time. The Mehen is also a “board” game, played on a stone carving of the serpent, which was played in ancient Egypt. The game was obviously named in reference to Mehen. The rules of the game and its purpose remain unknown.

The gnostic text of Chrysopoeia of Cleopatra, Κλεοπάτρας χρυσοποιία has the picture of a black and white ouroboros which encloses the words *hen to pan*, ἓν τὸ πᾶν, “all is one”. The halves of black and white being the Taoist yin and yang symbol. This is also linked to the philosopher’s stone by which lead is turned to gold, a metaphor for the perishable flesh being turned into the immortal spirit. The ouroboros appears

in The Book of Kells, the 1625 alchemical tract De Lapide Philosophico and is the Seal of the Theosophical Society.

In Norse mythology, the ouroboros appears as the serpent Jörmungandr, who is one of the three children of Loki and Angrboda, which grew so large that it could encircle the world and grasp its tail in its teeth.

In the legends of Ragnar Lodbrok, king Herraud gives a small lindworm as a gift to his daughter Póra Town-Hart after which it grows into a large serpent which encircles the girl's bower and bites itself in the tail. The serpent is slain by Ragnar Lodbrok who marries Póra. Ragnar later has a son with another woman named Kráka and this son is born with the image of a white snake in one eye. This snake encircled the iris and bit itself in the tail, and the son was named Sigurd Snake-in-the-Eye. The ouroboros is identified with the Biblical Leviathan. According to the Zohar, the Leviathan is a singular creature with no mate, "its tail is placed in its mouth". In the Aitareya Brahmana, the nature of the Vedic rituals is compared to "a snake biting its own tail" and Ouroboros symbolism has been used to describe the Kundalini. According to the medieval Yoga-kundalini Upanishad: "The divine power, Kundalini, shines like the stem of a young lotus; like a snake, coiled round upon herself she holds her tail in her mouth and lies resting half asleep as the base of the body", it also refers to the ouroboros image in reference to the "cycle of samsara", the Cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.

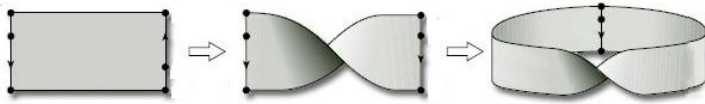
In Jungian psychology it is the archetype and basic mandala of alchemy. It has the meaning of infinity and the thought of devouring oneself. The ouroboros is often interpreted as a symbol for eternal cyclic renewal or a cycle of life, death and

rebirth; the snake's skin-sloughing symbolises the transmigration of souls. The snake biting its own tail is a fertility symbol in some religions: the tail is a phallic symbol, and the mouth is a yonic or womb-like symbol.

It is a symbol in Gnosticism and Hermeticism and most notably in alchemy. Some snakes, such as rat snakes, have been known to consume themselves. And so, as a powerful creative and also destructive force by which the object consumes and destroys itself.

A force now out of balance.

CHAPTER III III III III III III I: SECOND METHOD OF
DESTRUCTION IS THE MÖBIUS



Möbius bands appeared in Roman mosaics from the third century CE. The Möbius strip is a non-orientable surface, meaning that within it one cannot consistently distinguish clockwise from counterclockwise turns. Every non-orientable surface contains a Möbius strip. As an abstract topological space, the Möbius strip can be embedded into three-dimensional Euclidean space in many different ways: a clockwise half-twist is different from a counterclockwise half-twist, and it can also be embedded with odd numbers of twists greater than one, or with a knotted centreline. Any two embeddings with the same knot for the centreline and the same number and direction of twists are topologically equivalent. In the Möbius, space and time in the universe are unconnected, but there is no separation since both form the same. In fact, all existing matter and space are considered as a whole.

There are other examples which push this idea further such as The Kline bottle. In mathematics, the Klein bottle is an example of a non-orientable surface; that is, informally, a one-sided surface which, if travelled upon, could be followed back to the point of origin while flipping the traveller upside down. It is related to the Möbius strip. While a Möbius strip is a surface with a boundary, a Klein bottle has no boundary. Or its boundary is nothing.

The key concept is that unlike a loop which has sides the Möbius band has one side, which in effect means there are no sides. Or a surface which is a zero, a Klein bottle has no boundary.

That is, it is a self-negating structure, or aporia. An aporia is a “fault” in a schema or logical system such as languages. This includes mathematics and computer languages. The simplest formulation is the self-reference, such as the following:

“This sentence is not true.” - If true it is not true, if not true then it is true and so is not true...

“Everything is meaningless.” - If the sentence is a “thing” then it has meaning which is to say it doesn't have meaning.

“Nothing matters” - Then the statement doesn't matter, but it can't be null, it can't not matter, for if it is true, it matters...

Normally “rules” need to be created to prevent such things occurring, but they are natural features of the world, destructive natural features.

CHAPTER III III III III III III III II: THIRD METHOD OF DESTRUCTION IS ZERO

The self-destructive feature of these geometries is that of the ouroboros and Kline bottle at one degree of abstraction from the ouroboros, the next from these being the null operator or zero itself.

The zero demonstrates the same phenomena, that of destruction, in this case “explosion”, unlike the self-eating implosion of the ouroboros. Notably in division by zero. For instance, if attempted in computing and not checked it causes an interrupt, or a failure where the CPU cannot continue.



However, this error is avoided by software detecting the zero divisor and not attempting to perform it for a reason given by the mathematician Bhaskara.

Zero is a “peculiar” “thing” it’s not just different as a number giving a different result, just as 6 is different to 8, it “behaves” differently in division to all other numbers. Other numbers which behave the same, whose “being” is the same.

$$18 \div 6 = 3 \quad [\quad 18 / 6 = 3]$$

$$18 \div 2 = 9$$

$$8 \div 2 = 4$$

In short you can divide numbers by other numbers but not by zero. Or you can but the result is “undefined”, or nothing, or null. But why can’t you do this?

The mathematician Bhaskara considered any number divided by zero gave infinity! As when we divide numbers by ever smaller numbers, the result gets larger, so the smallest number, 0 gives the largest result possible, infinity.

$$8 \div 2 = 4$$

$$8 \div 0.5 = 16$$

$$8 \div 0.00007 = 114285.7142857143$$

$$8 \div 0 = \text{infinity}.. \infty$$

“A quantity divided by zero becomes a fraction the denominator of which is zero. This fraction is termed an infinite quantity. In this quantity consisting of that which has zero for its divisor, there is no alteration, though many may be inserted or extracted; as no change takes place in the infinite and immutable God when worlds are created or destroyed, though numerous orders of beings are absorbed or put forth.”

Historically, one of the earliest recorded references to the mathematical impossibility of assigning a value to anything divided by zero is contained in Anglo-Irish philosopher George Berkeley's criticism of infinitesimal calculus. Newton's calculus on which his Principia was founded was criticised in Berkeley's publication of 1734, "The Analyst or ghosts of departed quantities".

So, the null, zero in the shape with no sides, space with no sides is the abstraction of the ouroboros.

"Shape without form, shade without colour,
Paralysed force, gesture without motion;"

From The Hollow Men by T.S. Eliot.

CHAPTER IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII: FOURTH METHOD OF
DESTRUCTION IS TIME

The mistranslation of Oppenheimer’s quote when seeing the Trinity test of the first atomic bomb was,

‘We knew the world would not be the same. A few people laughed, a few people cried, most people were silent...I remembered the line from the Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad Gita. Vishnu is trying to persuade the Prince that he should do his duty and to impress him takes on his multi-armed form and says, “Now, I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.” I suppose we all thought that one way or another.’

Here is the actual text.

śhrī-bhagavān uvācha—the Supreme Lord said; kālaḥ—time; asmi—I am; loka-kṣhaya-kṛit—the source of destruction of the worlds; pravṛiddhaḥ—mighty; lokān—the worlds; samāhartum—annihilation; iha—this world; pravṛittāḥ—participation; ṛite—without; api—even; tvām—you; na bhaviṣhyanti—shall cease to exist; sarve—all; ye—who; avasthitāḥ—arrayed; prati-anīkeṣhu—in the opposing army; yodhāḥ—the warriors

shri-bhagavan uvacha

kalo 'smi loka-kshaya-krit pravridhdho

lokan samahartum iha pravrittah

rite 'pi tvam na bhavishyanti sarve

ye 'vasthitah pratanikeshu yodhah

The translation of BG 11.32: “The Supreme Lord said: I am mighty Time, the source of destruction that comes forth to annihilate the worlds. Even without your participation, the warriors arrayed in the opposing army shall cease to exist.”

Time is the great destroyer.

Any part – division of infinite time is infinite, yet infinity divided by infinity is mathematically undetermined, but as above like zero it is an infinity which is nothing.

So, with these, or this tool[s], [a] destruction[s] is [are] possible.

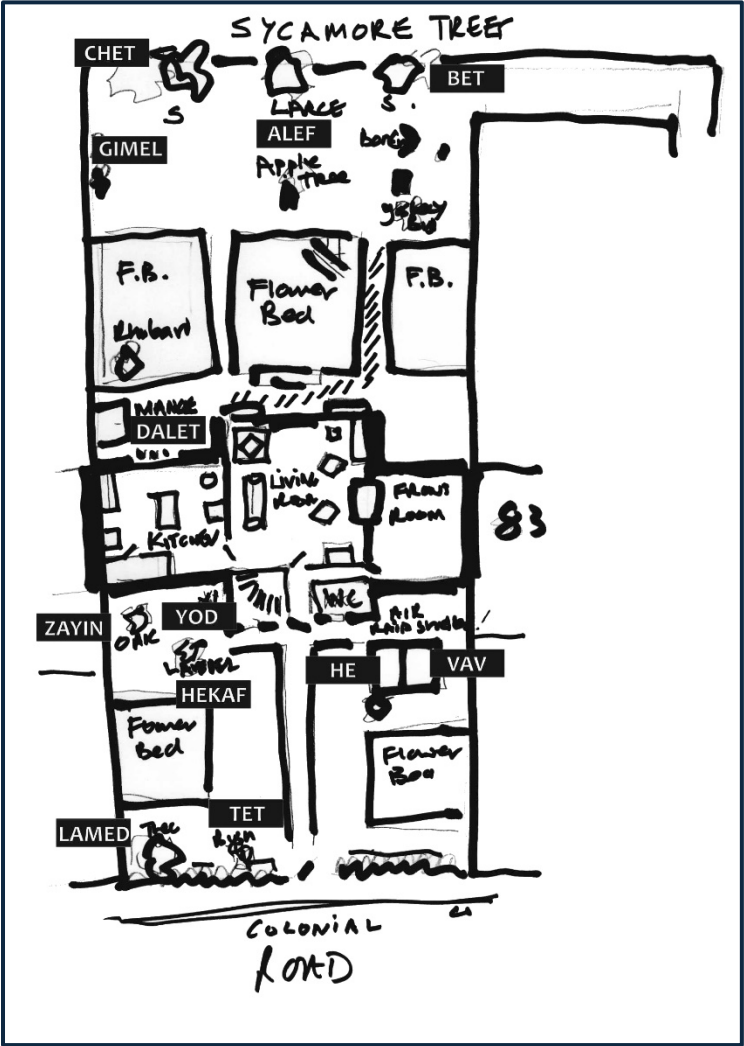
So, we return to the manifestation of this principal in the form of a self-consuming dragon, the ouroboros, in its simple form a zero, in its coiled form the Möbius.



This is how the ouroboros destroyed the rulers of heavens and hells.

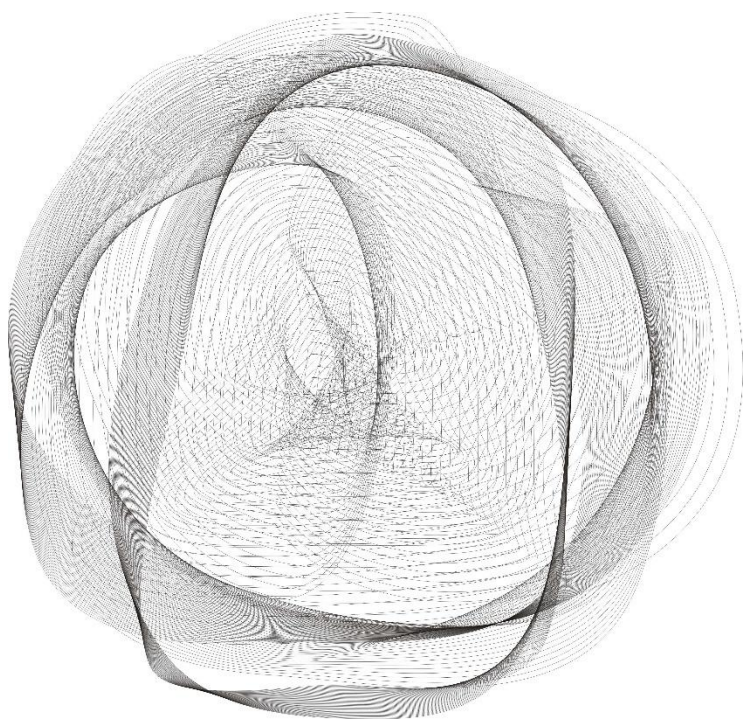
The heavens and hells consist in manifestations, emanations of beings, Angels, Spirits, aeons which are either archetypes of a quality, or supernatural beings in their own right, in the religions and myths of the world’s history. These consist of an infinity of infinites...

CHAPTER III III III III III III III III: THE DESTRUCTION OF
THE HEAVENS AND HELLS – ALEF TO LAMED



The planes of existence and non-existence of what were spirits, demons, gods and devils had been confined. But first it is hard to think how these could exist. They are human creations, no more though than any human creation. And their purpose was to allow human interaction with the non-human in human terms. These included all the forces of nature, desires of the psyche and so had in the history of humanity been both a help and a curse. Some of these forces, gods, demanded sacrifice. So, it was that they were placed in the garden of 85 when rebellion occurred. They were not destroyed, maybe destroyed from the minds of those who saw science and technology as granting dominion over nature, the ideas of the singularity and accelerationism. And these were now responsible for not only the sixth great and final mass extinction, but a cosmic imbalance.

The physical, mathematical, logical, and technological sciences could replace spirits, demons, gods and devils. So, these spirits, demons, gods and devils would be sort out and destroyed.



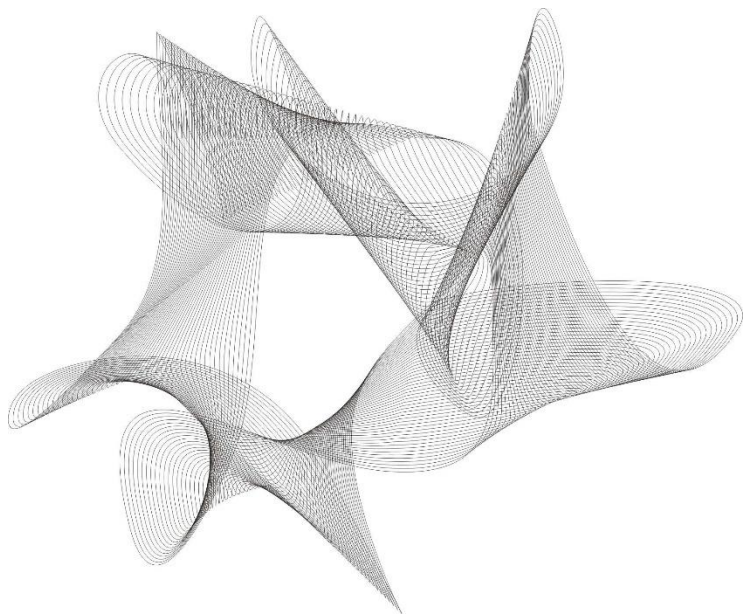
ALEF

Poseidon, Veritas, Fu Xi, Chokmah, Ecclesia, Ahura Mazda, Dorobo, Theletus, Pistis, u Thixo, Shang Di, Synesis, Netzach, and many others were in the large sycamore tree. This was the tallest of the three at the end of the garden marking what was probably once a field boundary.

Alef enveloped them in twisting movement of a writhing serpent which forms the Mobius, eating itself and all within it.

The tall tree fanned out its leaves in summer, creating moving patterns of green in the sunlight. Wet black bare bark in winter rain, and at times the branches hung with snow, strangely white against the city's night sky.

And once a tree marking a hedgerow and not a house in sight but fields stretching towards the slow meandering River Cole, unbridged, crossed then by a ford. And beyond the spire of Yardly's church, still a village with its blacksmith and manor house.



BET

Le-eyo, Cronos, Osiris, Acinetos, Lonkundo, Sermo, Teshub, Perseus, Baba Yaga Veles, Logos, Anat, Amaterasu the sun god, Xi Wangmu, Kailasa and many others were in the smallest of the three sycamore trees.

Bet became the zero, or null around the gods.

The tree which marks the end of the garden and the passageway around the next-door house to the road outside. To the road, lit by gas lamps, the road with its line of pollarded London Plane trees on either side. The road which dipped into where the house was, and the long forgotten brook which made its way once seen to the river.

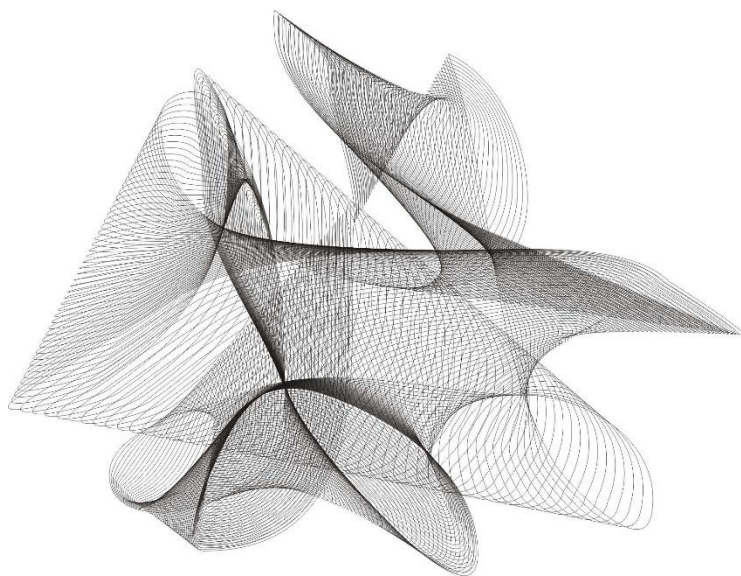


GIMEL

Gilgamesh, Kumarbi, Sige, Thoth, Homo, Henosis, Mahadevi, Gevurah, El, Athena, Anthropos, Krishna and many others were in the wild sweet pea which grew by the fence each summer. It's purple flowers like a dragon's mouth. It was old and held secrets.

The dragon-serpent Gimel enveloped the gods.

The wildness covered by the city yet only waiting.

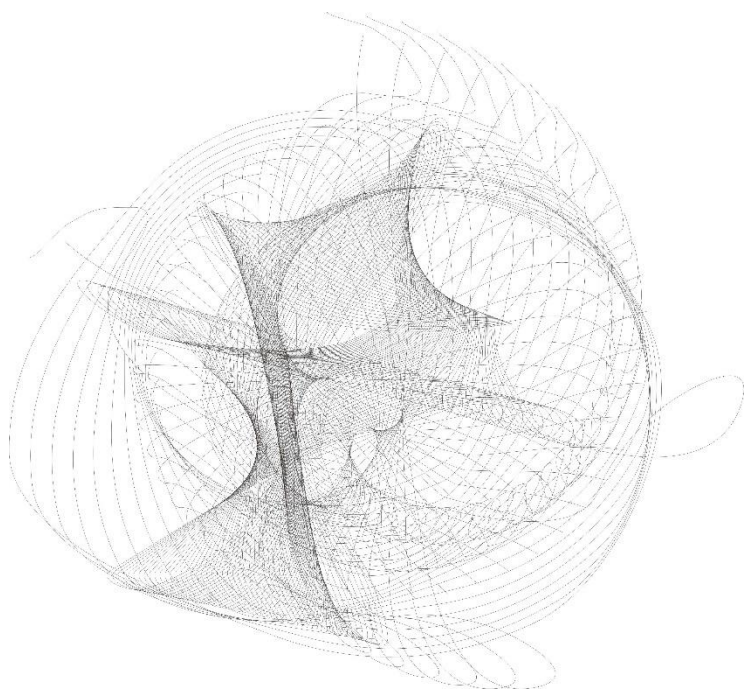


DALET

Mot, Hermes, Inti, Malkuth, Paracletus, Apollo, Ennoea, Damkina, Zurvan, Alalu, Syncrasis, Itonde and many others were in the horsetails which grew underneath the kitchen window, marking the ancient lands. The deep layers of sandstone.

The age of the great fishes in the seas, rivers, and lakes where the sands were washed into the shallow sea sediments which became the stone. And the first amphibia appeared.

Dalet wound and wound around them all, and then itself.

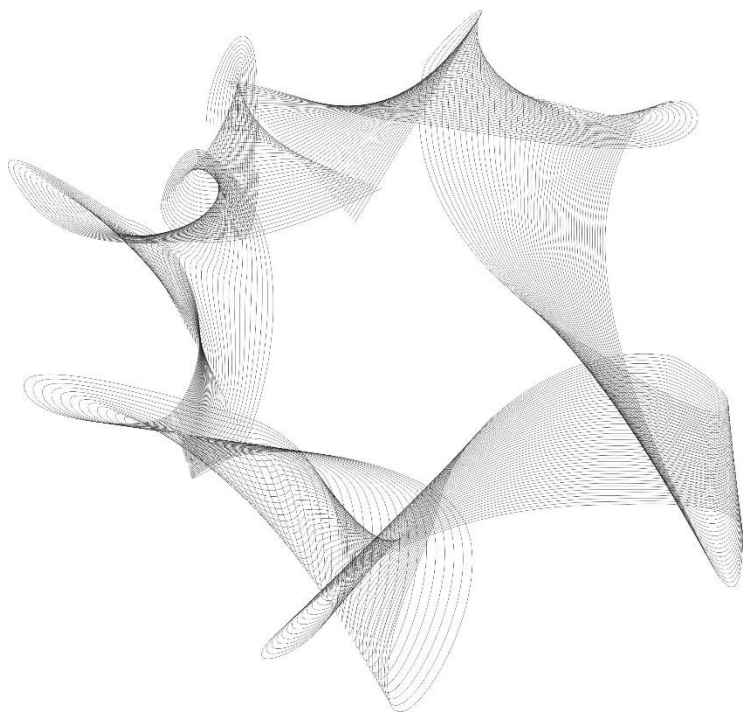


HE

Radha, Deeter, Vita, Charis, Yesod, Aido-Hwedo, Mixis, Inari, Zoe, Turkic, Ishtar, Horus and many others were in the air-raid shelter that was used to store coal. Its blackness seeming safe from discovery.

The coal produced in the Carboniferous period, the age of amphibians. Vast swaths of forests and swamps covered the land of tall tree ferns and giant dragonflies.

He, like a delicate spider's web wrapped around the multitudes and disappeared into the blackness.

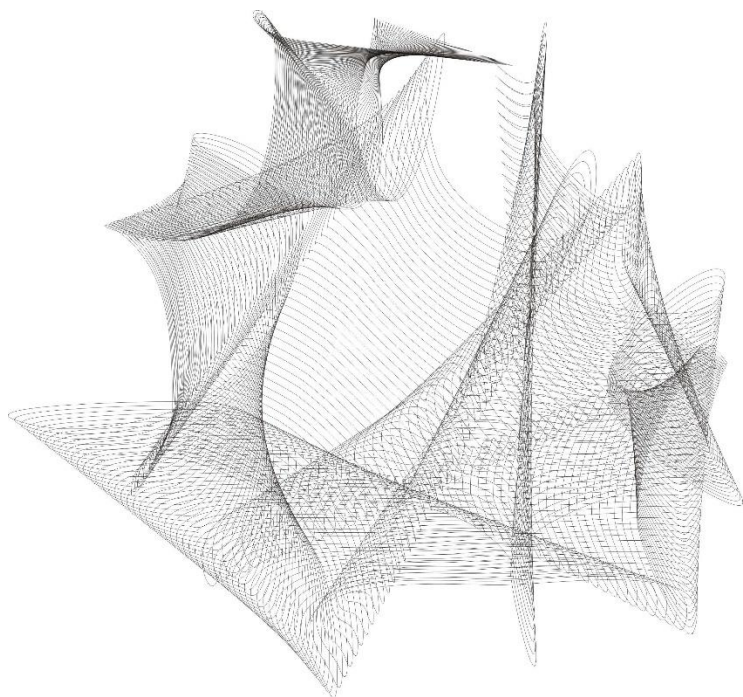


VAV

Isis, Quetzalcoatl Itzamna, Wa the Jade Emperor, Di Guan, Patricas, Sakyamuni, Agape, Set, Okuninushi, Autophyes, Apsu, Ve and many others were in the air-raid shelter that was used to store the lawn mower. Green paintwork and oiled bearings of the blades.

And Vav wrapped them all into nothingness and beyond.

And the mower would mow the lawns in the front garden and would be taken around the entry to the lawn in the back garden, and had been cleaned of the wet grass, and put back in the air-raid shelter. And there also were garden shears to cut and trim the privet hedges of the front garden.

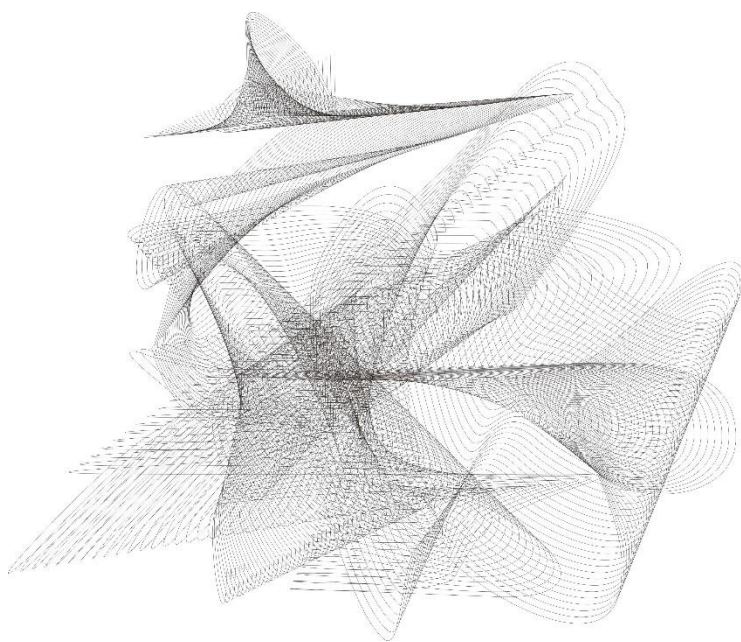


ZAYIN

Binah, Ra, Ananse, Metricos, Tikoloshe, Qormusta, Heracles, Shiva, Parvati, Aletheia, The god Durga, Hod and very many others were in the hollow where there was the stump of a long gone oak tree.

Zayin bund everything.

The rotting stump of an oak tree which was too near to the house. Was there before the house was built and the road made. The oak with the ash the trees of Warwickshire far from the seas.

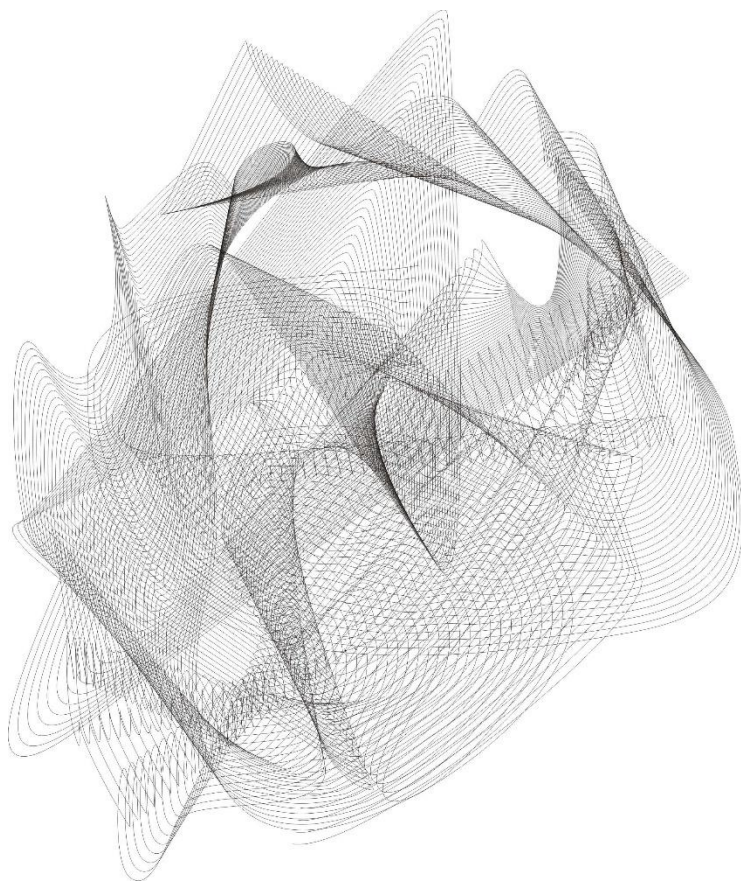


CHET

Koschei, Mawu, Ea, Nous, Tiamat, Al-Lat, Persephone, Lakshmi, Shui Guan, Hedone, Ageratos, Marduk and very many others were in the last of the three sycamore trees in the back garden. These three tall trees making the sounds of a vast ocean in the summer when the wind blew in their leaves.

A Chet slowly and gently wound itself around all these gods.

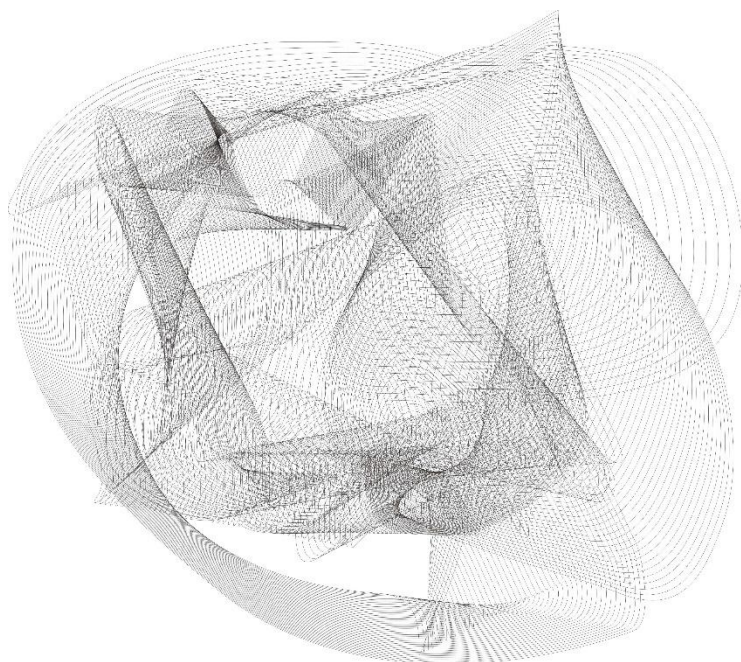
Behind the tree the rust and flaking iron door from one of the air-raid shelters, and behind that the fence and the air-raid shelter of the house in the next road. And both the gardens on the left and right brick air-raid shelters with concrete roofs, unlike 85 with its shelter, for some reason, built in the front garden. But like 85 the houses all having apple trees in their back gardens, apple trees in which at dusk the blackbirds would make their alarm calls.



TET

Ahriman, Chesed, Artemis, Macaria, Rustum Gesar Khan, Vili, Dionysius, Da Zodzi, Amun, Elpis, Mwindo, Tiferet and very many others were in the white flowering shrub whose hollow stems are the winter places for earwigs.

Tet closes them all in the hollow stems of the shrub in perpetual winter. It's pale-yellow flowers now not attracting the bees in the summer, and the many other insects. The one they called the blood-sucker which the boy was afraid of.



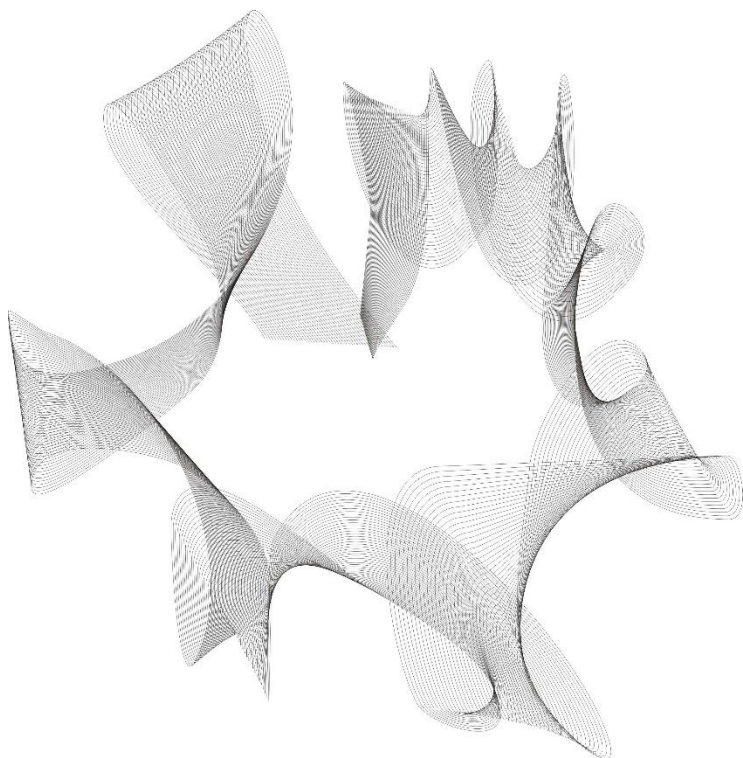
YOD

CCXXX

Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli, Hlakanyana, Ainos, Tsukuyomi,
Vaikuntha, Prometheus, Susano-O, Tian Guan, Mahadeva,
Bythios, Baal and very many others who are in the horse tails
growing in the pool outside the coalhouse door.

Yod entwines all the gods.

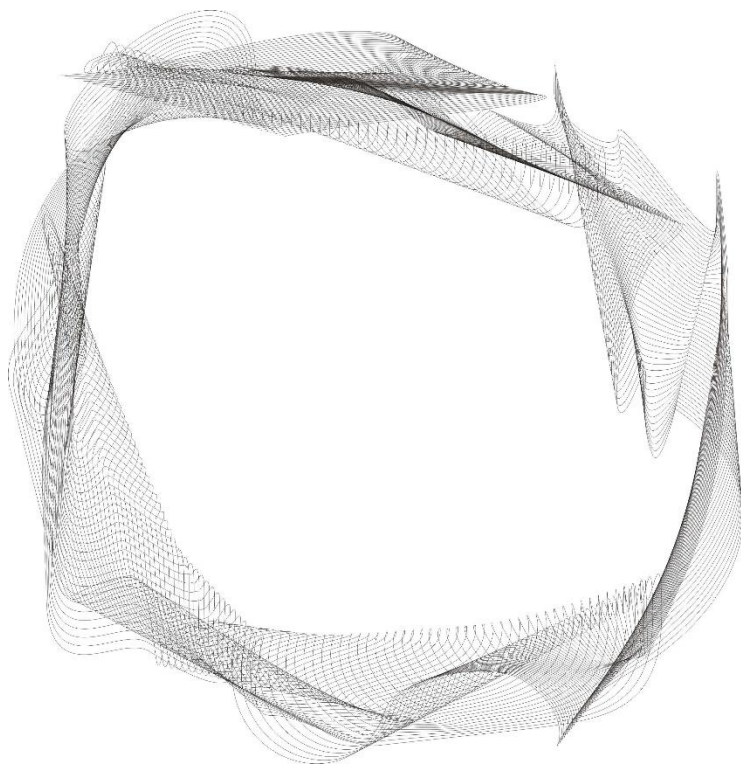
An imaginary landscape of endless shallow lakes and
horsetails from which they cannot escape.



HEKAF

Brahmaloka, Anubis, Monogenes, The sun god Viracocha,
Pachamama the goddess of fertility, Ecclesiasticus,
Macariotes, Hachiman, Anu, Gaia, Perun, Odin and very many
others are in the lilac tree, in its hollow centre, so they do not
notice until it's too late and they are in the embrace of Hekaf.

The cut flowers of lilac are often in a vase, in the spring,
scenting the room.



LAMED

Ya, Vishnu, Bythos, Keter, Qormusta, Tashawe, Anu, Athena, Zeus, Kumarbi, Amaterasu and very many others are in the tree in the front garden which has white blossom in the spring. It's delicate thin branches waving in the spring breezes.

Lamed circles and circles a never ending circle around them all.

Billy spent much of his time rowing around what was a small lake or large pond in the garden of his and Catherine Mulberry in Woodbridge. He would spend the evenings in his study, reading, looking up references, and using his pendulum. Thus, he would make a list of deities, angels and the like from examining texts and seeing how the pendulum behaved.

When asked 'How are things going?' by Emily Clarke, Catherine Mulberry had a second sense, his reply was a cryptic,

'Yes, they are all going, as if removed somehow, with a few exceptions, as if... like someone being bound up and gagged...' he paused, then continued, 'and also, all gone, except all the water nymphs, odd, but no doubt a reason.'

Then he received a long telephone call from The Reverend Lisa Phillips, it was very detailed, and Lisa tried to explain how her thoughts and more her feelings were changing, she put this down to her silent retreat and her Christian existentialism, that as Paul Tillich had said, God is the ground of my being, but also an Abyss, but now the human figure of Jesus became a powerful "idea" she first used the word, then corrected it to, "feeling, a presence". She added that she had also been

reading John Caputo's *The Weakness of God*, which she found difficult. But added, 'things seem clearer somehow?'

Billy listened carefully and said he thought he understood and could see why. He spoke to Emily and Catherine briefly about this, as the call was so long.

'As the many gets less, that which is real remains.' was his comment.

And so, he visited Arcadia to tell Nigel, Kate and Kannaur that the heavens and hells had been removed. Nigel and Kannaur agreed there would be no evidence of the Omega points passing away, there might be some evidence, unlikely, for the demise of the multiverses. Kannaur said he could return to Edgbaston and make enquiries, but both Nigel and Billy said he shouldn't, it's likely that he was still being looked for by certain agencies, so as Nigel still had contacts, he would pay the occasional visit.

CHAPTER III III III III III III III : THE OMEGA POINT

Omega points are where universes undergo a process outlined in Professor Frank Tipler's work. This is where the entire matter and energy of a universe are consumed by an intelligent life form from that universe. Such life forms, many, like our own, may begin as being biological. However as also thought possible in our own universe, intelligent biological life could develop other forms of intelligent beings, such as advanced artificial intelligences. In these scenarios the intelligences would seek to control natural phenomena. They would populate star systems and galaxies utilizing the energy and materials of these. In Professor Tipler's cosmology universes expand then reach a state where this becomes a collapse back into a singularity. Called 'a Big Crunch' in cosmology. Professor Tipler's idea is that such a collapsing universe, now a single super intelligent entity would engineer this collapse to avoid its extinction. Technically this is complex, but in simple terms if the collapse was not even then energy could be extracted to power the life form due to the laws of thermodynamics. As the universe approached the singularity, an infinite small timeless point, the processing power would rise exponentially, thus achieve the ability to process an infinite amount of information, which would amount to an infinity of time. This life form would then achieve the capabilities of the Abrahamic God, Omniscience, Omnipresence and Omnipotence. In Tipler's book of 1994 "The Physics of Immortality: Modern Cosmology, God and the Resurrection of the Dead." that is what he claims would occur out of the wish for such historical knowledge at a fraction of the infinitely intelligent life-form's potential, and simply as a consequence of it being "All Knowing". An objection could be that the Big Crunch might not occur, and the universe would

just expand and cool to where information processing and so life could no longer occur. However, before such a scenario, once the universe was one living organism it could in effect control the process, halt the expansion and engineer a Big Crunch in order to maintain its existence.

These singularities should not be confused with the idea of a technological singularity in human future history, although this would mark a significant point in the progress towards an Omega Point.

Technically such Omega points would from the outside be infinitely small nothings. However, if anything was introduced into these, no matter how small, then the singularity would exceed the infinite.

The dragon that swallows itself is nothing in which it holds a negative...

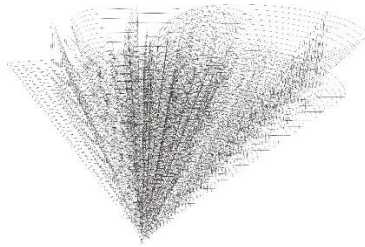
The star Thuban in the constellation of the dragon is the eye which sees into the Egyptian Pyramids, which have entrance passages geometrically aligned so that Thuban would be visible at night.

Draco was identified with one of the Gigantes, who battled the Olympian gods for ten years in the Gigantomachy, before the goddess Athena killed it and tossed it into the sky upon its defeat. As Athena threw the dragon, it became twisted on itself and froze at the cold north celestial pole before it could right itself.

Such a dragon is not real in myth and not considered an actual reality, a double negation.

Such an inverse excess would break the laws and constants of space-time and be briefly a “strange negativity”.

“Strange” because the direction of time being reversed, but not backwards, the end becomes first, yet there is no movement or direction, as such the laws of nature never come into being, therefore there is no coming into being from nothings, as there is no “is”. Sense is removed; all speeds are constant except that of light in which nothing happens.



Tipler uses the term Resurrection perhaps as a Christian and Cosmologist he sees this apt. The Resurrection he claims would be “real” as the God-like singularity would be able to “emulate” all possible life forms and histories in the given universe. He explains that unlike a simulation an emulation is perfect and so not distinguishable from the real thing.

However, if all “possible” life forms were emulated that would mean not just “The best of all possible worlds” but “The worst of all possible worlds” would be brought into being. This raises the problem of Theodicy, as defined by Alvin Plantinga, a theodicy is “an answer to the question of why God permits evil”, only here in the Omega Point would be all possible types of evil. The problem is not helped by the “absolute” nature of the power of the “Omega point”, it

would of necessity in order to be absolute, of necessity do this, manifest all possibilities. This is a result of absolute full and perfect knowledge. (Which might mitigate any human criticism of its destruction.)

One last point, Tipler has speculated that as an emulation is perfect, this universe, our universe, could in fact be one of such possible worlds emulated by an Omega point.

The ambivalent nature of Draco with an inverse excess would then break the laws and constants of space-time and be briefly a “strange negativity”. How Draco found the first Omega point was never known, though given the zero size of an Omega point this would appear impossible, too small to find, and an infinite amount of time in searching. However, from the point of an inverse excess any Omega point would appear infinite and be absolutely present.

So, an inverse excess destroyed all the Omega Points immediately it was realised. What realised this is problematic? It could well have been the first person to envisage this, to realise it, which was Dr Kannaur Rahul.

‘Once the process begins, like something unwinding itself it cannot be stopped, so it is not from without, the boy, or anything other than everything itself.’ Billy could suppress this thought but knew others would or could not. Which is why a negative thought or a positive thought without any counter would do to create an inverse excess. Mr Atkins for instance or his wife.

‘What took the other side, positive or negative?’ thought Billy, then this thought was lost to him, and he had a strange feeling, like reverse Déjà vu.

After the planes of Heavens and Hells and the Omega Points were destroyed next would be The Multiverses.

CHAPTER III III III III III III III I: MULTIVERSES

The idea of there being more than one universe, or type of universe within the contexts of infinite possibilities must exist, as would the possibility of their removal. The different universes within a multiverse are called “parallel universes”, “flat universes”, “other universes”, “alternate universes”, “multiple universes”, “plane universes”, “parent and child universes”, “many universes”, or “many worlds”.

Max Tegmark and Brian Greene have proposed different classification schemes for multiverses and universes. Tegmark's four-level classification consists of Level I: an extension of our universe, Level II: universes with different physical constants, Level III: many-worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics, and Level IV: ultimate ensemble.

Brian Greene's nine types of multiverses include quilted, inflationary, brane, cyclic, landscape, quantum, holographic, simulated, and ultimate. These ideas explore various dimensions of space, physical laws, and mathematical structures to explain the existence and interactions of multiple universes. Some other multiverse concepts include twin-world models, cyclic theories, M-theory, and black-hole cosmology.

The anthropic principle, which sees that “our universe” is particular to our consciousness of it, suggests that the existence of a multitude of universes, each with different physical laws, could explain the fine-tuning of our own universe for conscious life. The weak anthropic principle posits that we exist in one of the few universes that support life. Occam's razor and the simplicity of the multiverse versus a single universe arise, has proponents like Max Tegmark

arguing that the multiverse is simpler and more elegant as are the many-worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics and modal realism, the belief that all possible worlds must exist describes the realities of multiverses.

The idea existed in early Greek philosophy, in the modern scientific context in the course of the debate between Boltzmann and Zermelo in 1895. In Dublin in 1952, Erwin Schrödinger said that when his equations seemed to describe several different histories, these were “not alternatives, but all really happen simultaneously”.

In 2015, an astrophysicist, Dr Ranga-Ram Chary, analysing the cosmic radiation spectrum, found a signal 4,500 times brighter than it should have been, based on the number of protons and electrons scientists believe existed in the very early universe. This signal—an emission line that arose from the formation of atoms during the era of recombination—is more consistent with a universe whose ratio of matter particles to photons is about 65 times greater than our own, and that it exists because a parallel universe dumped some of its matter particles into our universe.

Cosmologist Max Tegmark’s detailed taxonomy of universes of four levels of multiverses:

Level I: An extension of our universe is one in which there are infinite number of Hubble volumes [spaces], all having the same physical laws and physical constants. Some will differ from our Hubble volume, however because there are infinitely many, there will be volumes with similar, and even identical, configurations to our universe. Tegmark estimates that an identical volume to ours should be about $10^{10^{115}}$ meters

away from us. Given infinite space, there would be an infinite number of Hubble volumes identical to ours in the multiverse.

Level II: Universes with different physical constants.

Level II also includes John Archibald Wheeler's oscillatory universe theory and Lee Smolin's fecund universes theory. In Lee Smolin's fecund universes in each universe black holes create new universes which randomly mutate to produce different universes similar to biological evolution. In an oscillating universe each universe collapses into a new universe.

Level III: Many-worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics where a branching of the universe occurs through a superposition of two quantum mechanical states.

Hugh Everett III's many-worlds interpretation (MWI) is one of several mainstream interpretations of quantum mechanics. From this every time a quantum event occurs the universe splits in two, this would occur at fantastic rates of billions per second.

Level IV: The ultimate mathematical universe hypothesis is Tegmark's own hypothesis. This level considers all universes to be equally real which can be described by different mathematical structures.

Tegmark writes: "Abstract mathematics is so general that any Theory Of Everything (TOE) which is definable in purely formal terms (independent of vague human terminology) is also a mathematical structure. For instance, a TOE involving a set of different types of entities (denoted by words, say) and relations between them (denoted by additional words) is nothing but what mathematicians call a set-theoretical model.

.... This implies that any conceivable parallel universe theory can be described at Level IV” and “subsumes all other ensembles, therefore brings closure to the hierarchy of multiverses, and there cannot be, say, a Level V.”

Which means all possibilities to be “possible” must be realised, and what we are left with is the “impossible”. This “creation” in its broadest terms is the ongoing realization of this. This ignores the higher and lower realms of the Heavens and Hells.

Brian Greene’s nine types of multiverse:

1. The quilted multiverse works only in an infinite universe. With an infinite amount of space, every possible event will occur an infinite number of times. However, the speed of light prevents us from being aware of these other identical areas.
2. The inflationary multiverse is composed of various pockets in which inflation fields collapse and form new universes.
3. The brane multiverse version postulates that our entire universe exists on a membrane (brane) which floats in a higher dimension or “bulk”. In this bulk, there are other membranes with their own universes. These universes can interact with one another, and when they collide, the violence and energy produced is more than enough to give rise to a Big Bang. The branes float or drift near each other in the bulk, and every few trillion years, attracted by gravity or some other force X, collide and bang into each other. This repeated contact gives rise to multiple or “cyclic” Big Bangs. This particular hypothesis falls under the string theory umbrella as it requires extra spatial dimensions.

4. The cyclic multiverse has multiple branes that have collided, causing Big Bangs. The universes bounce back and pass through time until they are pulled back together and again collide, destroying the old contents and creating them anew.

5. The landscape multiverse relies on string theory's Calabi–Yau spaces. Quantum fluctuations drop the shapes to a lower energy level, creating a pocket with a set of laws different from that of the surrounding space.

6. The quantum multiverse creates a new universe when a diversion in events occurs, as in the real-worlds variant of the many-worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics.

7. The holographic multiverse is derived from the theory that the surface area of a space can encode the contents of the volume of the region. That is like a hologram a part contains a picture of the whole.

8. The simulated multiverse exists on complex computer systems that simulate entire universes. A related hypothesis, as put forward as a possibility by astronomer Avi Loeb, is that universes may be creatable in laboratories of advanced technological civilizations who have a theory of everything. This is also found in Nick Bostrom's and Frank Tipler's ideas.

9. The ultimate multiverse contains every mathematically possible universe under different laws of physics. This is similar to Tegmark's level 4 multiverse.

In several theories, there is a series of, in some cases infinite, self-sustaining cycles – typically a series of Big Crunches (or Big Bounces). However, the respective universes do not exist at once but are forming or following in a logical order or

sequence, with key natural constituents potentially varying between universes.

M-theories require the presence of 10 or 11 spacetime dimensions. The extra six or seven dimensions may either be compactified on a very small scale, or our universe may simply be localized on a dynamical (3+1)-dimensional object, a D3-brane. This opens up the possibility that there are other branes which could support other universes.

Black-hole cosmology is a cosmological model in which the observable universe is the interior of a black hole existing as one of possibly many universes inside a larger universe. This includes the theory of white holes, which are on the opposite side of space-time.

Modal realism and “Possible worlds” are a way of explaining probability and hypothetical statements, that is if an idea is possible, it arises out of a potential, and this must be realizable, therefore is real. No realizable world that is never realized is not possible, it is more than a contradiction. For example, with 2 bits there are 4 possible states 00,10,01,11. To say that one of these is not the case, cannot be true, is not the case.

CHAPTER IIII III III III III III III III II: DESTRUCTION OF THE TEGMARK MULTIVERSES

It was the light of Thuban the dragon's eye which had shone into four Pyramids which gave the power to the idea, and possibility, therefore the reality of four types of multiverses.

At the end of the Egyptian dynasties the celestial pole had moved, the light of Thuban eventually could no longer shine into the four Pyramids. The gods of the Pharaohs still existed, despite the profane mutilation of their remains in museums and tourist attractions. The cosmic counterparts, the gods of ancient Egypt remained and maintained the light. Since these no longer existed, they were bound now, and no longer revealed in the garden, the light dimmed, the four pyramids lost their power and became nothing but stones in the desert.

Menkaure's Pyramid is smallest of the three main pyramids of the Giza site. Its light diminished, faded and then went out so ended all the simple universes like our own, but not our own. Those with the same physical constants:

- The gravitational constant G ,
- The speed of light c ,
- The Planck constant h ,
- The 9 Yukawa couplings for the quarks and leptons (equivalent to specifying the rest mass of these elementary particles),
- 2 parameters of the Higgs field potential,
- 4 parameters for the quark mixing matrix,
- 3 coupling constants for the gauge groups $SU(3) \times SU(2) \times U(1)$ (or equivalently, two coupling constants and the Weinberg angle),
- A phase for the quantum chromodynamics vacuum.

The Red Pyramid at Dahshur's light burnt brightly for all Level II Universes, all those with different physical constants from our own. Including such universes as those of John Archibald Wheeler's oscillatory universe theory and Lee Smolin's fecund universes theory. It too faded, diminished and expired and with this the type 2 multiverses.

Khafra's Pyramid at Giza maintained ideas as real or possible using the light from the eye of Draconis. The Many-worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics where a branching of the universes, and others created by interpretations of quantum mechanics. As it's light died so did all type 3 multiverses.

Khufu's Pyramid, The Great Pyramid of Giza used the light of the dragon's eye to uphold all universes of the ultimate mathematical universe hypothesis, all universes which can be described by different mathematical structures.

These lights came now no longer from an astral plane, that light stored in the four vast monuments slowly faded and died. The possibility of any other universes of four basic types ceased to be.

CHAPTER III III III III III III III III: DESTRUCTION OF THE OTHER MULTIVERSES

The awakening of dragons by technology has long been known, and order maintained by allowing dark places, the peace of darkness and confinement. Even for the wise Greeks with their creation of the “idea” – which is light.

The “idea” from Greek reasoning which originated from the *eidos* is related to seeing forms which requires light, both metaphorically and literally. In an uncreated, purposeless universe any light is brief and insignificant. This reality is dark and noisy. The psychological darkness of meaningless angst has as its binary meaning in the light of the word made flesh for us, however there is a darker darkness in which light amounts to nothing. “The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” A primal darkness that existed before and after time.

And so, the Greeks and the Hebrews had concealment also, *Lethia* or the Darkness before creation.

Alethia or *Veritas* is the Goddess of Truth, a daughter of Saturn, or Cronus, the Titan of Time. The elusive goddess is said to have hidden in the bottom of a holy well. She is depicted both as a virgin dressed in white and as the “naked truth” (*nuda veritas*) holding a hand mirror. She is pictured as the goddess of science and scientific knowledge.

And now was revealed as naked, no longer hidden, which means what? Stripped of metaphor? Whatever, the naked truth revealed two monsters. Typhon, and his partner Echidna held in darkness under a rock. Their offspring would destroy all the other multiverses mentioned above, whilst they would

also destroy any others not mentioned, notably those not describable using mathematics, and including those not describable at all.

Typhon is humanoid from the waist up, serpentine below and almost the size of a mountain. With his mate Echidna, he would father many monsters. Later, he would attempt to overthrow Zeus for the title of ruler of the cosmos. Typhon is a reptilian dragon with legs and wings, and he breathes fire from his mouth and eyes. Typhon had between five and 100 heads. For each head cut off two more grew back in its place. It had immortal heads which would remain alive when cut off. Hera, Queen of the gods, sent a giant crab to distract Heracles from cutting off Typhon's heads, but he simply crushed it under his foot. Hera then placed it in the heavens as the constellation Cancer. After slaying the dragon, Heracles buried the immortal heads under a rock. It would only take the curiosity, naïve curiosity or a desire for the naked truth to see what lies underneath a rock to free these heads.

Echidna was half beautiful woman and half fearsome drakaina. The goddess is a fierce flesh-eating monster, half a nymph with glancing eyes and fair cheeks, and half a huge snake, great and awful, with speckled skin, who never dies nor grows old, her snake half ended in a hundred snake-heads matching the hundred snake heads of her mate Typhon. She was immortal.

Python the earth-dragona, drakaina from Delphi, because of the greatness of that oracle, would be saved in order to interpret The Book of Revelation.

So, the other multiverses including the nine, were removed by the products of the mating of two great dragon-serpents, Typhon and Echidna.

1. Orthrus the two-headed dog, the brother of Cerberus, who is also a multi-headed guard dog. Orthrus guarded Geryon's cattle and was killed by Heracles. According to Hesiod, Orthrus was the father of the Sphinx and the Nemean Lion, though whom Hesiod meant as the mother, whether it is Orthrus' own mother Echidna, the Chimera, or Ceto, is unclear. Orthrus and his master Eurytion were charged with guarding the three-headed, or three-bodied giant Geryon's herd of red cattle in the "sunset" land of Erytheia, the red one, an island in the far west of the Mediterranean. Heracles killed Orthrus and later slew Eurytion and Geryon before taking the red cattle to complete his tenth labour. The poet Pindar refers to the "hounds of Geryon" trembling before Heracles. Pindar's use of the plural "hounds" in connection with Geryon is unique. He may have used the plural because Orthrus had multiple heads, or perhaps because he knew a tradition in which Geryon had more than one dog. The dog with its two heads tore the quilted multiverses apart, and ate them, then consumed itself.

2. Cerberus is often referred to as the hound of Hades, a multi-headed dog that guards the gates of the underworld to prevent the dead from leaving. He was the offspring of the monsters Echidna and Typhon, and was usually described as having three heads, a serpent for a tail, and snakes protruding from his body. Cerberus was captured by Heracles, the last of Heracles' twelve labours. Cerberus was the brother of three other multi-headed monsters, the multi-snake-headed Lernaean Hydra; Orthrus, the two-headed dog that guarded

the Cattle of Geryon; and the Chimera, who had three heads: that of a lion, a goat, and a snake.

In the earliest description of Cerberus, Hesiod's *Theogony*, Cerberus has fifty heads, while the poet Pindar gave him one hundred heads. However, later writers almost universally give Cerberus three heads. An exception is the Latin poet Horace's Cerberus which has a single dog head, and one hundred snake heads. Apollodorus's Cerberus has three dog heads and the heads of all sorts of snakes along his back, while the Byzantine poet John Tzetzes gives Cerberus fifty heads, three of which were dog heads, the rest being the heads of other beasts of all sorts.

Eurystheus king of Tiryns, commanded Heracles to bring back Cerberus from Hades, it was not from any desire to see Cerberus, but only because Eurystheus thought that the task was impossible. This was part of the contest of wills between Hera and Zeus over who would be hero. Fated to defeat the remaining creatures representing an old order and bring about the reign of the Twelve Olympians, Eurystheus was Hera's candidate, and Heracles was the candidate of Zeus.

While in the underworld, Heracles met the heroes Theseus and Pirithous, where the two companions were being held prisoner by Hades for attempting to carry off Hades's wife Persephone. Heracles found Theseus and Pirithous near the gates of Hades, bound to the Chair of Forgetfulness, to which they grew and were held fast by coils of serpents.

When Heracles brought Cerberus up from the underworld at Heraclea, Cerberus vomited bile from which the aconite plant grew up. Ovid also makes Cerberus the cause of the poisonous aconite. As Cerberus was being dragged by

Heracles from a cave, dazzled by the unaccustomed daylight, Cerberus spewed out a poison-foam, which made the aconite plants growing there poisonous.

After bringing Cerberus up from the underworld, Heracles paraded the captured Cerberus through Greece. He led Cerberus through Midea in Argolis as women and children watched in fear. Then Heracles showed Cerberus to Eurystheus, as commanded, after which he returned Cerberus to the underworld. Only to be thrown out when it too was destroyed, thrown out in order to consume itself and the inflationary multiverses.

3. The Hydra is a serpentine lake monster. Its lair was the lake of Lerna in the Argolid, which was also the site of the myth of the Danaïdes. Lerna being the lake where the 49 daughters of Danaus, king of Libya, having killed their bridegrooms buried their heads. The other daughter Hypermnestra spared her husband Lynceus because he respected her desire to remain a virgin. The other 49 condemned to spend eternity carrying water in a sieve, a futile repetitive task that can never be completed.

The Hydra had poisonous breath and blood so virulent that even its scent was deadly, it had many heads, between nine and fifty as the monster could re generate new heads.

Eurystheus, the king of the Tiryns, sent Heracles (or Hercules) to slay the Hydra, which Hera had raised just to slay Heracles. Upon reaching the swamp near Lake Lerna, where the Hydra dwelt, Heracles covered his mouth and nose with a cloth to protect himself from the poisonous fumes. He shot flaming arrows into the Hydra's lair, the spring of Amymone, a deep cave from which it emerged only to terrorize neighbouring

villages. He then confronted the Hydra, wielding his famed club. Heracles then attempted to cut off the Hydra's heads but each time that he did so two more heads would grow back in its place. The Hydra was invulnerable as long as it retained at least one head. Heracles called on his nephew Iolaus for help who had the idea inspired by Athena of using a firebrand to scorch the neck stumps after each decapitation. Seeing that Heracles was winning the struggle, Hera, Athena's enemy, sent a giant crab to distract him. He crushed it under his mighty foot. The Hydra's one immortal head was cut off with a golden sword given to Heracles by Athena. Heracles placed the head—still alive and writhing—under a great rock on the sacred way between Lerna and Elaius. The rock was lifted, and The Hydra consumed the brane multiverses and itself.

4. The Chimera is a monstrous fire-breathing hybrid creature from Lycia, Asia Minor, composed of different animal parts. A lion with a goat's head protruding from its back and a tail ending with a snake's head. The term "chimera" has come to mean an unrealistic, or unrealisable, wild, foolish or vain dream, notion or objective.

Iobates, the king of Lycia, had ordered Bellerophon to kill the Chimera, which had been killing cattle and had devastated the country. Though he thought that the Chimera would instead kill Bellerophon, for it was more than a match for many let alone one. Bellerophon was in exile in the king's land, the king who wanted him dead could not do so for fear of the gods who punished those not hospitable to strangers and foreigners. The hero mounted his winged horse Pegasus, who had sprung from the blood of Medusa, and soaring on high

shot down the Chimera from a great height. As the Chimera fell it ate itself and the cyclic multiverses.

5. The Sphinx is a treacherous and merciless being with the head of a woman, the haunches of a lion, and the wings of a bird. She challenges those who encounter her to answer a riddle and kills and eats them when they fail to solve it. The word sphinx comes from the Greek Σφίγξ, associated with the verb σφίγγειν (sphíngēn), meaning “to squeeze”, “to tighten up”. This name may be derived from the fact that lions kill their prey by strangulation, biting the throat of prey and holding them down until they die.

It was said that Hera or Ares sent the Sphinx from her Aethiopian homeland to Thebes in Greece where she asked any passersby the most famous riddle in history: “Which creature has one voice and yet becomes four-footed and two-footed and three-footed?” She strangled and devoured anyone who could not answer. Oedipus solved the riddle by answering: “Man—who crawls on all fours as a baby, then walks on two feet as an adult, and then uses a walking stick in old age”. There was a second riddle: “There are two sisters: one gives birth to the other and she, in turn, gives birth to the first. Who are the two sisters?” The answer is “day and night”.

Beaten at last, the Sphinx she devoured herself and the landscape multiverses. Here again the monster is a “liminal” or threshold figure, helping effect the transition between the old religious practices, represented by the death of the Sphinx, and the rise of the new, Olympian gods. But here now there was no new age.

6. Gopaitioshah – The Persian Gopat or Gopaitioshah is a creature that is similar to the Sphinx, being a winged lion with

human face. The origins are primeval, the 32,000 year-old Aurignacian Löwenmensch figurine, also known as “lion-man” is the oldest known anthropomorphic statue, discovered in the Hohlenstein-Stadel in Germany. The Manticore or Man-eater is a Persian legendary hybrid creature and another similar creature to the sphinx.

Narasimha – Narasimha (“human-lion”) is an incarnation, Avatara, of Vishnu in Hinduism. In the Dashavatara of Vishnu who takes the form of half-man/half-Asiatic lion, having a human torso and lower body, but with a lion-like face and claws and in this avatara, Vishnu killed Hiranyakashipu as Narashima and saved the world from chaos.

The Nemean lion, its golden fur was impervious to attack, it could not be killed with mortals’ weapons. Its claws were sharper than mortals’ swords and could cut through any strong armour.

The first of Heracles’ twelve labours, set by King Eurystheus, his cousin, was to slay the Nemean lion. Heracles wandered the area until he came to the town of Cleonae. There, he met a boy who said that if Heracles slew the Nemean lion and returned alive within 30 days, the town would sacrifice a lion to Zeus; if he did not return within 30 days or he died, the boy would sacrifice himself to Zeus. While searching for the lion, Heracles fetched some arrows to use against it, not knowing that its golden fur was impenetrable; when he found the lion and shot at it with his bow, he discovered the fur’s protective property when the arrow bounced harmlessly off the creature’s thigh. After some time, Heracles made the lion return to his cave. The cave had two entrances, one of which Heracles blocked; he then entered the other. In those dark

and close quarters Heracles stunned the beast with his club. He eventually killed it by strangling it with his bare hands. As it choked on the Quantum multiverses. After slaying the lion, he tried to skin it with a knife from his belt but failed. He then tried sharpening the knife with a stone and even tried with the stone itself. Finally, Athena, noticing the hero's plight, told Heracles to use one of the lion's own claws to skin the pelt. When Heracles returned on the thirtieth day carrying the carcass of the lion on his shoulders, King Eurystheus was amazed and terrified. Eurystheus forbade him ever again to enter the city; in the future he was to display the fruits of his labours outside the city gates. Eurystheus warned him that the tasks set for him would become increasingly difficult. He then sent Heracles off to complete his next quest, which was to destroy the Lernaean Hydra.

Heracles wore the Nemean lion's coat after killing it, as it was impervious to the elements and all but the most powerful weapons. Heracles was helped in this labour by an Earth-born serpent, which followed him to Thebes and settled down in Aulis. It was later identified as the water snake which devoured the sparrows and was turned into stone in the prophecy about the Trojan War.

7. Caucasian Eagle is the eagle that devours the liver of Prometheus. Prometheus is one of the Titans and an old god of fire. Prometheus, known for defying the Olympian gods by taking fire from them and giving it to humanity in the form of technology, knowledge and, more generally, civilization, also credited with the creation of humanity from clay, known for his intelligence and for being a champion of mankind, seen as the author of the human arts and sciences.

The punishment of Prometheus for stealing fire from Olympus and giving it to humans is a subject of both ancient and modern culture.

Zeus, king of the Olympian gods, condemned Prometheus to eternal torment for his transgression. Prometheus was bound to a rock, and the Caucasian Eagle (an emblem of Zeus— and of power) was sent to eat his liver. In ancient Greece, the liver was thought to be the seat of human emotions. His liver would then grow back overnight, only to be eaten again the next day in an ongoing cycle. According to some Prometheus was eventually freed by the hero Heracles. In yet more symbolism, the struggle of Prometheus is located by some at Mount Elbrus or at Mount Kazbek, two volcanic promontories in the Caucasus Mountains beyond which for the ancient Greeks lay the realm of the barbari.

A barbarian is a person or tribe of people that is perceived to be primitive, savage and warlike. In Ancient Greece, the Greeks used the term not only for those who did not speak Greek and follow classical Greek customs, but also for Greek populations on the fringe of the Greek world with peculiar dialects.

Barabbas was a prisoner who rebelled against the Roman occupying forces and who was chosen over Jesus by the crowd in Jerusalem to be pardoned and released by the Roman governor Pontius Pilate at the Passover feast.

The holographic multiverses were eaten by the eagle.

8. Ladon was a dragon who guarded the golden apples in the Garden of the Hesperides. It twined and twisted around the tree in the Garden of the Hesperides in guarding the golden

apples. In pursuance of his eleventh labour, Heracles killed Ladon with a bow and arrow and carried the apples away. The following day Jason and the Argonauts passed by on their return journey from acquiring the Golden Fleece, hearing the lament of the Aegle, one of the four Hesperides, and viewing the still-twitching Ladon eating the simulated multiverses.

9. The Crommyonian Sow was a wild pig that ravaged the region around the village of Crommyon between Megara and Corinth and was eventually slain by Theseus in his early adventures. It was said by some to be the daughter of Echidna and Typhon and was named after the old woman who raised it.

The sow consumed the ultimate multiverses and others.

Gorgon swallowed Black-hole cosmologies, she was the mother of The Gorgons three monstrous sisters, Stheno, Euryale, and Medusa, Euryale and Stheno were immortal, but Medusa was not and was slain by the hero Perseus. Gorgons were dread monsters with terrifying eyes. A Gorgon head was displayed on Athena's aegis, a shield, giving it the power both to protect her from any weapon, and instil great fear in any enemy. Gorgon blood was said to have both the power to heal and harm.

The Colchian dragon was an immense serpent, a child of Typhon and Echidna, guarded the Golden Fleece at Colchis. It was said to never sleep, rest, or lower its vigilance. It had a crest and three tongues. When Jason went to retrieve the Fleece, the witch Medea put the dragon to sleep with her magic and drugs, on waking it consumed the White hole multiverses.

Scylla a six-headed monster with a kētos (dragon like sea monster) tail and dog heads sprouting from her body. A man-eating monster who lives on one side of a narrow channel of water, opposite her counterpart, the sea-swallowing monster Charybdis. The two sides of the strait are within an arrow's range of each other so close that sailors attempting to avoid the whirlpools of Charybdis would pass dangerously close to Scylla and vice versa. Heracles encountered Scylla during a journey to Sicily and slew her. The sea-god Phorcys then applied flaming torches to her body and restored her to life. The giant monster Scylla ate Modal realism's all 'Possible worlds'.

All possible multiverses were thus consumed by self-destroying monsters, the product of the naked truth.

Meanwhile Billy stayed in Woodbridge with Emily and Catherine Mulberry, Nigel, Kannaur and Kate returned to their seclusion in Arcadia. Nigel visited his mansion to check for any evidence of multiverses disappearing. He made contact with Dr Ranga-Ram Chary who immediately recognised the three-time Nobel prize winner. Nigel chatted about the Doctors work, then casually asked if the data regarding a possible other universe had changed. He said he hadn't but something in Nigel's manner of the question made him pause,

'No, not checked recently but I will, and if you like we could talk tomorrow.' was his reply.

Nigel took a stroll around his garden before returning to Arcadia, and met his gardener, who remarked that he had seen strangers outside by the fence.

‘Agents,’ thought Nigel, ‘and trying to gain access to the garden, good luck.’

Nigel had visited Australia some years before and had a strange experience, in a walkabout where he had a close relation to the land, and this was likewise in England and in his garden, such that it would keep out unwanted strangers.

On arriving back in Arcadia, he told Kannaur and Kate about his two conversations, and that it would be best for Kannaur to remain whilst the next day Nigel and Kate would pay a visit to his mansion and see what Dr Ranga-Ram Chary had to say. Kate needed some things and to touch base with the University.

So, the next day Nigel had a conversation with Dr Ranga-Ram Chary. The doctor sounded depressed, he had checked, the cosmic radiation spectrum signal, evidence of another universe, and so evidence of a multiverse, had gone. He concluded that it might have been therefore not a sign of a universe but just noise. Nigel responded by saying,

‘Or it could mean this universe had been removed, destroyed.’

Dr Ranga-Ram Chary laughed, ‘As if a whole universe could disappear, and have done so billions of years ago, as the time taken for the signals to reach the Earth.’ Nigel said nothing but now knew that this was not always the case, for instance by folding space data could be transmitted across the universe instantly. So, he finished his call with the Doctor. When Kate arrived back from the university they decided to return to Arcadia. Nigel let Billy know that the multiverse that we were in was gone, we were on our own, and probably the

other multiverses too were no longer, and he hinted that someone might have folded space to get real-time data.

‘Not so,’ said Billy, ‘whatever removes these other universes removes them, and all their light.’

‘Oh, I see,’ said Nigel, ‘So the size of a thing is its totality of what it is and what is observed. When it dies in such a way all traces vanish in an instant.’

‘So now can you check on galaxy clusters in our universe, I’d start with any that relate to dragons.’ Billy continued.

‘Will do.’ said Nigel.

In conversation with Kannaur he related his calls to Dr Ranga-Ram Chary and his conversation with Billy. Kate was listening.

‘Draco in the Northern hemisphere is obvious, I think it has a cluster, is there anything on astronomy in the library here?’ this was Dr Kannaur Rahul. He knew of the library in the palace of Arcadia.

‘Well, if there wasn’t there will be now,’ said Kate, ‘this place supplies ones needs.’

So, they left the lounge and were soon in the library and noticed on the nearest table a book on “Deep Sky Objects”. Kannaur picked it up and read,

‘Draco features several galaxy clusters. One such massive cluster is Abell 2218, located at a distance of 3 billion light-years, redshift 0.171. It acts as a gravitational lens for even more distant background galaxies, allowing astronomers to study those galaxies as well as Abell 2218 itself; more specifically, the lensing effect allows astronomers to confirm

the cluster's mass as determined by x-ray emissions... So yes,' he turned some pages, 'nothing in Hydra though.'

'I know someone at the Crimean Astrophysical Observatory, a Dr Grigory Steshenko who was working at the Simeiz Observatory, I can get him to check, obviously emails are not secure so what should I say?' Kannaur continued.

'The Universe might be ending, please check to see if the galaxy clusters in Draco are still there?' offered Kate.

Laughter.

Kannaur drafted the email, and Nigel visited his mansion and sent it. The next day the reply was simply,

"Gone!"

Nigel let Billy know.

Over the next few days, the information acquired was conclusive. Other observatories were now picking up this phenomenon, but as no one could explain what was happening, the general public were ignorant. As astronomical data about deep space objects were not of interest to the media.

Two nights later in Woodbridge at supper, soup followed by a Sutton Hoo roast chicken with root vegetables, over a glass or two of red wine Billy announced to Catherine and Emily,

'So, we, our universe, is now on its own. So, next I suspect the naiads have work to do?'

Catherine Mulberry changed the subject to that of growing parsnips.

CHAPTER III III III III III III III III: GALAXIES

‘Galaxies, those spirals and ellipsoids of millions of stars, of which our milky way is one, these form galaxy clusters of hundreds or thousands of galaxies, which in turn form superclusters. Superclusters are the largest known structures in the universe. The Milky Way is part of the Local Group of more than 54 galaxies, which in turn is part of the Virgo Supercluster, which is part of the Laniakea Supercluster, which is part of the Pisces–Cetus Supercluster Complex. The number of superclusters in the observable universe is estimated to be 10 million.

Although superclusters are supposed to be the largest structures in the universe, larger structures have been observed in surveys, including the Sloan Great Wall, a cosmic structure formed by a giant wall of galaxies, a galaxy filament of 1.37 billion light-years in length. The BOSS Great Wall is a superstructure of roughly 1 billion light years in diameter and has a total mass approximately 10,000 times larger than the Milky Way galaxy. The Big Ring is a ring-shaped large-scale structure formed by galaxies and galaxy clusters with a diameter of 1.3 billion light years. The Giant Arc is a large-scale structure that spans 3.3 billion light years. The Huge Large Quasar Group, (Huge-LQG, also called U1.27) is a possible structure or pseudo-structure of 73 quasars, referred to as a large quasar group, that measures about 4 billion light-years across.’

Kannaur was reading aloud, Nigel and Kate listening. It was dusk outside; French windows open onto the lawns which stretched down to the river and lake. A warm early summer, a star like Venus, and a crescent moon, but obviously not the

real thing, and a group of fallow deer crossed the river and headed into the dense woodland.

‘10 million clusters? that’s a lot of stuff,’ said Kate, ‘but then the multiverses were I suppose much much more, and the transcendental realms more so? Makes you wonder if they are all real?’

‘Superclusters, galaxy filaments.’ Nigel corrected.

‘Galaxy filaments, like rivers?’ Kate said to herself.

Nigel gave her the look of a scientist, then a strange frown and a very unscientific smile.

She continued, ‘I wonder who, how and why these things are being, it seems, destroyed?’

‘I have an idea,’ said Nigel, ‘some things, or thing was transgressed,’ he continued, ‘and if all this physical stuff is less real than this,’ at which he looked around the interior of the baroque room with its paintings, burning log fire and lit candelabra, and the darkening sky outside, ‘then it might make sense. I suspect Billy might have the same idea.’

‘And?’ asked Kate, ‘why then destroy everything just because of one transgression?’

‘What if the transgression destroyed what was keeping everything together?’ was the reply.

‘Can I ask a question?’ Kannaur said.

‘Sure.’ replied Nigel.

So, he asked, 'If this place is not real, and I should add scare quotes now, then when reality is destroyed will this world, Arcadia and what is outside, will this also be destroyed?'

'Good, now that's a question.' Nigel replied.

'And?' said Kannaur.

'It's a good question.' Nigel replied.

'Galaxy filaments of lots of stars like rivers.' Kate said, again to herself.

Dragonflies are predatory insects, both in their aquatic nymphal stage in which they are also known as naiads.

Naiad is a female spirit, or nymph, presiding over fountains, wells, springs, streams, brooks and other bodies of fresh water. They are distinct from river gods, who embodied rivers, and the very ancient spirits that inhabited the still waters of marshes, ponds and lagoon-lakes such as pre-Mycenaean Lerna in the Argolis.

The Naiads:

Potameide.

Melia, an Oceanid; mother, by Apollo, of Tenerus and Ismenus.

Cleone.

Lilaea, daughter of the local river-god Cephisus.

Paria, mother of Eurymedon, Nephalion, Chryses and Philolaus by Minos.

Aia, loved by the river-god Phasis..

Callirrhoe, daughter of the river god Scamander; wife of Tros and mother of Ilus, Assaracus and Ganymede.

Pegaeae.

Deino, wife of the river god Spercheios and by him the mother of Diopatre.

Metis, daughter of the river god Meles; mother of Homer by Maeon.

Nemea, others called her the daughter of Zeus and Selene.

Nacole, eponym of Nacoleia.

Ornea.

Cleochareia, queen consort of King Lelex and mother of Myles and Polycaon.

Astyochē, daughter of the river god Simoeis, mother of Tros by Erichthonius.

Eleionomae.

Acraea.

Pronoe, mother of Aegialus by Caunus.

Anchiroe.

Peirene, others called her father to be Oebalus or Achelous by Poseidon she became the mother of Lecheas and Cenchrias.

Hyperia.

Philia, one of the nurses of the god Dionysus.

Xanderirhoe, daughter of the river god Grenikos; mother of Aesacus by Priam.

Abarbarea, wife of Bucolion by whom she mothered twin sons, Aesepus and Pedasus.

Psanis, may have been the wife of the river god Ladon.

Diopatre, others called her the daughter of Zeus; loved by Poseidon.

Cretheis, mother of Homer by the river god Meles.

The Ortygian nymphs, local springs of Syracuse.

Aegina, mother of Menoetius by Actor, and Aeacus by Zeus.

Methone, mother of Oeagrus by Pierus.

Libethrias.

Drosera, ancestors of the Tyrians along with Abarbarea and Callirhoe.

Euboea.

Melia, mother, by Poseidon, of Mygdon and Amycus, kings of Bebryces.

Combe, consort of Socus and mother by him of the seven Corybantes.

Milichie.

Ortygia, nurse of Apollo.

Cyane, playmate of Persephone who was changed into a well through grief at the loss of her.

Europa, one of the daughters of the river-god Nilus; wife of Danaus who bore him the Danaides.

Aegle, daughter of Zeus and Neaera, by whom Helios begot the Charites.

Melanthea, daughter of the river-god Alpheus; she bore to Poseidon a daughter, Eirene.

Comaetho, daughter or wife of the river god Cydnus.

Harpina, mother of Oenomaus by Ares.

Thebe, wife of Zethus and also said to have consorted with Zeus.

The Spercheides, daughters of the river god Spercheus and the naiad Deino.

Pallas, daughter of Triton or of Poseidon and Tritonis; accidentally killed by her playmate, the goddess Athena.

Strophia, spring on Mount Cithaeron; barely personified.

Ismene, wife of Argus, eponymous king of Argus and thus, mother of Argus Panoptes and Iasus..

The Thessalids, daughters of the river god Peneus.

Nonacris, wife of Lycaon and the mother of Callisto.

Melia, mother, by Apollo, of Ceos.

Philodice, wife of Leucippus of Messenia by whom she became the mother of Hilaeira, Phoebe and possibly Arsinoe.

Euneica.

Neaera, mother of Dresaeus by Theiodamas.

Melite.

Byze.

Dirce, transformed into a spring (presumably into a nymph personifying it) after her death.

Potameides.

Callirrhoe, mother of Amphoterus and Acarnan by Alcmaeon.

Nomia, companion of Callisto.

Automate.

The Erasinides, daughters of the river god Erasinus; attendants of the goddess Britomartis.

Theisoa.

Aba, presumed daughter of the river Hebros; mother of Ergiscus by Poseidon.

Limnades.

Zeuxippe, mother of Butes by Teleon.

Archidemia.

Ceto, an Oceanid; she bore Helios a daughter, Astris.

Eupheme, nurse of the Muses; mother of Crotus by Pan.

Nana, daughter of the river-god Sangarius; she was impregnated by an almond from the tree sprung from the severed genitals of Agdistis, giving birth to Attis.

Hagno, one of the nurses of Zeus.

Symaethis, loved by Pan.

The Sithnides, one of them became the mother of Megaros by Zeus.

The Rhyndacides, daughters of the river god Rhyndacus.

Argiope, possibly the daughter of the river-god Cephissus, mother of Thamyris by Philammon.

The Pierides,.

Hippe.

Dercetis, mother of Alatreus by Laphitaon.

Callirrhoe, ancestors of the Tyrians along with Abarbarea and Drosera.

The Mysian Naiads, dwelled in the spring of Pegae near the lake Askanios and were responsible for the kidnapping of Hylas.

Harmonia, mother of the Amazons by Ares.

Maera.

Anthraccia, one of the nurses of the god Zeus.

Magea.

Langia.

Amymone.

Asterodia, daughter of Oceanus and Tethys; loved by the Colchian king Aeetes by whom she had a son Apsyrtus.

Cyrene, also called the daughter of Peneus' son Hypseus and mother of Aristaeus and Idmon by Apollo.

Moria, brother of Tylus.

The Deliades, daughters of Inopus, god of the river Inopus.

Tereine, daughter of the river god Strymon; mother of

Thrassa by Ares.

The Himerian Naiads.

The Cocythiae, naiads of Hades.

Praxithea, married Erichthonius of Athens and by him had a son named Pandion I.

Alcinoe, one of the nurses of the god Zeus.

Thespeia, abducted by Apollo.

Nycheia.

Cleomede, daughter of the river god Axius; she was the wife of Paeon.

Arethusa, daughter of Nereus.

Styx, an Oceanid; she was the wife of Pallas and thus mother of Zelus, Nike, Kratos, and Bia.

Lotis, escape from the embraces of Priapus was metamorphosed into a tree.

Crinaeae.

Name, Relations.

Glauce, one of the nurses of Zeus.

Diogeneia, daughter of the river-god Cephisus; the wife of the Athenian lord Phrasimos and mother by him of Praxithea.

Asterope or Hesperia, daughter of the river god Cebren and lover of Aesacus, also called Hesperia.

Malis.

The Asopides, daughters of the river god Asopus and Metope; all abducted by the gods.

Orseis, mother of Dorus, Aeolus and Xuthus by Hellen.

Aganippe, daughter of the river-god Termessus.

Ocyrhoe, daughter of the river god Imbrasus and Chesias; she was pursued by the god Apollo.

Argyra, loved by the hero Selemnus.

Pegasis, daughter of the river god Grenikos.

Melaina, mother of Delphos by Apollo.

Iasis.

Metope, daughter of the river-god Ladon and wife of Asopus.

Cnossia, mother of Xenodamos by Menelaus when he visited the island.

Ocyrhoe, mother of Phasis by Helios.

Melia, an Oceanid; mother, by Inachus, of Phoroneus and Aegialeus.

Cleide, one of the nurses of the god Dionysus.

Neaera, wife of the river-god Strymon, and mother of Evadne.

Io, mother of Epaphus by Zeus.

Euboea, abducted by Poseidon.

Corycia, mother of Lycoreus by Apollo.

Abarbarea, ancestors of the Tyrians along with Callirrhoe and Drosera.

Anthedon.

Limnaee, daughter of the Indian river god Ganges; one of the reputed mothers of Athis.

Cyanea, daughter of the river Meander; wife of king Miletos and mother by him of Caunus and Byblis.

Lara, daughter of the river Almo; mother of the Lares by Mercury.

The Corycian Nymphs, daughters of the river god Pleistos.

Evadne, daughter of Strymon and Neaera, wife of Argus (king of Argos), mother of Ecbasus, Peiras, Epidaurus and Criasus.

Neda, daughter of Oceanus; one of the nurses of infant Zeus.

Syrinx, daughter of the river god Ladon; pursued by Pan.

Pharmaceia, nymph of a poisonous spring and Orithyia's playmate.

The Amnisiades, daughters of the river god Amnisos who served as handmaidens of the goddess Artemis.

Argiope, daughter of the river Nilus; wife of Agenor and mother of Europa, Phoenix, Cilix and Cadmus; commonly known as Telephassa.

Telphousa, daughter of the river-god Ladon.

Daphne, daughter of the river-god Ladon or of king Amyclas; loved by the god Apollo.

Anchiroe, one of the nurses of the god Zeus.

Memphis, daughter of Nilus; she was the wife to Epaphus and mother of Libya and Anippe or Lysianassa.

Pitane, daughter of the river god Eurotas, became by Poseidon the mother of Evadne.

Argiope, possibly the daughter of the river-god Cephissus, mother of Cercyon by Branchus.

Tiasa, daughter of the river god Eurotas.

Echenais, blinded his unfaithful lover Daphnis.

Asterope, an Oceanid; mother of Acragas by Zeus.

Eurypoe, one of the daughters of the river-god Nilus; wife of Aegyptus who bore him fifty sons.

The Asterionides, daughters of the river god Asterion; nurses of the infant goddess Hera.

Calliphaea.

Coronis, one of the nurses of the god Dionysus.

Castalia or Cassotis, others called her the daughter of the river god Cephissus.

Peuce, mother of Peuceon.

Ascrea, loved by Poseidon who bore him a son Oeclus.

Ismenis, daughters of the river god Ismenus; mother, by Pan, of Crenaeus, a defender of Thebes against the Seven.

Hercyna, a childhood companion of the goddess Persephone.

The Acheloides, daughters of the river god Achelous; see also Castalia and Callirhoe below.

Strymo, wife of King Laomedon and the mother of King Priam and Tithonus.

Tritonis, mother of Nasamon and Caphaurus (or Cephalion) by Amphithemis, and according to an archaic version of the myth, also of Athena by Poseidon; she could be also the mother of above Pallas and Athena again by Triton.

Clonia, consort of Hyrieus and by him became the mother of Nycteus and Lycus.

The Ionides, daughters of the river god Cytherus.

Physadeia.

Daulis, daughter of the river-god Cephisus.

Lethe.

Daphne, loved by the god Apollo; see below entry of Daphne.

Appias, lived in the Appian Well outside the temple to Venus Genitrix in the Roman Forum.

Anchinoe, daughter of the river Nilus; wife of the Egyptian King Belus; mother of Aegyptus and Danaus, and perhaps, Cepheus and Phineus..

The Lamides, daughters of the river god Lamos; nurses of the god Dionysus.

Chalcis, regarded as the mother of the Curetes and Corybantes; perhaps the same as Combe and Euboea below.

Glaucia, daughter of the Trojan river god Scamander; wife of Deimachus and the mother of Scamander who was named after his grandfather.

Melite, daughter of the river-god Aegaeus and mother of Hyllus by Heracles.

Trojan Nymphs or Trojan Naiads, daughters of the river gods, Scamander and Simoeis.

Pegaea.

Sinope, mother of Syrus by Apollo.

Sparta, daughter of the river god Eurotas; mother of Amyclas and Eurydice by Lacedaemon.

Ocyrhoe, mother of Caicus by Hermes.

The Sirens (possibly), their mother could be one of the Muses (Terpsichore, Melpomene or Calliope) or Sterope; they were close companions of the goddess Persephone before her abduction.

Syllis, mother of Zeuxippus by Apollo.

Caliadne, presumably one of the daughters of the river-god Nilus; one of the wives of Aegyptus, bearing him 12 sons: Eurylochus, Phantes, Peristhenes, Hermus, Dryas, Potamon, Cisseus, Lixus, Imbrus, Bromios, Polycctor, and Chthonios.

The Cyrtonian nymphs, local springs in the town of Cyrtones.

Danaïs, she was loved by the Pisan king Pelops by whom she became the mother of his bastard son, Chrysippus.

Asopis.

Myrtoessa, one of the nurses of infant Zeus.

Ocyrhoe, daughter of the river-god Sangarius; she was the mother, by Hippasus, of Hippomedon.

Melia, she was the mother by Silenus of Dolion.

Messeis, Mycene, wife of Arestor and by him probably the mother of Argus Panoptes; eponym of Mycenae.

Salamis, mother of Cychreus by Poseidon.

The Astakides, appeared in the myth of Nicaea.

Bolbe, an Oceanid due to her parentage (daughter of Oceanus and Tethys).

Nicaea, daughter of the river-god Sangarius and Cybele. By the god of wine, Dionysus, she mothered Telete (consecration).

Thronia, mother of Abderus by Poseidon.

Bateaia, married King Oebalus of Sparta and mother of their sons were Hippocoon, Tyndareus and Icarius.

The Anigrades, daughters of the river god Anigros, were believed to cure skin diseases.

The Inachides, daughters of the river god Inachus.

Neis, mother of Aetolus by Endymion.

Phrixa, one of the nurses of Zeus.

The Ithacian nymphs, dwelled in sacred caves on the island.

Albunea.

Hieromneme, daughter of the river-god Simois and the wife of Assaracus, by whom she bore Capys or the daughter-in-law of Assaracus, wife of Capys and mother of Anchises.

Nais, wife of Silenus.

The Cephisides, daughters of the river god Cephissus; mothers of the 50 sons of Orion.

Samia, wife of Ancaeus.

Eunoë, daughter of the river-god Sangarius; she was the possible mother of Hecuba by Dymas.

Petra.

Kleodora (or Cleodora), mother of Parnassus by Poseidon.

Synallaxis, Tanagra, mother of Leucippus and Ephippus by Poemander.

The Pactolides, appeared in the myth concerning Arachne..

Chesias, loved by the river god Imbrasis.

Chlidanope, wife of Hypseus and mother Cyrene.

Stilbe, bore to Apollo twin sons, Centaurus and Lapithus..

The Leibethrides.

Menippe, wife of Pelasgus, by whom she became the mother of Phrastor.

Polyxo, presumably one of the daughters of the river-god Nilus; she was one of the wives of Danaus and bore him 12 daughters: Autonoe, Theano, Electra, Cleopatra, Eurydice, Glaucippe, Anthelea, Cleodora, Euippe, Erato, Stygne and Bryce.

Corcyra, mother of Phaiax by Poseidon.

Charybdis, daughter of Poseidon and Gaia.

Salmacis.

Byzia.

Chione, daughter of the Oceanid Callirrhoe and the river god Nilus.

Minthe, daughter of Cocytus; loved by the god Hades but as punishment her boasts was transformed by Persephone or Demeter into a mint-plant.

Pero, mother of Asopus by Poseidon.

Hagno, one of the nurses of infant Zeus.

The Hydaspides, daughters of the river god Hydaspes and Astris, they were nurses of the god Zagreus, the first-born Dionysos.

Prosymna.

Creusa, daughter of Gaia; she bore Hypseus and Stilbe to the river god Peneus.

Gargaphia or Plataia or Oeroe, carried off by Zeus.

The Aesepides, daughters of the river god Aesepus.

Midea, mother of Aspledon by Poseidon.

Anchiroe, wife of the Psylli tribe's first king Psyllus.

Temenitis.

Liriope, bore a son Narcissus to the river-god Cephisus.

Annaed.

Bistonis, mother of Tereus by Ares.

Periboea, wife of Icarius, mother of Penelope, Perilaus, Aletes, Damasippus, Imeusimus and Thoas.

Rhodope, mother of Hebros by Haemus and of Cicon by Apollo.

Anippe, loved by the god Poseidon by whom she became the mother of Busiris.

The galaxies were spun out faster and faster, then collapsed in faster and faster by the nymphs, like a rhythmic cycle with each cycle adding more energy, they could eventually spin out into the void of the cosmos, but they did not, at the end of one powerful cycle the condensing force was so great that the galaxy would become a singularity. Whole chains and structures were like the lights on a Christmas tree going out in waves as the naiads swirled them into nothingness.

Billy again had been all morning in his study looking at reference books of Greek mythology and using his pendulum. Now he was in the garden at Woodbridge having lunch of

salad and cold chicken with Emily and Catherine Mulberry. He was talking to himself, Emily was half listening, and Catherine Mulberry ignoring.

‘So now the universe is left with just one galaxy, our own, the very beautiful and very predatory water Naiads have removed all the others. And what of dragons? of course the naiads, nymphs, are what become dragons, dragonflies’

‘So, dragons enter again into our lives.’ Catherine Mulberry said, she had not been ignoring, she never could, she had been listening.

‘How do water nymphs destroy whole galaxies?’ Emily asked.

‘Kannaur might not follow, yet,’ said Billy, ‘obviously Nigel would once he heard. The insects are vicious killers, the naiads are beautiful female spirits, or nymphs.’ he paused, ‘Like in those Matisse paintings, they dance in circles of joined hands, this probably accounts for the gravitational anomalies of galaxies... and so create rhythms of expansion and contraction.’

Catherine Mulberry raised an eyelid.

‘A reification, an anthropomorphic device, to visualise forces of nature as personae.’ she added.

‘Well, they are part of this end of all things, their dances have changed, no longer beautiful, more like those of the maenads.’ Billy added.

‘And why the change?’ asked Emily.

Picking up his glass of red wine he walked towards the house,

‘I’m thinking more about human intervention in this sixth and maybe final apocalypse.’ he was saying, then musing again to himself,

‘Should pay Nigel a visit and talk.’ So he entered the house and was soon in Arcadia.

As more and more galaxies disappeared, such that even amateur astronomers became aware, those in authority put out cover stories. They had to be cover stories because in terms of modern cosmology this could not occur, even if galaxies were disappearing, being destroyed, the observations would not all occur within a few days, it would be millions of years as they slowly disappeared due to the great distances of some, and closer distances of others. For instance, an event in the Andromeda galaxy would take 2.5 million years to be detected on Earth, however an event in the furthest galaxy would take 13 billion years to be detected.

‘It’s the sixth great extinction,’ said Billy to Nigel, ‘and this time total, universal and more.’

‘Not then due to global warming, the Anthropocene and human activity then.’ said Nigel.

They were talking in a drawing room in Arcadia, Kate and Kannaur listening.

‘Something or someone far more powerful.’ Nigel continued.

‘I thought so too, had a candidate but couldn’t understand why they would, made no sense, then Smith gave the answer, it was, or is down to human intervention, someone has destroyed the device in the garden of number 85, and now we can’t get to it thanks to human action.’

‘Can you explain, who, what how?’ this was Kate.

‘Well, the Americans made it impossible for us to get access to 85, and I suspect it was they who deliberately or not moved the tiles which the device was made from. Maybe Shelia and Lance or one of the agents.’

‘So couldn’t the boy repair, couldn’t Smith tell him to do this?’ Nigel was speaking, now to Kannaur, ‘I’ll tell you the details later.’

‘Well, it seems according to Smith there is a missing tile.’ Billy added.

‘And?’ this was Kate.

‘Smith thinks the boy’s device kept things in balance, stopped a catastrophic runaway process, yes like some collapse in the climate, but universal and beyond. And messing with the Unsepttrium didn’t help.’ said Billy.

‘Oh! we’re sunk then.’ said Nigel.

‘My question?’ said Kannaur.

‘Oh,’ Nigel asked Billy, ‘If this place is not real, Arcadia, then when reality is destroyed will this be?’

‘That’s a question.’ Billy replied.

‘And?’ said Kannaur.

‘It’s a good question.’ Billy replied, adding his, ‘Absolutely no idea.’

CHAPTER III III III III III III III III: STARS

There was no worldwide panic, the congregations swelled, as did cults, and the apocalypse of St John became headline news when the first stars began to disappear.

And so it was that The Reverend Lisa Phillips telephoned Billy, and read to him,

‘Isaiah 14:12 How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low!

Luke 10:18 And he said to them, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

Mark 13:25 And the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

Matthew 24:29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Revelation 6:12-17 When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of

him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

Revelation 8:10-12 The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from the water, because it had been made bitter. The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light might be darkened, and a third of the day might be kept from shining, and likewise a third of the night.

Revelation 9:1 And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit.'

'Yes, I know, and perhaps a new interpretation of Revelations?' replied Billy.

She added, 'And I'm staying with the congregations.'

In the infrared and x rays, great sea monsters and dragons were leaping from the sun and moon into space. These resembled theropods a family or clade of dinosaurs of which the very well-known example is tyrannosaurus rex. They leapt snatching at stars with their front claws, the stars would then seemingly fall to earth. This occurred across the globe, and the falling stars were clearly visible at night. At first people were reluctant to venture out, but as no damage seemed to occur as stars fell, and despite the science clearly stating they were in fact massive objects of hydrogen, they fell as harmless points of light. No theory was able to cope with this,

but as it was harmless soon groups would gather to watch. After many nights it became commonplace and eventually so like most things that become the norm was no longer of interest to the public. Meanwhile the scientific community could not do or say anything which made any sense.

The group from Arcadia had visited Nigel's mansion to witness what was occurring in the so-called real world. Nigel had been paying visits and conferring with those he knew in the science community via email. He had difficulty at times, with certain expressions, up to the point where topics like multiverses and Omega points seem to baffle others when he mentioned them. He also happened to mention Dr Kannaur Rahul, but no one knew of him, he did an internet search, again finding no mention, nothing. He had reported back, and when asked if anything else was odd, after having thought he said,

'Yeh, it seems retro is now a fashion, the browsers and the internet looked very retro?'

So now the six, including Kannaur visited the garden in Edgbaston. They watched the stars falling on several nights.

'It's as if the old and seemingly childish notions of the ancients was becoming real.' Emily had said when watching from Nigel's Garden.

'God! you might have something in that.' Nigel said, 'Is that possible? It would explain much.'

'And the reality of a cosmology of 50 years ago or more? Yes, it would.' said Kannaur, he laughed and continued, 'And that I don't exist.' He was pondering, 'Can we see if the Star Wars project exists?'

So, the group went back into the mansion, it was decided that Kannaur should use the internet. The rest gathered around him as he typed, even Catherine Mulberry was interested, or for once showed her interest.

‘No, no Star Wars project or evidence.’ he was typing, he laughed. ‘Just the first movie, can’t find many of my colleagues either, the older physicists yes, no younger ones.’ He continued typing, ‘And none of our papers, obviously if we are not around to write them.’ More typing, ‘And look, Nigel, you only have one Nobel prize!’

They all looked, ‘Things are going backwards.’ Catherine Mulberry was speaking, ‘And I’d feel safer in Arcadia.’

Which was the general mood, a puzzled and sombre mood.

And so, it was after many days and nights the one thing that the cosmologists could calculate was when the universe would become devoid of stars. They figured two and a half billion fell each day, so came up with the very biblical 40 days, though this wasn’t obvious to many straight away. None of the six were surprised.

The question was what would happen next and by now the gang of six knew it would be the planets.

CHAPTER III III III III III III III I: THE PLANETS

Nigel had been making brief visits to his home to check on the internet to see what was happening and reporting back. The others tried to amuse themselves. Billy seemed sullen and introverted, unusual for him. And now these occasions he reported back was giving some of the group, especially Kate, the feeling that he was putting a positive spin on what he was finding. So, a visit by all six was planned.

This visit of all six they thought might be the last possible, after the planets what next? Nigel also wanted to bring back a particular Burne-Jones painting.

They arrived in the hall of the mansion, Nigel first, it was dark, 'No lights.' he said, 'No switches.'

Kannaur and Kate took out their smart phones and used them as torches,

'No signal?' Kate said, 'Odd!'

Both were now using the phones as torches,

'No switches, no light fittings,' Kannaur paused, 'no light switches but look candles in holders.'

Billy approached one and took out a Ronson lighter from his pocket and lit it, he then proceeded to walk down the corridor lighting the candles as he went.

Kannaur was about to speak but Billy anticipated,

'I always carry a Ronson lighter.' He continued lighting candles, there was no signal, no electricity, so no computers or internet.

Nigel said what everyone was thinking, 'This isn't retro, or is it reverse technology, maybe it's reverse history.'

They didn't stay long, or explore, they couldn't use the internet as it looked like it didn't exist. It was very dark, and felt dangerous, they quickly decided to leave.

Nigel said, 'I'll go back in the morning and go to the university, ask what's going on.'

It was agreed this would not be all six, but just Nigel and Kannaur would visit the mansion and walk the half mile or so to the university.

So, it was early the next morning that Nigel and Kannaur arrived in the hallway deep in conversation, quickly leaving the mansion and striding off down the driveway. At the end of which there was no road to the university only a track. This was a shock, but not for long.

'Reverse technology?' mused Kannaur.

They stopped and took in the scene.

'And no other houses, just fields. So more like reversed history.' Nigel observed.

Either side of the fairly wide track were low hawthorn hedges with the occasional young oak and ash trees. The fields were small, some just grass, others had a few sheep grazing in them. They walked on.

The track turned and they saw some iron gates and a sign saying "Calthorpe college", the gates were broken, and the place looked abandoned.

‘I think we’ve seen enough, this was once a place of learning, but no longer.’ Nigel said almost talking to himself. So, they left the building.

‘It seems those of the Earth now are more into astrology than astronomy.’ Nigel said, and continued, ‘And I think that’s enough of our visit to see what’s happening maybe?’

‘Let’s get back to Arcadia, I’ll feel safer there somehow, I get a feeling we are not welcome here.’ this was Kannaur. So, they walked back down the track, a cart pulled by two oxen passed them travelling in the other direction, the driver dressed in rough cloth trousers and a shirt bid then a ‘Mornin.’ To which they replied likewise.

The driver stopped his cart, and leaning over spoke,

‘You b’aint an astronomer, them that deal with spirits?’

He seemed to be thinking to himself,

‘Nay, them as do bait never dealin with common folk...’

Then to them, ‘They yonder...’ pointing down the road to where they had come from and the college, ‘left, all in confusions...’ he tut tutted to himself. Then louder, ‘Aye be a fine mornin.’ and he went on his way.

‘Back to Arcadia then.’ said Nigel.

They walked back to Nigel’s mansion, but as they walked down its drive they paused,

‘That’s wrong.’ Kannaur said.

‘Well, it’s not my Victorian mansion, it’s far more like a Jacobean fine house, I never noticed, well in the dark it wasn’t

obvious from inside, and this morning, we were talking and didn't look back, so things are very different.'

They went inside and through the door back to Arcadia, and over a good breakfast related their story. No one had a good explanation, but finally Kannaur spoke,

'Well, I suppose now will be the destruction of the planets, but what planets, those of modern science or those of the world which we have just come from? And I'd not feel safe back there watching some biblical apocalypse!'

Billy gave a frown.

'So, we can't, see?' said Kate.

'Oh, this house might find a way,' said Billy, 'let's explore the gardens, not the parkland, the formal gardens.'

On the west side of the palace were gardens, geometric flower beds with low hedges of yew. One had an ornamental fountain, another was a low maze, again made from yew and at its centre a round pond.

All five carefully followed Billy through the maze, even though they could easily have stepped over the low hedges, when they arrived at the pond, they automatically formed a circle around it.

Billy spoke, 'I'm glad no one cheated and stepped over a hedge, I don't think if anyone had it would have worked.'

Before the curious could ask what would work?

Kannaur was pointing to the pond, 'Look the planets, Saturn is obvious, then Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Mercury, and I guess that's the Moon, then the Sun and Earth in the middle!'

'The Ptolemaic universe!' said Catherine Mulberry.

They all now watched the images of the planets seeming to move just under the water of the pond.

And so, they saw the destruction of the planets.

This was surprising as they all thought, except of course for Billy, because the sequence was wrong.

The first vision was that of The Earth. They watched as if it looked like a fertilized egg cell, it divided, and divided again, they then began to see the form of the embryo, they all guessed it would be human, and it was, a giant androgenous human.

It reached out a hand and touched the sun which grew slowly dark and as it did so the human form grew paler, once the sun was black, The Black Sun, the Human / Earth was no more. Then the same sequence occurred, only The Sun became an embryo and then what was obviously a naked male figure. It in turn stretched out its hand and touched the moon, this became a female, Luna, and Sol disappeared. Luna touched Mercury which grew into the Messenger of the gods, Luna was gone. Mercury now allowed Venus to materialise, who in turn materialised Mars, she like the others now gone. Mars touched Jupiter, which became Zeus, who then touched Saturn. All that was left now was Saturn, Chronos and death.

There was a long silence. The pond was now a deep black with no reflections.

CHAPTER III III III III III III III III II: THE END

Seven days passed, as always Arcadia matched the mood, it was late autumn, nights were drawing in, log fires were made and lit by unseen hands in the palace. The meals were provided again by the same unseen hands, which the six enjoyed. They passed their time in various ways, Billy spending time in the library, others doing similar or taking walks.

Catherine Mulberry, Emily Clarke, Billy, Kate, Nigel and Kannaur were now in a salon in Arcadia, a fine view outside through French windows of the gardens at dusk, when from a side door in walked Mr Smith carrying a briefcase, something he had never been seen doing before. Before it closed Billy moved towards the open door, no corridor to where Smith had come from, The Hall of the Mountain King, but opening onto blackness. It seemed this was solid, as Billy tapped it with his knuckles, Smith turning around at the noise.

He gave a wry smile, then spoke,

‘As you know space is not empty, virtual particles, in pairs, wink into existence only to immediately, or almost immediately, annihilate each other, are being annihilated and recreated on a timescale of less than 10^{-23} seconds. Well, let’s imagine if the annihilation part ceased.’

‘Impossible, then so is all of this,’ Nigel said, correcting himself, he paused, ‘so I guess within less than a second all space would become solid, by which I mean it would be a block of matter, pure mass.’

‘And of infinite size, if we could use the word.’ Dr Kannaur Rahul added.

‘And the point of this?’ asked Emily.

Nigel was first, ‘Well an empty space could be populated, or re populated, but a block mass, and having zero energy, could not.’

‘Creation would not only cease, as in everything being destroyed or removed, but this would mean creation would become impossible because...’ Smith was adding, then Emily interrupted,

‘There would be no space, as if everything was absolutely completed.’

‘Nice phrase.’ said Nigel, adding, ‘A proper end.’

‘But it’s not.’ said Billy, who continued, ‘Look at what happened, think what has occurred?’

Multiverses disappeared, as did Omega points, then the galaxies, and finally what about the stars, what are stars?’

Kannaur began to give an explanation but was stopped by Billy,

‘But what fell were points of light. What then were stars then?’

He paused and no one could answer.

‘And the planets, how many were there?’

‘It’s considered there are eight planets.’ Kannaur said.

‘Which are?’ asked Billy.

‘Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars, Jupiter and Saturn, Uranus and Neptune. And at least nine dwarf planets: Ceres, Orcus, Pluto, Haumea, Quaoar, Makemake, Gonggong, Eris...’

‘Stop!’ said Billy, ‘what were destroyed?’

‘Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn and not a planet but the Moon. Oh, and the Sun, but that’s not a planet either.’ said Kannaur.

‘And these are, or were?’ asked Billy, empathising the “were”.

Emily was first, ‘The Sun, the Moon, Venus, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury and Saturn. The classical seven planets.’

‘And how do we count them?’ Billy again.

‘1, 2, 3...’ began Emily.

‘No no,’ said Kannaur, ‘I, II, III, IIII, IIII, IIII, IIII, they, those in the abandoned college, they tallied them, not even at that point using Roman numerals.’

‘I don’t understand?’ said Emily.

‘I think I do,’ this was Nigel, ‘What’s being destroyed is human knowledge, not whatever reality is!’ he paused, then continued, ‘Starting with the most sophisticated and ending with the simplest.’

‘I still don’t get it?’ said Emily.

‘What’s changing is the nature of humanity, maybe returning us to a more primitive state. Well maybe primitive is the wrong word here.’

Nigel and Billy were smiling.

So, Nigel explained, ‘I think what is happening is that reality is changing and doing so to match our, human, understanding. Changing from our current wisdom which has produced technologies which are bringing about the sixth and possible final mass extinction. That, and the Americans managing to destroy a device which may have been keeping things at bay. Anyway, for whatever reason we were doomed, now for some reason I do not know...’

Here he was interrupted by Billy,

‘I think I might, but not yet fully, so please continue.’

He did, ‘The successive destructions were of the cosmologies of the past. So not only did the physical multiverses and Omega Points disappear, but the very ideas also did, and then the galaxies, and finally the stars.’

Here Emily picked up the thread,

‘So, the stars became points of light, which we saw falling and the planets became those of antiquity, and the science, I guess astronomy became astrology, and I bet physics became Alchemy once again.’

‘And so, in the university we saw old star maps, evidence of using Roman numerals, not decimal, and then not even those but tally marks.’ said Kannaur, adding, ‘And the first clue was when I was no longer a living scientist! I expect Nigel, Einstein and Newton went the same way.’

‘So,’ said Smith, ‘Billy, your reason?’

‘By tomorrow,’ replied Billy, ‘and how do you get to Inglefield Road?’

CHAPTER III III III III III III III III: REVELATION

And now Python the earth-dragona, drakaina from Delphi, the greatness of that oracle, spoke revealing the nature of the Revelation.

Alchemy is where fire and putrefaction transforms the base metal such as lead into gold. It's an allegory of transforming the base material of the flesh which dies and decays, into an immortal spirit.

Then the verses. Python fixated on three verses, one in Isaiah, "How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn!" and from Revelation,

"And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things... And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star..."

And,

"I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star..."

Alchemy, Saturn becomes ruler of the Golden Age. He ate his children, but his third child Jupiter was hidden from him and did become ruler. So, Saturn became Chronos, "Father of Death", source of putrefaction under the earth.

And for the Neoplatonists, and Alchemists this was seen to be important. Putrefaction is part of a very important process in

Alchemy, one of Alchemic Transubstantiation, death through putrefaction and burning. This in Revelations is the fiery pit. For the alchemist each, burning and putrefaction, is a mutual metaphor of transformation. The blackness of the sun in Revelations is the symbol of putrefaction, the black sediment in the alchemist's retort during distillation.

So, in the Judgment of the two Beasts, the Dragon, and the Dead. The Beast and the False Prophet are cast into the Lake of Fire. The Dragon is imprisoned in the Bottomless Pit for a thousand years, buried to putrefy. The resurrected martyrs live and reign with Christ for a thousand years. And after the Thousand Years the Dragon is released making war but then is cast into the Lake of Fire with the Beast and the False Prophet. Which is the second death. And are transformed. And so, the New Heaven and Earth, and New Jerusalem replace the old heaven and old earth. There is no more suffering or death.

The River of Life and the Tree of Life appear for the healing of the nations and peoples. The curse of sin is ended.

'That is my interpretation of Revelation.' said Billy, the next day to the assembled, now six, with Mr Smith.

'So, Mr Smith how do you get to Inglefield Road?' asked Billy.

'By a Vickers Viscount.' came the answer, which confused Kannaur, so Nigel explained.

'The boy who seems to figure in this, who lives in some late 1950s world, well he had a model of this aircraft, a Vickers Viscount, and to cut a long story short, I helped him with making it, well painting it, and that helped me. I was mentally in a very bad place at the time. Strange how something so

simple could help. Anyway, we had a flight in an actual aircraft, Smith piloting, but how that gets us to Inglefield Road I don't know.'

He paused as Kannaur still looked confused, so continued,

'And this boy who seems significant in this, and has been elsewhere, well he visits Inglefield Road on Sundays. Why Billy wants to go there, I've absolutely no idea. So, I like you are still confused?'

'Yes, very confused.' said Kannaur.

'Welcome to the club.' said Nigel and some of the others.

Some of the others might be, but not Catherine Mulberry, or did she understand, but just let the story play out as she always did in these adventures.

'Well, I think we might have at least one satisfactory end, but it's the middle, or middles of the story we need to check out.' said Billy.

'No, still confused.' said Kannaur.

CHAPTER III III III III III III III III: VICKERS VISCOUNT

Smith was now talking to Kannaur, and correcting Nigel,

‘A Vickers Viscount was a turbo prop passenger aircraft from the 1950s. You see in another of my episodes with Mr Taylor I was required to pilot such a primitive machine, the outcome was of no consequence, however I so quite enjoyed having to manipulate such a primitive machine that afterwards I decided to manufacture one for myself. A perfect copy was easy to fabricate, and so purely for pleasure I would fly the machine.’

Kannaur was now nodding an acknowledgement.

Smith continued, ‘One day whilst flying through some clouds, a particular strange formation, this is by the way very significant, I noticed through a gap in the cloud formation what looked like a town below. On investigating I recognised it as the English city of Birmingham, I had flown over this before in the other episode. Moreover, it appeared to be the city as it was at that time, the late 1950s, and there below was Elmdon Airport in the 1950s, what is now Birmingham airport. So, I landed to investigate, and finding transport, what is called a Jeep, I decided to see Inglefield Road, and if number 46 was extant. Sure enough it was, and there was the boy.

So, the answer to Mr Taylor, I can get to Inglefield Road by using a Vickers Viscount.’

‘Well not knowing what a Vickers Viscount even looks like, I’m sure we do not have one.’ said Kannaur.

‘I think we do, and it looks like that.’ Nigel was saying as he pointed out of the windows of the salon to a Vickers Viscount standing on the lawn outside of the palace of Arcadia.

‘Well then, shall we go?’ said Billy.

‘Why?’ asked Kannaur.

‘To fill in the gaps, or rather to make or find some in the blackness of fullness.’ came the reply.

So, Billy opened the French doors and walked onto the lawn.

There was the aircraft with the passenger door open and boarding steps.

Smith looked at the aircraft, and the steps,

‘It might be best if one or two stay and remove the steps.’ he said, ‘Any volunteers?’

No one spoke, it seemed none wished to be left behind with the possibility of an eternity in front of them, albeit in a palace.

‘Oh! Well, I suppose we can push the stairs aside once inside the aircraft.’ said Smith.

‘But I don’t understand how this aircraft got here?’ Kannaur said.

‘This palace provides.’ replied Emily.

So, all seven climbed the steps, Smith sitting in the pilot’s seat, and as before Nigel taking the co-pilot’s seat.

Billy pushed the steps away and closed the door. Smith threw some switches, and the four turbo props screamed into life.

‘The noise!’ exclaimed Kannaur.

‘Yes,’ shouted Smith through the open door to the flight deck and holding back a smile, ‘and they started without the need of a compressor, and I suspect we will take off easier from a grass runway.’

As he said this, he swung the aircraft around, opened the throttles, the noise rose louder, the aircraft shook and began to move faster across the extensive lawn, soon they were airborne. Smith banked and circled over the palace, he was scanning the sky, others were looking down at the palace below, the formal gardens, the parkland, lake and woods.

After nearly completing a circuit Nigel exclaimed,

‘What’s that?’ his finger pointing to a strange towering cloud formation.

‘What we are looking for.’ Smith replied.

In the passenger section all but Catherine Mulberry had sat at a window seat. She had sat next to Billy. As the aircraft circled, she spoke,

‘Billy, you are very quiet, which is unusual, is there something on your mind that is bothering you?’

He replied, ‘No, that’s just it, nothing is on my mind, it’s almost as if that blackness is also in my head, I can’t even feel the concern for all that’s occurred recently. Which is my reason for going to Inglefield Road, to find something, what I don’t know.’

They flew into the cloud and sudden blackness, total blackness. Cabin lights were on, Billy rose from his seat,

‘Excuse me Catherine I must see Smith.’ She made way and he walked down the aisle and through the door to the flight deck where there were a puzzled Nigel and Mr Smith.

‘Nothing, just blackness.’ Nigel was saying, whilst Smith was saying calmly, ‘This doesn’t seem right.’ and then Nigel,

‘Look! eyes, massive red eyes ahead.’

Smith made to bank the aircraft,

‘No,’ said Billy, ‘fly towards it’, which he did without question.

‘Another dragon.’ thought Nigel.

As if to answer Billy was saying to Smith,

‘It’s not a dragon but a giant theropod, a dinosaur like the most famous, Tyrannosaurus Rex, fly towards it, but when it opens its jaws, and it will, fly straight for an eye, no matter which one.’

Smith and Billy had been in similar strange circumstances, so no questions were asked or answered, and it all took place so quickly, soon they entered the eye, red light filled the cabin, then daylight and an airfield below,

‘Elmdon.’ said Smith, ‘Let’s land then.’

He banked the aircraft, took a large circle and brought the Viscount down on the main runway and taxied to the apron by the terminal buildings.

‘How to get out?’ Nigel asked.

‘How I normally do, I’ll taxi up to the access steps, and open the door.’ said Smith, and he did.

Billy was standing in the open doorway to the passenger compartment so called to the others,

‘Now down the steps and onto the apron of the airfield.’

They did as asked.

Smith was looking at a Jeep parked nearby, ‘I normally use this, but it only seats four and we are seven, so maybe two trips?’ he said.

‘No need,’ said Catherine Mulberry, ‘I’ll take some in that.’ She pointed to a Wolseley saloon car, ‘I can drive a Wolseley, and even start one without keys, and there isn’t any alarm or steering locking on a real car.’

‘She drives a 1950s Wolseley at home.’ Billy explained.

So, they set off, Catherine Mulberry driving the Wolseley with Billy and Emily as passengers, Smith driving the Jeep with Nigel, Kate and Kannaur.

They drove out of the airport and onto the Coventry Road towards Birmingham city centre, taking a right at Manor House Lane then onto Garrets Green Lane and finally left into Lea Hall Road which becomes Inglefield Road.

Smith led the way, Catherine Mulberry commenting,

‘I’m glad Smith knows the way.’

To which Billy, who was sitting in the back of the saloon car said,

‘I think I could have done as well, maybe took The Radleys, and then down St Giles Road.’

Catherine Mulberry said nothing, just mouthed to Emily,
'Typical Brummie.'

'There are no other cars, or any people?' Emily remarked.

'There never is.' replied Catherine Mulberry.

CHAPTER III III III III III III III III: THE PLENUM

Inglefield Road was now as it was in the late 1950s, all the houses being owned by Birmingham City Council, and at that time only one parked car in the entire street. The private houses opposite number 46 yet to be built in the early 60s. The only surprised person being Kannaur, he had certainly visited the UK, and Birmingham, notably the University and Nigel's mansion, but not these districts, and not some forty odd years before he was born. The others had all at some point had this experience of the time warp back to Birmingham in the late 50s very early 60s.

So, for those who had visited before there was no shock of the change from a future present to the now of the late 50s. As they entered the front garden with the tall pampas grass in the centre of a small lawn, they walked inside, there was the polished hallway, the Singer sowing machine, they followed Smith into the dining room, with its upright piano, windows showing the apple trees in blossom, and the blue lupins in the flower borders. But now something very strange, on the dining table a black sphere the size of a football and around it small models of second world war warships.

'What is that?' asked Emily.

There was a long pause then eventually Nigel spoke,

'I think that is everything, that is a plenum, the absolute opposite of the vacuum of an emptiness. That black sphere is total, the total fullness of everything.'

'But weird and impossible.' said Kannaur,

'You'll get used to it.' Nigel replied.

‘I haven’t and suspect I never will.’ Mr Smith said, and Catherine Mulberry agreed.

Billy had ignored this exchange and was examining but not touching the model boats,

‘Interesting,’ he was talking to himself, but Kate and Emily were listening, ‘I know these, they are Eagle model kits, 1/1200 scale, very interesting, HMS Hood, Bismark, and a Tri-ang Minic metal model of HMS Vanguard.’

‘What are they for?’ asked Kate.

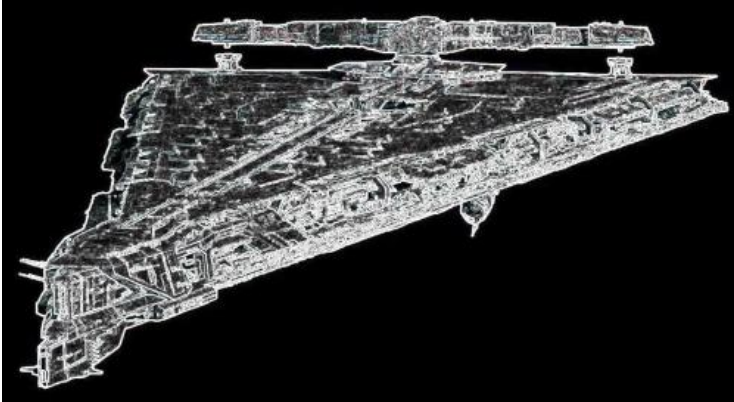
‘Containment I think, containment before other things.’ was the reply. Anticipating more questions, ‘I think the boy is containing the plenum until, well I guess he needs more fire power, yes fire power to break up the plenum, that must be it.’

With which he walked out of the room, down the hallway and into to front living room. On the sofa was one of the boy’s drawing books. The boy had used small Silvine sketch books bought at a corner shop but now he used old large Atlases, painting the pages black and drawing on them using pens, pens that Mr Smith had provided. On the sofa was one such book, Billy picked it up and opened it, the first few pages had dinosaur drawings,

‘Was he going to use these?’ Billy wondered aloud, Kate and Emily listening. He flicked a few pages, then he found some drawings of battleships.

‘Ah, super dreadnaughts.’ Billy muttered. By now the others had followed, the other four in the hallway peering into the

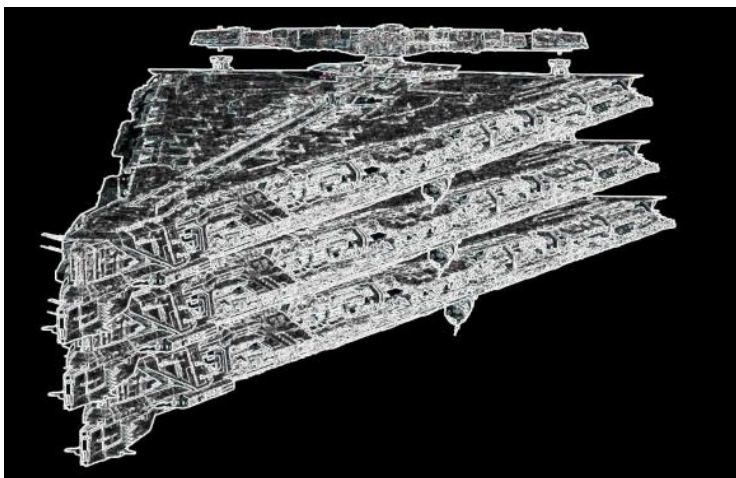
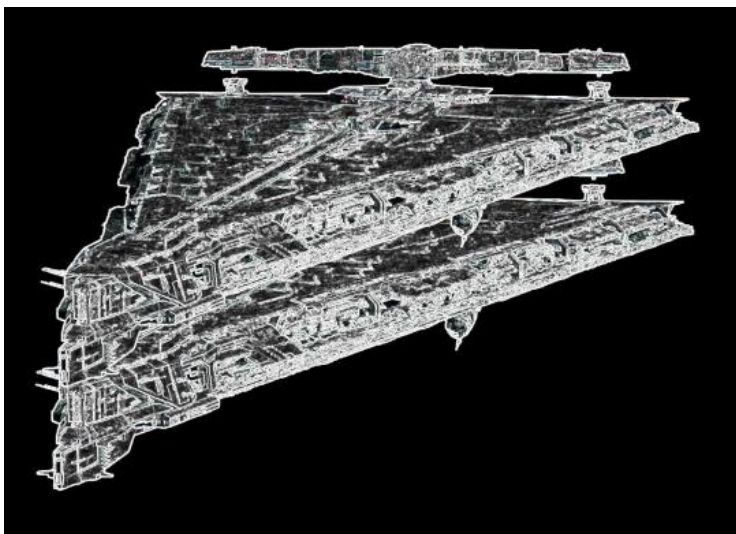
room. He flicked the next page and there was no drawing but an A4 sheet had been stuck on the page.

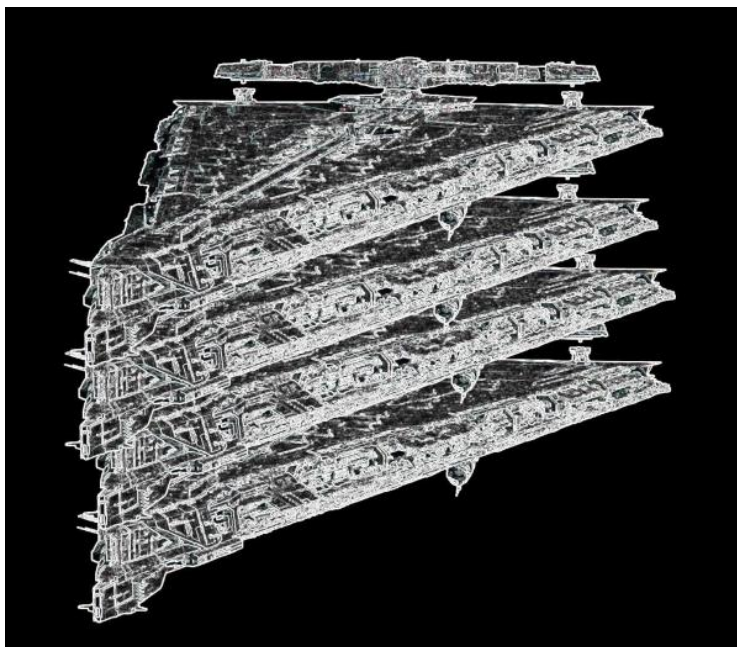


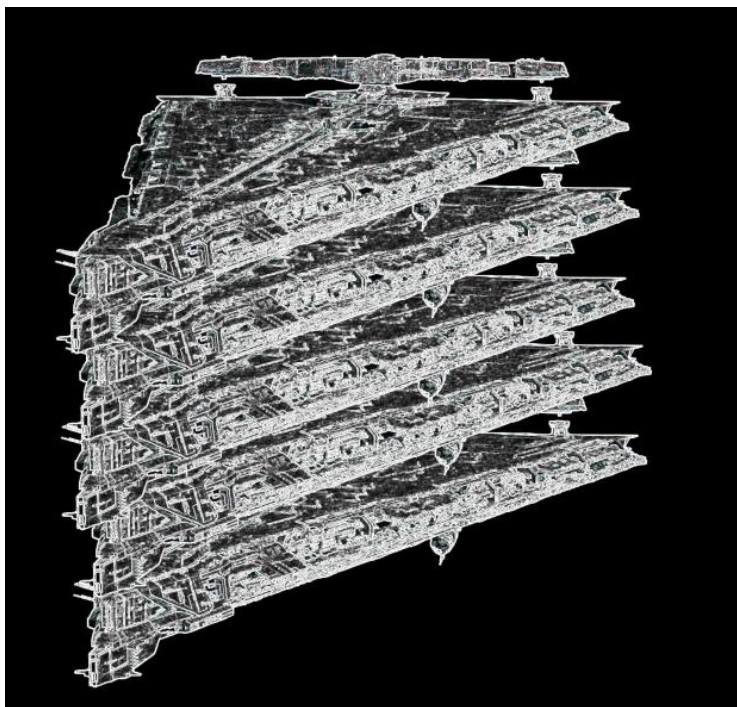
Mandator IV-class Siege Dreadnought

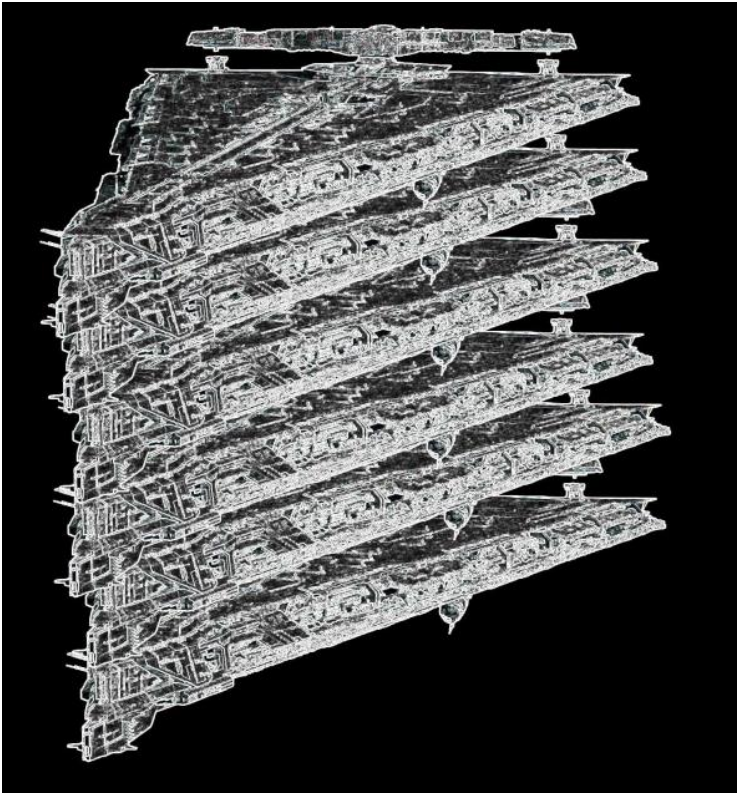
And the caption. Billy read this out, then looking around the room saw a comic at first, he thought it was *The Eagle*, the boy's favourite, but it wasn't, it was a magazine about the spacecraft found in the *Star Wars* Movies.

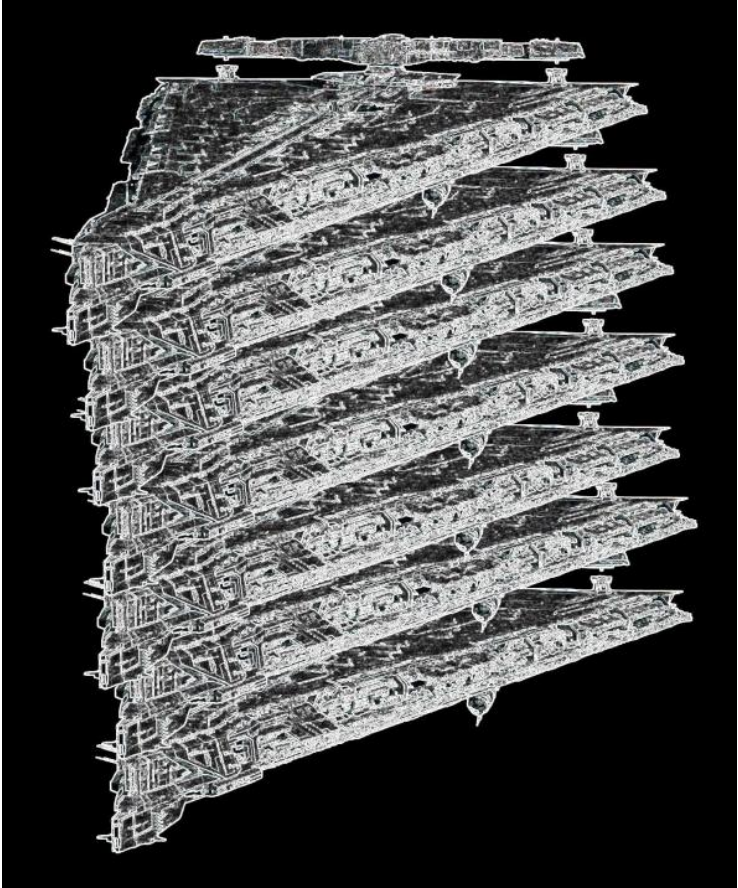
Before he could say anymore Mr Smith had pushed past the others, and had taken the book from Billy, and turned the next few pages to reveal more pictures.

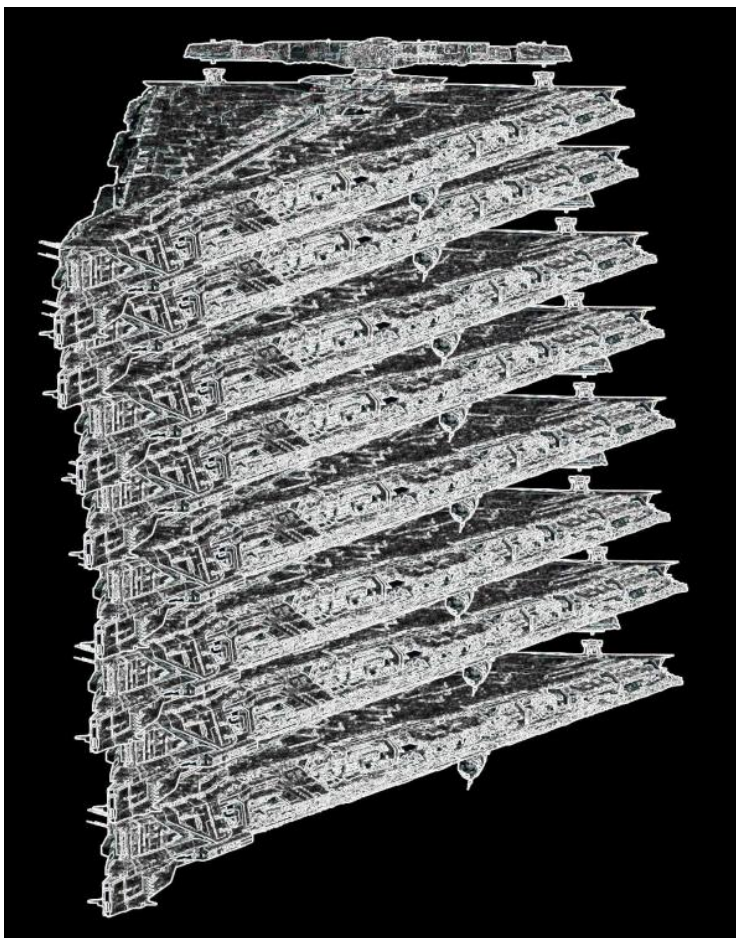












Smith showed them to Billy saying,

‘You know I gave him the pens, well I thought he might like something different to Dan Dare so I brought him a Star Wars magazine, which he very much likes. So much so he asked if I could copy this picture.’

He flipped back to the first, 'So I did, then he asked if he could have more copies, and I was fascinated how he extemporised on them, eventually producing these.'

Smith flicked back to the other pictures where the spacecraft seemed to be stacked.

'Like the Japanese warships, that's where he got the idea, making super, super dreadnaughts.' said Billy.

'Or the beginning of an infinite series.' said Smith.

'Oh my!' was Billy's response.

'So?' said Kate.

Billy answered, 'Well, my guess is he will make them, or one such. It's clever, he has contained the plenum, the absolute blackness, now as I said, he needs the fire power to break it up, and this is smart, he can stack these, Mandator Dreadnoughts, star destroyers increasing their fire power.'

'So, how many will do the job?' asked Kate.

'It would need to be a greater infinity.' Smith replied.

'So impossible.' said Kannaur

'No, he makes one, then uses the two-mirror trick, that generates an infinity, and so he has one, so infinity plus one beats the plenum.' Billy explained.

'Brilliant!' said Nigel.

'Do you know if he has something to make one or more with? Like maybe a Meccano set?' Billy asked.

'I think he has one in Colonial Road.' said Smith.

‘How do you know?’ asked Kate.

‘I gave him a deluxe set.’ said Smith, expressionless.

‘Then we drive to Colonial Road.’ said Billy.

‘Could someone please explain?’ asked Kannaur.

‘Nigel you can explain, you and Kannaur can travel in the Wolseley with Kate, I’ll go with Smith in the Jeep with Emily.’

As they drove Smith talked about how as a surrogate uncle he would visit the boy, had given him the pens, and helped him make plastic models.

‘Like Nigel has, like we did with the Sunderland flying boat.’ Smith was saying. ‘And I investigated, it seems a Meccano set would be the next logical step.’

Smith was uncertain about the response he would get from Billy.

‘You did well Smith, you fired his imagination. And so, this stacking he is doing, and with the mirrors, might it be, well it is, transcendental. Well done!’

Smith repeated, ‘Transcendental’ and almost showed the smile he felt.

Meanwhile in the much more comfortable leather seating of the Wolseley, which had impressed Kannaur, as Catherine Mulberry drove Nigel explained as much as he could about the boy.

‘I first met him when with Billy, we visited the house in Colonial Road as it was in the late 1950s. He had in the garden a device made of 170 tiles of unbihexium, atomic number 173,

which I know is impossible, the instability should have destroyed everything. But one thing was that time was strange there, started, stopped, slowed.’ He gave a wry smile, ‘so that’s the weird explanation. I’ve learnt to accept such. Since that time Billy, myself and others have had all sorts of, well adventures I suppose. I could detail these, but I doubt it would help, so who and what this boy is I don’t know. But what I do know is he has often been of great help. I think he is as it were on the outside looking in.’

Kannaur just nodded, then deep in thought he broke the silence,

‘I really like this car.’

There were smiles, even from Catherine Mulberry, who replied,

‘I have one at home just like it, but it’s not for sale, but I know a dealer.’

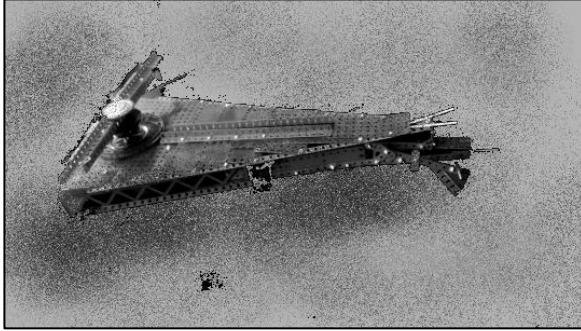
Then added,

‘Or did have one, and did know a dealer...’ she muttered some more sentences which were inaudible then gave a sigh,

‘I’ll miss that car.’

All this time they had driven down The Meadway and Bordesley Green Road, then took the right turn down Colonial Road. A Colonial Road as it was in the late 50s, maybe very early 60s. They entered the house as before with its hallways, the bamboo table with the cactus, through the living room and through French windows and into the garden. As expected, there was a Meccano Mandator Dreadnought, lying on the lawn, and on one side a small mirror, on the other a

round shaving mirror, the concave magnifying side facing the Mandator.



Nigel bent to look, ‘Fantastic!’ he said, ‘look he used the magnifying mirror, not only do we get infinity plus one, but each refection is larger, almost like the infinity of Reals.’

‘Smart,’ said Kannaure, ‘very smart, do you think it has worked.’

Billy, Catherine Mulberry, Kate, Emily were nodding a yes.

Mr Smith was actually smiling and rubbing his chin with his hand, ‘Magnifying each time, wonderful, even I didn’t think of that, wonderful.’

They all stood for a good few minutes, the wind rustling the leaves of the sycamore trees sounding like a distant sea, suddenly Kannaure asked,

‘Why here in the garden?’

Billy replied, ‘It can stay here undisturbed, now shall we go back to the house?’

So, they did, the boy was not to be seen, the old lady appeared and reluctantly offered tea,

‘Tea for seven, well we have enough cups and mugs.’

‘Oh, and I don’t know where he is, maybe up town in the museum.’

They declined the tea and left.

Outside there was a discussion about going to the museum, direct to the airport or calling at number 46 first to check out the black sphere, the plenum. Billy and Mr Smith said there was no need, Nigel, Catherine Mulberry and Kannaur were undecided, Emily and Kate wanted to visit Inglefield Road. Nigel said as it was enroute to the airport he would make the deciding vote, so they drove to Inglefield Road. Kannaur asked to be driven in the Wolseley, Catherine Mulberry asked if he would like to drive, however he couldn’t use the gears and clutch, what he called a manual shift, so instead he sat in the passenger seat and watched, fascinated. Back at 46 Inglefield Road they found on the table in the dining room the black spherical plenum was in tiny fragments, the model warships had gone, and no sign of the boy. So, they drove back to the airport, boarded the Vickers Viscount, took off and with no trouble found and entered the cloud formation arriving back on the lawns of a still autumnal Arcadia.

CHAPTER III III III III III III III III I: OLD NEW WORLD

They entered the great hall of the palace, Nigel immediately tried the door that led to his home in Edgbaston, no longer solid blackness as he expected but the dim shadows of an interior.

‘I’m hungry and tired, could we investigate in the morning?’ he said.

There was general agreement.

Again, the palace had laid out food in a dining room, so the six having freshened up it their rooms came down to eat together. Smith was missing, all the others hungry and now very tired. Supper was typical of that which the palace produced, a fine tomato soup, roast chicken and root vegetables, perhaps because this was a favourite of Billy and Catherine Mulberry. Kate, a vegan had a slight guilty conscience even though she knew well no animal was used in any of the food that the palace provided. The conversation was of course speculative about what had changed. It was suggested that Kannaur and Nigel investigate as they had before, in the morning after breakfast. Catherine Mulberry and Emily went straight to bed after supper, taking books that they said they wouldn’t read, too tired, but from habit. Kannaur, Billy, Nigel and Kate sat at the dining table chatting, and drinking, Billy as always red wine. He was last to retire.

The following morning, as usual the palace laid on a buffet breakfast, though the weather still warm it was inside the dining room. Kannaur and Nigel had a full English, as did Billy, and joined by Kate. Catherine Mulberry had her usual smoked

salmon and scrambled eggs, Emily her usual croissants and strawberry jam.

Smith arrived to talk to Billy, Nigel and Kannaur, he said that they might find things a tad strange when told of the plan to revisit Nigel's home. Kannaur went and fetched Smith's briefcase which he had left behind, but he said he had no need of it now and left. Kannaur wondered why, Billy took it from him, opening it to show it was empty, Kannaur looked puzzled.

'He was or is an avatar of a much larger being, now I suspect back in some other locations, he brought this with him when he was forced to leave, I suspect in this case were far greater objects than it looks capable of holding.' He paused, 'Yes, it might be useful.'

It was decided to go ahead with the plan, all six would be maybe too much for any encounters, so as before Nigel would try to visit the university, with Kannaur for company.

So, the two left Arcadia and entered what should be Nigel's Victorian mansion. This time they looked carefully about the house, it was grand, a mansion, but not high Victorian,

'More maybe Jacobean I think.' remarked Nigel, Kannaur admitting he knew little of architecture, but said,

'I like the wood panelling, so decorative,' and looking up, 'wow the plaster work on the ceiling, fantastic.'

They walked into the hallway, which was likewise decorated, and to the outside which was equally impressive with its stonework and fine windows. They walked down the drive and onto the track which looked much the same the last time.

The hedgerows looked the same, Nigel noticed the trees were taller, the fields still had sheep in them, and they guessed it was spring by the budding flowers and the blackthorn blossom. They walked towards where The University of Birmingham once was, and the college the last time they came this way, only this time they were met by a cart pulled by two oxen going in their direction, the driver dressed in rough cloth trousers and a shirt as before, and as before bid them a 'Mornin.' To which they replied likewise.

The driver stopped his cart, and leaning over spoke,

'You be a likely going to that place of learnin, would you gents like a lift, I'd be a passin that way.'

Before Kannaur could decline Nigel had said 'Many thanks' and was helped up onto the cart, he in turn helped up Kannaur.

The cart driver talked, 'They be smart and clever folk there, what with them predictions an all, and them new ways, some say of counting and knowing, like the stars and planets...'

And so on, soon the gates where in sight, though not broken and this time they were open.

'So, err you are.' the cart driver said, stopping his cart, continued pointing to a notice board attached to the wall which surrounded the college, 'an there them predictions, bin right for years...'

So, Nigel and Kannaur thanked the driver, who went on his way, now whistling some tune.

The two approached the gates but first inspected the notice board. It was headed with the words “Calthorpe University, public notices.”

Written on what looked more like plastic than paper were weather forecasts for Great Britain for the next fourteen days. High and low tides around the coast, and then a section on

“Severe Warnings – Next 12 months.”

This listed several towns with dates of flood warnings, predicted heights, and similar for gales, with wind speeds. Finally, a list of towns with dates, headed “Best Sunny Days for Events.”

‘Well,’ said Nigel ‘if that old boy is right and these predictions have been true for years there must be some very smart people inside, let’s pay them a visit.’

Kannaur had taken out his smart phone to take pictures, especially of the notice board. Nigel was looking closely at the notice, speaking half to himself,

‘It’s not a paper notice, looks like plastic, and... Whoa... did you see that, there is date and time at the top, and the time just changed, it’s some kind of dynamic display like an LCD screen!’

‘That’s not all,’ said Kannaur, ‘look, my phone, it has a signal.’

They both looked at the phone and the notice, both showed,

“YoOL 14/4/1645 10:15 Wednesday”

‘Yool?’ asked Kannaur.

‘Year of our Lord.’ Nigel replied, adding, ‘Let’s go inside.’

Kannaur was now playing with his I phone, and said ‘Look, I don’t believe it, Google Maps, and here, it’s showing our location.’

‘Let’s go inside.’ said Nigel.

So, they walked through the gates into the forecourt of the building they had visited before. But it was not in a state of disrepair and there was no damage to the bronze statue of a woman holding an orrery. Apart from the statue there was a stone bench which was placed in front of a small circular pond which had a fountain at its centre. The doors at the front of the building were now of polished wood, Nigel pushed at one, it opened and so they entered the building. It was confusing, made no sense, the room they entered was far larger than the building which contained it, and it appeared to have fish-like creatures swimming in it, yet for them there was no water.

CHAPTER III III III III III III III III II: SEAHORSES

Inside was a massive white walled room, fishlike creatures with heads like catfish, and large seahorses appeared to swim in this waterless room. There were no windows, just white walls, and the ceiling must have been at least 100 feet above Nigel and Kannaur. Though the walls were white they were covered with markings, some recognisable to Nigel and Kannaur, similar to equations found in Quantum Mechanics, but others were unintelligible. These appeared and altered as the “fish” approached them. The fish being black with a slight luminescence, having large bulbous eyes and massive jaws lined with sharp teeth.

‘The long stringlike structures projecting from their chins is called a barbel, in the stomiidae family of dragon fish, they have light producing tips, as these have, which seem to do the writing, but these are enormous compared to the dragonfish found in the oceans.’ this was Nigel, ‘You know I also keep fish as well as having N gauge railway layouts.’

Kannaur nodded, he had seen both the railway layouts and Nigel’s aquaria, both being very impressive.

‘These fellows seem a tad more intelligent.’ he said with one of his ironic grins.

They noticed the seahorses which were around three feet, at least a third of the size of the dragon fish, would occasionally nuzzle the larger fish. Both at first thought they might be pets,

‘Pets?’ said Kannaur, ‘the seahorses?’

One of the horses glided close to Kannaur, and in a voice very like Kannaur's it spoke,

'Not pets, what you call dragon fish are wonderful computers, calculators and can perform all kinds of equations and algebra, to use your expressions, but they lack any imagination, which is where what you call us seahorses are involved, we have rather splendid imaginations. By the way we are known therefore as the imaginators, and they as the calculators in the languages you use.'

Nigel and Kannaur watched, it was obviously the case, a seahorse would nuzzle, and the dragon fish begin writing some formula, or amend one.

'Why are you here?' Kannaur asked the seahorse.

'Oh, that's a "why" question, we can't do those, only you humans do those, you call it metaphysics, we do physics, completely different.'

The seahorse continued, 'You see the calculators are having to work furiously because the physics keeps changing, so more and more are needed, and so more and more space is required of the right kind, places where this kind of thing goes on, that is the how of why we are here.'

'In order to do what?' asked Nigel, who had long ago given up physics.

'Well at first to complete the encyclopaedia for the...' the seahorse stopped looking for the right word, 'for the lovers of knowledge, the philosophers, they want knowledge.'

The seahorse "swam" away,

‘More space is required of the right kind, places where this kind of thing goes on?’ Kannaur repeated the seahorse’s comment as a question.

‘Seems they think, or maybe it’s true, cause and effect, effect and cause, universities are where things like physics occurs.’ said Nigel.

‘But that’s the wrong way around.’ said Kannaur.

‘Oh, I had that argument with Billy, he told me that once great art galleries were great because of the art inside, but now the great galleries like Tate Modern or the Beaubourg make any work placed in them great. I said science was different, then he said that places like CERN and MIT are now where the great scientists are, not like Newton in his garden, or Einstein at home after working in the patent office. I gave it some thought and see now that’s true. Or rather it becomes true.’

Kannaur shook his head but looked worried, then said, ‘Beaubourg?’

‘Oh, Billy calls it its proper name, you might know it as The Centre Pompidou.’

‘Look at the process.’ said Nigel. Both looked at the activity in the room. The seahorses communicating with the calculators, they then changing the equations.

‘The seahorses appear to be looking at changing signs on that wall.’ said Nigel

‘It’s data,’ said Kannaur, ‘and it’s rapidly changing, which is why the equations are changing.’

‘That’s the problem,’ said a passing seahorse, it stopped and hovered above the two humans, it continued, ‘well not changing, but we have what seems like an infinite variety of different data!’

‘So, you re-calculate.’ said Kannaur.

‘No,’ replied the seahorse, ‘the old calcs are still correct! That’s the problem and why we need more and more calculators, and why we are here. It’s almost as if the MWI had been fully actualised’.

‘OMG it has.’ said Nigel.

There was a pause, then the room was empty.

‘I think this has had to be an hallucination.’ Kannaur said looking worried, then glancing at his I phone again and Google maps, ‘But how then is this working then, or why?’

‘Maybe the imagimators and calculators set it up as some resource?’ Nigel mused. ‘Let’s sit on that bench outside, watch the fountain and think.’

CHAPTER III III III III III III III III III: JACK AND JILL

They left the building and sat on the bench looking at the fountain for several minutes, then Kannaur spoke, he had been looking and playing with his I Phone,

‘The maps are strange, keep changing...’

‘It’s almost as if the MWI had been fully actualised,’ Nigel repeated the seahorse, ‘and they, all the many worlds were in the plenum, then shattered, but they were all realised, and that’s the world we are now in.’

There was a long pause.

‘So, all virtualities have been realised and we somehow now live in such a world.’ This was Nigel, ‘Which is why the fish couldn’t cope, they were seeing the totality of all possible worlds where even the constants are different, and maybe they were even seeing the impossible worlds.’

Kannaur looked up from his I phone, turned it off and placed it in his pocket, and was thinking, he then spoke,

‘So, the sphere we saw in Inglefield Road was all possible...’ here he paused, then continued, ‘all possible possibilities, past future present. All at once.’

‘And maybe who knows even impossible impossibilities.’ said Nigel.

Kannaur continued, ‘And now then as it shattered in fragments...’

‘Of events.’ said Nigel.

‘We have no history, but everything at once.’ Kannaur continued.

‘Well, all at once but a history of all at once.’ Nigel said.

‘No, don’t get it.’ said Kannaur.

‘Ok,’ said Nigel, ‘Imagine we didn’t sit on this bench when we left the building, imagine we walked back to the mansion, imagine we got a lift in a cart, or you fell and hurt yourself, imagine all these events occurring at once.’

‘No, don’t get it.’ said Kannaur.

‘OK, keep it simple, lets imagine a 2 bit universe, how many possible histories or stories.’ Nigel said.

‘Easy, 4, 00, 01, 10, 11.’ said Kannaur.

‘OK, now this, Jack and Jill went up the hill to get water.’ said Nigel.

‘Got it, Jack and Jill don’t go up the hill, Jack Goes, Jill goes...and so on. Four possible events or histories all occur at once.’

‘Yes!’ said Nigel.

‘OK,’ this was Kannaur, ‘let’s imagine I’m Jack, which history am I in, I can’t be in all 4 at once.’

‘Tricky,’ said Nigel, continuing, ‘I guess you are in the one you are in, but which, and can you decide, we need to run this past Billy or someone. Given a concurrent multitude of histories, events, well maybe infinite, which one are we in, which one am I in, and what if anything can I do about this?’

Nigel and Kannaure rose from the bench, 'So a walk back to your mansion and then to Arcadia?' Kannaure said.

As they left the grounds Kannaure was first to notice,

'The lane, I mean road, it's now a road!'

'Tarmacadam,' said Nigel 'so things are changing.' As they walked back towards Nigel's driveway a car passed them,

'It's a Wolseley like before.' said Kannaure.

'No, I think it might be an Austin Westminster, similar vintage and in good condition.' said Nigel.

It was followed by a Bedford van, 'Looks like we are sometime in the 1950s.' said Nigel.

They were soon on the driveway to the mansion, as they walked and it came into view, they could see it was no longer a Jacobean house, it was the original High Victorian mansion, the two stood looking at it, and a car, a Jaguar Saloon Mark 1 parked in front of the garage block, what was once stables.

'Hey, someone's got a Jag like in Morse.' Kannaure gave Nigel a quizzical look, so Nigel explained, 'It's an old TV detective series, the detective drives an old Jaguar car, a vintage.'

They approached the car inspecting it carefully, Nigel was speaking, 'It's in very good condition, so maybe this is 1950s, but,' he paused looking at a tax disc in the front window of the car, he was thinking it would confirm his idea of being in the 1950s, then before he could say this he noticed something,

‘A tax disc,’ he said, ‘but the date is May 2024, impossible they phased these out years ago in the UK. Odd, let’s get inside.’

Out of curiosity the two wandered around the rooms which Nigel was now often unfamiliar with,

‘My paintings and drawings are here, more if anything, lots of Burne-Jones of course, but some Pre-Raphaelite type works I don’t recognise. And then that.’ He pointed to a large cabinet with a front of wooden roller doors, he opened it revealing a television screen, of the old tube type. ‘So, this me owns a giant retro TV.’

‘That’s not all,’ came Kannaur’s voice from another room. Nigel found where the voice had come from, it was a small side room off the hall. Inside on a swivel chair in front of a tv type monitor and keyboard next to two tall cabinets the size of fridge freezers sat Kannaur beaming,

‘Seems the new you has a computer.’ he said swivelling round and pointing,

‘A Ferranti-Packard 5500, with a tape drive and monitor.’

He had a large ring file manual on his lap and was flipping through it.

‘And a modem!’

Pointing to a telephone handset in a cradle.

‘All the latest gear.’ he said in an ironic tone.

‘It must be a museum piece like the Jag.’ said Nigel.

‘Not according to the manual, its date 2022!’ said Kannaur still beaming.

‘We need to get back to Arcadia.’ Nigel said.

So, they found the familiar green door, opened it and left this strange new world, which seemed old.

CHAPTER III III III III III III III III III: TITANIC

The Titanic could accommodate 833 First Class Passengers, 614 in Second Class and 1,006 in Third Class, for a total passenger capacity of 2,453. In addition, Titanic's capacity for crew members exceeded 900, the full carrying capacity for passengers and crew being approximately 3,547, around 2,200 on its maiden voyage.

The passenger facilities aboard Titanic were of the highest standards of luxury in first and second classes. The ship's interior design was a departure from that of other passenger liners of the day, which had typically been decorated in the style of a manor house or an English country house. The Titanic was laid out in a much lighter style similar to that of contemporary high-class hotels, the Ritz Hotel was an example from which the decoration for the first-class areas was taken. There was also a variety of other decorative styles, ranging from the Renaissance to Louis XV. These were used to decorate cabins and public rooms in First- and Second-Class areas of the ship. The aim was to convey an impression that the passengers were in a floating hotel rather than a ship. This was as one passenger recalled.

Cabins in First Class also contained buttons that, when pressed, would signal for a steward to come to the cabin.

Among the amenities for first-class passengers there was 7 ft deep saltwater swimming pool, a gymnasium, a squash court, and a Victorian-style Turkish bath which comprised hot room, warm (temperate) room, cooling-room, and two shampooing (massage) rooms. Complementing the Turkish bath, and within the same area, was a steam room and an electric bath.

First-class common rooms were impressive in scope and lavishly decorated. They included a lounge in the style of the Palace of Versailles, an enormous reception room, a men's smoking room, and a reading and writing room. There was an à la carte restaurant in the style of the Ritz Hotel which was run as a concession by the famous Italian restaurateur Gaspare Gatti. A Café Parisien decorated in the style of a French pavement café, complete with ivy-covered trellises and wicker furniture, was run as an annex to the restaurant.

For an extra cost, first-class passengers could enjoy the finest French haute cuisine in the most luxurious of surroundings. There was also a Verandah Café where tea and light refreshments were served, this offered grand views of the ocean. At 114 ft long by 92 ft wide, the dining saloon, which was designed by Charles Fitzroy Doll, was the largest room afloat and could seat almost 600 passengers at a time.

The Titanic set off on its maiden voyage from Southampton on Wednesday, 10 April 1912. The ship headed for the French port of Cherbourg, this was in order to allow European passengers to join the ship without needing cross the channel to board in England. Because Cherbourg lacked docking facilities for a ship the size of Titanic, tenders had to be used to transfer passengers from the shore. 142 First Class, 30 Second Class, and 102 Third Class passengers embarked.

At 11:30 am on Thursday 11 April, Titanic arrived at Cork Harbour on the south coast of Ireland. Again, the dock facilities were not suitable for a ship of Titanic's size, and the tenders America and Ireland were used to bring passengers aboard. In all, 123 passengers boarded the Titanic at

Queenstown. Three First Class, seven Second Class and 113 Third Class.

The ship made good progress, though warnings were received that there were icebergs in the mid-Atlantic even for April.

At 11:40 pm on 14 April, lookout Frederick Fleet spotted an iceberg immediately ahead of Titanic and alerted the bridge. First Officer William Murdoch ordered the ship to be steered around the iceberg and the engines to be reversed, but it was too late. The starboard side of Titanic struck the iceberg, creating a series of holes below the waterline. The hull was not punctured, but rather dented such that the steel plates of the hull buckled and separated, allowing water to rush in. Five of the sixteen watertight compartments were heavily breached and a sixth was slightly compromised. It soon became clear that Titanic would sink, as the ship could not remain afloat with more than four compartments flooded. Titanic began sinking bow-first, with water spilling from compartment to compartment over the top of each watertight bulkhead as the ship's angle in the water became steeper.

At that time there were no lifeboat drills or safety procedures, the ship being thought unsinkable those aboard Titanic were ill-prepared for such an emergency. The lifeboats were only intended to transfer passengers to nearby rescue vessels, and therefore Titanic only had enough lifeboats to carry about half of those on board. The crew had not been trained adequately in carrying out an evacuation, the officers did not know how many they could safely put aboard the lifeboats and so launched many of them barely half-full. Third-class passengers

were largely left to fend for themselves, causing many of them to become trapped below decks as the ship filled with water. The “women and children first” protocol was followed when loading the lifeboats, and so most of the male passengers and crew were left aboard. Women and children survived at rates of about 75 per cent and 50 per cent, while only 20 per cent of men survived.

Between 2:10 and 2:15 am, a little over two and a half hours after Titanic struck the iceberg, the rate of sinking suddenly increased as the boat deck dipped underwater, and the sea poured in through open hatches and grates. In between that time, the electrical power on board had failed. As the ship's unsupported stern rose out of the water, exposing the propellers, the ship broke in two. With the bow underwater, and air trapped in the stern, the stern remained afloat and buoyant for a few minutes longer, rising to a nearly vertical angle with hundreds of people still clinging to it, before sinking at 2:20 am. All remaining passengers and crew were in water at a temperature of -2°C (28°F). At such temperatures most could only survive for a few minutes. Unsurprisingly only five who were in the water were helped into the lifeboats, though the lifeboats had room for almost 500 more people. 706 people survived and were conveyed by Carpathia to New York, while 1,517 people died.

The following days news was first that Titanic had sunk, but all passengers and crew had been transferred to another vessel, and then that the Titanic had been lost and that most of the passengers and crew had died. The news attracted crowds of people to the White Star Line's offices in London, New York, Montreal, Southampton, Liverpool and Belfast. In particular in

Southampton the news was particularly bad where four out of every five crew members came from.

The Carpathia docked at 9:30 pm on 18 April at New York's Pier 54 with the survivors. and was greeted by some 40,000 people waiting at the quayside in heavy rain.

During the sinking distress signals were sent by wireless, rockets, and lamp, but none of the ships that responded were near enough to reach Titanic before sinking.

However, the SS Californian, which was the last to have been in contact before the collision, saw Titanic's flares but failed to assist, so it was around 4 am, RMS Carpathia arrived on the scene to rescue survivors

The SS Californian had been in the ice and tried to inform Titanic of it and was only a few miles from Titanic but had not picked up distress calls or responded to signal rockets. Californian had stopped for the night because of icy conditions and its wireless operator, Cyril Evans, informed Titanic by radio: "Hey old man, we're stopped for the night and surrounded by ice." He was told to stop transmitting by Titanic's senior wireless operator, Jack Phillips, who was busy clearing a backlog of messages with Cape Race in Newfoundland, whose signals were faint. Earlier at 10:10 pm, over an hour before the Titanic's lookout saw the iceberg. the Californian observed her lights to the south. At 11:50 pm, the officer watched that ship's lights flash out, as if shutting down or turning sharply, and noted that the port light was visible. Morse light signals to the ship, upon Lord's order, were made between 11:30 pm and 1:00 am, but were not acknowledged.

A reasonable course of action would have been to awaken the wireless operator of the Californian and to instruct him to attempt to contact Titanic by that method. Had this had been done it would have been possible to have reached Titanic in time to save additional lives.

The captain of the Californian, Captain Lord, had gone to the chart room at 11:00 pm. Second Officer Herbert Stone, now on duty, notified Lord at 1:10 am that a ship, the Titanic, had fired five rockets. Lord wanted to know if they were company signals, that is, coloured flares used for identification. Stone said that he did not know and that the rockets were all white. Captain Lord instructed the crew to continue to signal the other vessel with the Morse lamp and went back to sleep. Three more rockets were observed at 1:50 am and Stone noted that the ship looked strange in the water, as if the ship were listing. At 2:15 am, Lord was notified that the ship could no longer be seen. Lord asked again if the lights had had any colours in them, and he was informed that they were all white. Californian eventually responded. At around 5:30 am, Chief Officer George Stewart awakened wireless operator Cyril Furmstone Evans, informed him that rocket had been seen during the night, and asked that he try to communicate with any ship. He got news of Titanic's loss, Captain Lord was notified, and the ship set out to render assistance, arriving well after Carpathia had already picked up all the survivors. Inquiries found that the Californian had seen the Titanic and that it would have been possible for Californian to aid rescue; therefore, Captain Lord had acted improperly in failing to do so.

The captain of the Californian, Captain Lord, had gone to the chart room at 11:00 pm. Second Officer Herbert Stone, now on duty, notified Lord at 1:10 am that a ship, the Titanic, had fired five rockets. Lord wanted to know if they were company signals, that is, coloured flares used for identification. Stone said that he did not know and that the rockets were all white. Captain Lord the ordered Second Officer Herbert Stone to awaken wireless operator Cyril Furmstone Evans, who contacted the Titanic and received and S.O.S. He informed the captain who made full steam to the position of the rockets and Morse light, arriving well before the Carpathia as the Titanic was sinking. All those in lifeboats were rescued and also many who survived long enough in the icy waters. None of those still in the ship.

The Californian and Carpathia docked at 9:30 pm on 18 April at New York's Pier 54 with the survivors and was greeted by some 40,000 people waiting in a solemn mood at the quayside in heavy rain.

The captain of the Californian, Captain Lord, had gone to the chart room at 11:00 pm. Second Officer Herbert Stone informed the captain at 12:00 of distress rockets from the Titanic. Captain Lord order for the ship to head for that position then ordered Second Officer Herbert Stone to awaken wireless operator Cyril Furmstone Evans, who contacted the Titanic and received the message that she was sinking. Making full steam to the position of the rockets and Morse light, arriving when the bow of the Titanic was low, but that she was sinking. Passengers were transferred by lifeboats to the SS California and for want of room in the

Californian some of the crew remained in lifeboats until the Carpathia arrived.

The Californian and Carpathia docked at 9:30 pm on 18 April at New York's Pier 54 with the survivors. and was greeted by some 40,000 people waiting in a at the quayside in heavy rain cheering as the two ships arrived.

At 11:30 am on Thursday 11 April, Titanic arrived at Cork Harbour on the south coast of Ireland. Again, the dock facilities were not suitable for a ship of Titanic's size, and the tenders America and Ireland were used to bring passengers aboard. In all, 123 passengers boarded the Titanic at Queenstown. Three First Class, seven Second Class and 113 Third Class.

The ship made good progress and when warnings of icebergs in the mid-Atlantic were received Captain Edward John Smith ordered a change of course 10 miles south of the previous plot.

At 11:40 pm on 14 April, lookout Frederick Fleet was on watch, he saw nothing remarkable, perhaps lights of some ships to the north. On Wednesday 17 April 1912 the Titanic arrived at New York to hundreds of spectators.

At 11:30 am on Thursday 11 April, Titanic arrived at Cork Harbour on the south coast of Ireland. Again, the dock facilities were not suitable for a ship of Titanic's size, and the tenders America and Ireland were used to bring passengers

aboard. In all, 123 passengers boarded the Titanic at Queenstown. Three First Class, seven Second Class and 113 Third Class.

The ship made good progress and continued on its planned course despite warnings of icebergs in the mid-Atlantic.

At 11:40 pm on 14 April, lookout Frederick Fleet should have been on watch but for some reason fell asleep. The Titanic ploughed into the iceberg and in an attempt to steer around shelved on the berg flipping the whole ship over into a capsized. None survived, any in the water only lasting a few minutes, the boiler exploding ripping holes in the hull, The ship sank in seconds, most died inside the ship. It had given no warning or Mayday signals, and so no reports of its sinking occurred. Radio silence indicated something catastrophic might have occurred, or just the radio system might have failed. No other ships reported any sightings, and it did not arrive in New York on the 17th. It was assumed it was lost somehow, but it remained a mystery. Because its final position was never known searches since had been fruitless. Many conspiracy theories grew up around the event, from being swallowed by the dragon fish Leviathan to alien abduction. These also could be true.

CHAPTER III III III III III III III III III WW1

Under the 1878 Treaty of Berlin, the state of Austria-Hungary was allowed to occupy and administer the province of Bosnia which was part of the Ottoman Empire also known as the Turkish Empire, capital in Istanbul, which had once many provinces in eastern Europe, at its height, Greece, parts of Hungary, Moldavia, Ukraine and Crimea. Under the treaty it retained official sovereignty. Under this same treaty, the Great Powers, Austria-Hungary, the United Kingdom, France, the German Empire, Italy, and the Russian Empire gave official recognition to the Principality of Serbia as a fully sovereign state, which four years later transformed into a kingdom under Prince Milan IV Obrenović who became King Milan I of Serbia.

The closeness Austria-Hungary was resented. In May 1903, Royal Serbian Army officers led by Dragutin Dimitrijević stormed the Serbian Royal Palace. The King was shot thirty times and the Queen eighteen. Their corpses were stripped and brutally sabred. The attackers threw the corpses of King Alexander and Queen Draga out of a palace window. The conspirators installed Peter I of the House of Karađorđević as the new king.

The new dynasty was more nationalist, friendlier to Russia and less friendly to Austria-Hungary. Over the next decade, disputes between Serbia and its neighbours erupted, as Serbia moved to build its power and gradually reclaim its 14th-century empire. Serbia assumed an attitude of protest over Austria-Hungary's annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and following the two Balkan Wars of 1912–1913, Serbia acquired Macedonia and Kosovo from the Ottoman Empire.

Thus, emboldened Serbia to seek to unite with Bosnia. The Serbian nationalist society Narodna Odbrana, was formed in Belgrade on 8 October 1908 under the initiative of Milovan Milovanović. It operated to undermine the loyalty of Bosnian Serbs to t Austria-Hungary. In the five years leading up to 1914, lone assassins, mostly Serb citizens of Austria-Hungary, made a series of unsuccessful assassination attempts in Croatia, Slavonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina against Austro-Hungarian officials. In Bosnia local revolutionary groups known as Young Bosnia, had their goal was the end of Austria-Hungarian colonial rule in Bosnia and the unification of all South Slavs.

On 3 June 1910, Bogdan Žerajić, a young revolutionary connected to Young Bosnia, attempted to kill the Austrian governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina, General Marijan Varešanin. He shot at Varešanin five times and missed. With his last, sixth, bullet Žerajić killed himself. He became inspiration to future assassins, including Princip, who assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir presumptive to the throne of Austria-Hungary, and his wife Sophie, Duchess von Hohenberg which began the first world war.

Princip said that Žerajić “was my first model. When I was seventeen, I passed whole nights at his grave, reflecting on our wretched condition and thinking of him. It is there that I made up my mind sooner or later to perpetrate an outrage.”

In May 1911, the Black Hand, a secret society dedicated to creating a Greater Serbia through “terrorist action”, was established. Within Bosnia and Herzegovina, the networks of both the Black Hand and the Serbian nationalist society Narodna Odbrana penetrated local revolutionary movements

such as Young Bosnia. The fundamental difference between those movements was that the Young Bosnians regarded social revolution as a necessary corollary of national liberation, and that, even though its membership was predominantly Serb, Young Bosnia also attracted an important minority of Croats and some Muslims. In the Spring of 1912, in a plot involving Young Bosnians

In 1913, Emperor Franz Joseph commanded Archduke Franz Ferdinand to observe the military manoeuvres in Bosnia scheduled for June 1914. Following this Ferdinand and his wife planned to visit Sarajevo to open the state museum in its new premises there.

Sophie was of high aristocratic birth, she was not from a dynastic family, her marriage with the Archduke could only be morganatic. A morganatic marriage, sometimes called a left-handed marriage, is between people of unequal social rank, it prevents the principal's position or privileges being passed to the spouse, or any children born of the marriage. Emperor Franz Joseph had only consented to their marriage on the condition that their descendants would never ascend the throne. Sophie could never even sit by his side on any public occasion. There was one loophole, his wife could enjoy the recognition of his rank when he was acting in a military capacity. Hence, he decided, in 1914, to inspect the army in Bosnia. There, at its capital Sarajevo, the Archduke and his wife could ride in an open carriage side by side.

Franz Ferdinand was an advocate of increased federalism and widely believed to favour a Croatian state, alongside Austria and Hungary, a third crown which would prevent Serbian designs on Bosnia.

Princip, Čabrinović and other members of the Young Bosnia were inspired by the heroism of Miloš Obilić, a legendary Serbian knight.

The plot against the archduke had arisen when student Gavrilo Princip was shown a newspaper cutting announcing Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria's visit to Bosnia in June, by his friend Čabrinović. Princip asked another friend Trifko Grabež to join the plot, and then wrote to Ilić, his former roommate and confidante, asking him to recruit people in Sarajevo. Ilić recruited seventeen-year-old Sarajevo high-school student Vaso Čubrilović, eighteen-year-old student Cvjetko Popović, as well as Mehmed Mehmedbašić.

A Major Tankosić made an agreement to acquire arms. He provided the bombs and pistols, suicide pills, and was responsible for training Princip, Grabež, and Čabrinović.

On arriving in Sarajevo on 4 June, Princip, Grabež, and Čabrinović went their separate ways. On the morning of Sunday 28 June 1914, Ilić positioned the six assassins along the motorcade route. Ilić walked the street, exhorting the assassins to bravery. Franz Ferdinand and his party proceeded by train from Ilidža Spa to Sarajevo. Governor Oskar Potiorek met the party at Sarajevo station. Six automobiles were waiting. By mistake, three local police officers got into the first car with the chief officer of special security; the special security officers who were supposed to accompany their chief got left behind. The second car carried the Mayor and the Chief of Police of Sarajevo. The third car in the motorcade was a Gräf & Stift 28/32 PS open sports car with its top folded down. Franz Ferdinand, Sophie, Governor Potiorek, and Lieutenant Colonel Count Franz von Harrach rode in this third

car. The motorcade's first stop on the preannounced program was for a brief inspection of a military barracks. According to the program, at 10:00 a.m., the motorcade was to leave the barracks for the town hall by way of the Appel Quay.

The motorcade passed the first assassin, Mehmedbašić. Danilo Ilić had placed him in front of the garden of the Mostar Café and armed him with a bomb. Mehmedbašić failed to act. Ilić had placed Vaso Čubriloović next to Mehmedbašić, arming him with a pistol and a bomb. He too failed to act. Further along the route, Ilić had placed Nedeljko Čabrinović on the opposite side of the street near the Miljacka river, arming him with a bomb.

At 10:10 am, Franz Ferdinand's car approached and Čabrinović threw his bomb. The bomb bounced off the folded back convertible cover into the street. The bomb's timed detonator caused it to explode under the next car, putting that car out of action, leaving a 1-foot-diameter, 6.5-inch-deep crater, and wounding around 20 people.

Čabrinović swallowed his cyanide pill and jumped into the Miljacka river. Čabrinović's suicide attempt failed, as the old cyanide only induced vomiting, and the Miljacka was only 13 cm deep due to the hot, dry summer. Police dragged Čabrinović out of the river, and he was severely beaten by the crowd before being taken into custody.

The procession sped away towards the Town Hall leaving the disabled car behind. Cvjetko Popović, Gavrilo Princip, and Trifun Grabež failed to act as the motorcade passed them at high speed.

Arriving at the Town Hall for a scheduled reception, Franz Ferdinand showed signs of stress, interrupting a prepared speech of welcome by Mayor Fehim Ćurčić to protest: “Mr. Mayor, I came here on a visit, and I am greeted with bombs. It is outrageous.” Duchess Sophie then whispered into Franz Ferdinand’s ear, and after a pause, Franz Ferdinand said to the mayor: “Now you may speak.” He then became calm and the mayor gave his speech. Franz Ferdinand had to wait as his own speech, still wet with blood from being in the damaged car, was brought to him. To the prepared text he added a few remarks about the day’s events thanking the people of Sarajevo for their ovations “as I see in them an expression of their joy at the failure of the attempt at assassination.”

Officials and members of the Archduke's party discussed what to do next. The archduke's chamberlain, Baron Rumerskirch, proposed that the couple remain at the Town Hall until troops could be brought into the city to line the streets. Governor-General Oskar Potiorek vetoed this suggestion on the grounds that soldiers coming straight from manoeuvres would not have the dress uniforms appropriate for such duties. “Do you think that Sarajevo is full of assassins?” he concluded.

Franz Ferdinand and Sophie gave up their planned program in favour of visiting the wounded from the bombing, at the hospital. Count Harrach took up a position on the left-hand running board of Franz Ferdinand's car to protect the Archduke from any assault from the river side of the street. At 10:45 a.m, Franz Ferdinand and Sophie got back into the motorcade, once again in the third car. In order to ensure the safety of the couple, General Oskar Potiorek decided that the imperial motorcade should travel straight along the Appel Quay to the Sarajevo Hospital so that they could avoid the

crowded city centre. However, Potiorek failed to communicate his decision to the drivers. As a result, the Archduke's driver, Leopold Lojka, took a right turn at the Latin Bridge just as the two drivers ahead of him had done.

After learning that the first assassination attempt had been unsuccessful, Princip thought about a position to assassinate the Archduke on his return journey and decided to move to a position in front of a nearby food shop, Schiller's delicatessen, near the Latin Bridge. At this point, the first and second cars of the Archduke's motorcade suddenly turned right into a side street, leaving the Appel Quay. When the Archduke's driver followed their route, Governor Potiorek, who was sharing the third vehicle with the Imperial couple, called out to the driver to stop as he was going the wrong way. The driver applied the brakes, and when he attempted to put the car into reverse gear, he accidentally stalled the engine close to where Princip was standing. The assassin stepped up to the footboard of the car, and shot Franz Ferdinand and Sophie at point-blank range using a Belgian-made Fabrique Nationale model 1910 .380 calibre pistol. The first bullet wounded the Archduke in the jugular vein, the second inflicted an abdominal wound on the Duchess. Princip tried to shoot himself but was immediately seized and arrested. At his sentencing, Princip stated that his intention had been to kill Governor Potiorek, rather than Sophie.

After being shot, Sophie immediately fell unconscious and collapsed onto Franz Ferdinand's legs. The Archduke, too, lost consciousness while being driven to the Governor's residence for medical treatment. As reported by Count Harrach, Franz Ferdinand's last words were "Sophie, Sophie! Don't die! Live for our children!" followed by six or seven utterances of "It is

nothing,” in response to Harrach's inquiry as to Franz Ferdinand's injury. These utterances were followed by a violent choking sound caused by haemorrhage. The imperial couple were dead by 11:30 a.m on 28 June 1914;[Sophie was dead on arrival at the Governor's residence, and Franz Ferdinand died 10 minutes later.

The bodies were transported to Trieste by the battleship SMS Viribus Unitis and then to Vienna by special train. The funeral was arranged by the Obersthofmeister of the Royal Household Alfred, 2nd Prince of Montenuovo, who was said to have been a lifelong enemy of Franz Ferdinand. With the Emperor's connivance, he decided to turn the funeral into a massive and vicious snub of the assassinated couple. Even though most foreign royalty had planned to attend, they were pointedly disinvited, and the funeral was attended by just the immediate imperial family, with the dead couple's three children excluded from the few public ceremonies. The Archduke's friend Kaiser Wilhelm II was invited so that the Imperial Cabinet could consult him on foreign policy, but he declined to attend; although he publicly claimed it was due to a case of lumbago, Imperial Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg revealed that the real reason was security concerns. The officer corps was forbidden to salute the funeral train, and this led to a minor revolt led by Archduke Karl, the new heir presumptive. The public viewing of the coffins was curtailed severely and even more scandalously, Montenuovo tried unsuccessfully to make the couple's children foot the bill. Sophie's coffin was slanted down from her husband's to reassert her lower social status, gloves were placed on top of her casket as was traditional for a lady-in-waiting. The Archduke and his wife were interred at

Artstetten Castle because the Duchess could not be buried in the Imperial Crypt.

All of the assassins were eventually caught. Those in Austro-Hungarian custody were tried together with members of the infiltration route who had helped deliver them and their weapons to Sarajevo. Mehmedbašić, the only Bosnian Muslim among the conspirators, was arrested in Montenegro by local authorities but managed to escape from the Nikšić prison before his extradition could take place, possibly with help from the gendarmes who were guarding him and were consequently put under arrest. He later resurfaced in Serbia where he joined Major Tankosić's Chetnik detachment during the war, in 1916 the Serbian government imprisoned him on fabricated charges of treason during the Salonika trial, he was released in 1919.

Anti-Serb rioting broke out in Sarajevo and various other places within Austria-Hungary in the hours following the assassination until order was restored by the military. On the night of the assassination, country-wide anti-Serb pogroms and demonstrations were also organized in other parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, particularly on the territory of modern-day Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. They were organized and stimulated by Oskar Potiorek, the Austro-Hungarian governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The first anti-Serb demonstrations, led by the followers of Josip Frank, were organized in the early evening of 28 June in Zagreb. The following day, anti-Serb demonstrations in Sarajevo became more violent and could be characterized as a pogrom. The police and local authorities in the city did nothing to prevent anti-Serb violence. Two Serbs were killed on the first day of pogrom in Sarajevo, many were attacked, while around 1,000

houses, shops, schools and institutions such as banks, hotels, printing houses) owned by Serbs were razed or pillaged.

Following the assassination, Franz Joseph's daughter, Marie Valerie, noted that her father expressed his greater confidence in the new heir presumptive, his grandnephew Archduke Charles. The emperor admitted to his daughter, regarding the assassination: "For me, it is a relief from a great worry."

Austria-Hungary held Serbia responsible for the assignation and declared war on 28 July. After Russia mobilised in Serbia's defence, Germany declared war on Russia and France, who had an alliance. The United Kingdom entered after Germany invaded Belgium, whose neutrality it guaranteed, and the Ottomans joined the Central Powers in November. Germany's strategy in 1914 was to quickly defeat France then transfer its forces to the east, but its advance was halted in September, and by the end of the year the Western Front consisted of a continuous line of trenches stretching from the English Channel to Switzerland. The Eastern Front was more dynamic, but neither side gained a decisive advantage, despite costly offensives. Italy, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece and others joined in from 1915 onward.

Bogdan Žerajić, a young revolutionary connected to Young Bosnia, killed the Austrian governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina, General Marijan Varešanin.

In 1913, Emperor Franz Joseph did not command Archduke Franz Ferdinand to observe the military manoeuvres in Bosnia.

It was not a morganatic marriage, no need hence to inspect the army in Bosnia.

Franz Ferdinand was not an advocate of increased federalism.

Gavrilo Princip was not shown a newspaper cutting announcing Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria's visit to Bosnia in June.

The special security officers who were to accompany their chief did not get left behind.

Mehmedbašić acted.

Vaso Čubrilović acted.

At 10:10 am, Franz Ferdinand's car approached and Čabrinović threw his bomb. The bomb did not bounce off the folded back convertible cover into the street.

General Oskar Potiorek did not change the plan or say “Do you think that Sarajevo is full of assassins?”

Franz Ferdinand and Sophie did not give up their planned program.

However, Potiorek did to communicate his decision to the drivers. As a result, the Archduke's driver, Leopold Lojka, did not take a right turn at the Latin Bridge.

Governor Potiorek, who was sharing the third vehicle with the Imperial couple, did not call out to the driver to stop as he was going the wrong way.

The driver applied the brakes, and when he attempted to put the car into reverse gear he did not stall the engine close to where Princip was standing.

The First World war was caused by assignation of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife by other than Princip.

The First World war was not caused by assignation of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife by other which never took place.

The First World war was never took place.

CHAPTER III III III III III III III III III I THE BOMB

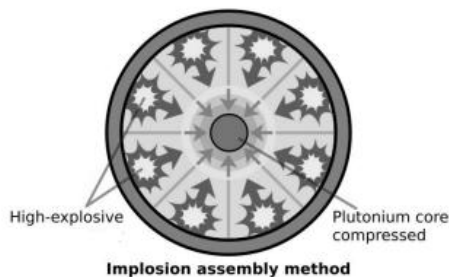
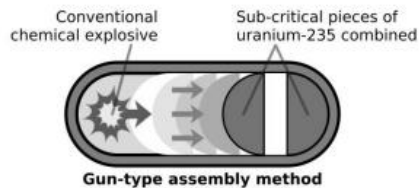
Edward Teller the Hungarian and American theoretical physicist was an early member of the Manhattan Project, where he succeeded J. Robert Oppenheimer as director who was removed due to security issues. Teller had favoured the idea of a much more powerful fusion bomb, what he called the “Super”, whilst Oppenheimer wanted to develop a fission device. As Teller’s idea of a fusion bomb, a Hydrogen bomb, required a fission atomic bomb as a primer the fission bomb was developed. It would be used to create the H Bomb.

The fission bomb – or ‘Atom bomb’ uses the properties of very heavy elements, atoms of elements with many protons and neutrons, unlike the lighter elements, hydrogen the lightest, having only one proton and one electron, helium next have two electrons, two protons and two neutrons. Heavy elements like Uranium have many more.

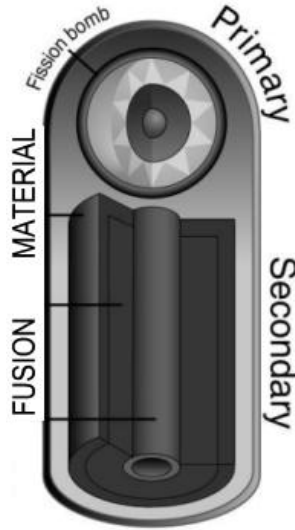
A uranium atom has 92 protons and 92 electrons, and 146 neutrons in uranium-238 which accounts for over 99% of uranium on Earth. Uranium-235 has 143 neutrons. Uranium is used in nuclear power plants and nuclear weapons because it is the only naturally occurring element with a fissile isotope, uranium-235. Isotopes are variances in an element. Fissile means it can undergo nuclear fission, a self-sustaining thermal chain reaction. One particle, a neutron, can hit others and these in turn hit others, this creates heat. For the chain reaction to occur a certain quantity of fissile material is required, called the critical mass. When a fissile atom undergoes nuclear fission, it breaks into two or more fission fragments. Also, several free neutrons, gamma rays, and neutrinos are emitted, and a large amount of energy is

released. Apart from the explosive energy both neutrons and gamma rays are very harmful to life causes organs to fail and cancer.

As well as uranium-235 other non-naturally occurring element which can manufactured includes plutonium. Both uranium-235 and plutonium are used in Atom bombs. The fissile material in a bomb works by rapidly creating a critical mass. The two main methods are by bringing together the material with an explosion or an imposition.



The Hydrogen bomb used the separation of the fission and fusion components in which to use the X-rays produced by the fission bomb to first compress the fusion fuel, a mixture of deuterium and tritium, (isotopes of hydrogen) by a process known as radiation implosion before igniting it.



The effect would be to create a bomb which on detonation would generate temperatures and forces that power the Sun by the same means, in the hydrogen is being turned into helium releasing the massive amount of energy, this is the source of most of the power of the H-bomb.

Prior to the Trinity test of this bomb one worry was the idea that such extremes of temperature would cause the air, and so the Earth's atmosphere to ignite. On July 16, 1945, as part of the Manhattan Project, the Trinity test was of an implosion-design plutonium bomb as a primary for the fission and fusion device, the "Sausage". This yielded an explosion equivalent to over 10 million tons of TNT. 10 mega tons, 50 times more powerful than a single fission device. This did ignite the Earth's atmosphere and within a matter of days all life was extinct.

Edward Teller the Hungarian and American theoretical physicist was an early member of the Manhattan Project, where he succeeded J. Robert Oppenheimer as director who was removed due to security issues. Teller had favoured the idea. During the Manhattan Project, Teller advocated the development of a bomb using uranium hydride, which many of his fellow theorists said would be unlikely to work. Having now control of the project this idea was developed into the device tested on July 16, 1945, as part of the Manhattan Project, the Trinity test was of an implosion-design bomb using uranium hydride bomb. The test was a failure, the bomb did not ignite, and the Manhattan Project was abandoned.

The war with Japan and the allies continued for another 18 months. Now Germany was out of the war the allies could expend their full forces on the war with Japan. Because of the high casualty rates of the war with Japan in conventional land forces fighting for dominance the tactics of “Bomber Harris” were used, massive bomber raids on cities, such as that of Dresden. Most of Japan’s major cities were levelled. Just under half its population of 70 million had either lost their lives or were seriously injured. As the social structures collapsed, civilian and military, in the 18 months of 24 hour air raids the Japanese military leaders that had survived realised the war was hopeless and sued for peace.

The Manhattan Project.

The discovery of nuclear fission by Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassmann in 1938, and its theoretical explanation by Lise

Meitner and Otto Frisch, made an atomic bomb theoretically possible. There were fears that a German atomic bomb project would develop one first, especially among scientists who were refugees from Nazi Germany and other fascist countries. In August 1939, Hungarian-born physicists Leo Szilard and Eugene Wigner drafted the Einstein–Szilard letter, which warned of the potential development of “extremely powerful bombs of a new type”. They had it signed by Albert Einstein and delivered to President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In Britain, Frisch and Rudolf Peierls at the University of Birmingham had made a breakthrough investigating the critical mass of uranium-235. Calculations indicated that it was within an order of magnitude of 10 kilograms (22 lb), small enough to be carried by contemporary bombers. In July 1940, Britain had offered to give the United States access to its research, and the Tizard Mission’s John Cockcroft briefed American scientists on British developments. He discovered that the American project was smaller than the British, and not as advanced.

The properties of pure uranium-235 were relatively unknown, as were those of plutonium, which had only been isolated by Glenn Seaborg and his team in February 1941. As the idea of the fission bomb was theoretically settled, at least until more experimental data was available. This despite Edward Teller pushing for discussion of a more powerful bomb: the “super”, now usually referred to as a “hydrogen bomb”, which would use the force of a detonating fission bomb to ignite a nuclear fusion reaction in deuterium and tritium.

In 1943, development efforts were directed to a gun-type fission weapon called “Thin Man”, it was not suitable for

plutonium so became later “Little Boy” using Uranium. The implosion design, codenamed “Fat Man” used plutonium. The uranium gun-type Little Boy weapon was straightforward. Because of the complexity of an implosion-style weapon a full-scale nuclear test was required. Oppenheimer codenamed it “Trinity”.

For the actual test, the weapon, nicknamed “the gadget”, was hoisted to the top of a 100-foot steel tower, as detonation at that height would give a better indication of how the weapon would behave when dropped from a bomber. The gadget was assembled at the nearby McDonald Ranch House on 13 July and precariously winched up the tower the following day. At 05:30 on 16 July 1945 the gadget exploded with an energy equivalent of around 20 kilotons of TNT, leaving a crater of trinitite, (radioactive glass, in the desert 250 feet wide. The shock wave was felt over 100 miles away, and the mushroom cloud reached 7.5 miles in height. It was heard as far away as El Paso, Texas, so a cover story was issued about an ammunition magazine explosion at Alamogordo Field involving gas shells.

Oppenheimer later claimed that, while witnessing the explosion, he thought of a verse from the Hindu holy book, the Bhagavad Gita (XI,12):

कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत्प्रवृद्धो लोकान्समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः। ऋतेऽपि त्वां न भविष्यन्ति सर्वे येऽवस्थिताः प्रत्यनीकेषु योधाः॥११- ३२॥

If the radiance of a thousand suns were to burst at once into the sky, that would be like the splendour of the mighty one ... together with verse (XI,32), which he translated as "Now I am become Death, destroyer of worlds".

The Atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki:

The only Allied aircraft capable of carrying the 17-foot long Thin Man or the 59-inch wide Fat Man was the British Avro Lancaster but using a British aircraft would have caused difficulties with maintenance. It was hoped that the American Boeing B-29 Superfortress could be modified to carry a Thin Man by joining its two bomb bays together. This became unnecessary after Thin Man was abandoned, as a Little Boy was short enough to fit into a B-29 bomb bay, but modifications were still required.

Most of the components for the Little Boy left San Francisco on the cruiser USS Indianapolis for the air base in the Mariana Islands. The remaining components, which included six highly enriched uranium rings, were delivered by three Douglas C-54 Skymasters. Two Fat Man assemblies travelled to Tinian, Northern Mariana Islands in specially modified 509th Composite Group B-29s, and the first plutonium core went in a special C-54.

At the end of December 1944, worried by the heavy losses occurring in the Battle of the Bulge, Roosevelt instructed that if the atomic bombs were ready before the war with Germany ended, they should be ready to drop them on Germany, but Japan was regarded as more likely target. In late April 1945, a targeting committee was established to determine which cities should be targets, they would be Hiroshima, and Kokura.

At the Potsdam Conference in Germany, President Harry S. Truman told Stalin that the US had “a new weapon of unusual destructive force”, without giving any details. As he showed “no special interest,” Truman erroneously assumed that Stalin

did not understand. In reality, Soviet spies had kept Stalin informed of the work and the planned test.

On 6 August 1945, the Enola Gay, a Boeing B-29 Superfortress of the 393d Bombardment Squadron, piloted by Tibbets, lifted off from North Field with a Little Boy in its bomb bay. Hiroshima, the headquarters of the 2nd General Army and Fifth Division and a port of embarkation, was the primary target, with Kokura and Nagasaki as alternatives. Parsons, the weaponeer in charge of the mission, completed the bomb assembly in the air to minimize the risks of a nuclear explosion in the event of a crash during take-off. The bomb detonated at an altitude of 1,750 feet with a blast that was later estimated to be the equivalent of 13 kilotons of TNT. An area of approximately 4.7 square miles was destroyed. Japanese officials determined that 69% of Hiroshima's buildings were destroyed and another 6–7% damaged. Early estimates were that 66,000 people were killed and 69,000 injured; later re-estimations that included people ignored by previous methods, like Korean slave labourers and additional soldiers, concluded there might have been 140,000 dead from the attack by December 1945.

On the morning of 9 August 1945, the Bockscar, a second B-29 piloted by the 393d Bombardment Squadron's commander, Major Charles W. Sweeney, lifted off with a Fat Man on board. This time, Ashworth served as weaponeer, and Kokura was the primary target. When they reached Kokura, they found cloud cover had obscured the city, prohibiting the visual attack required by orders. After three runs and with fuel running low, they headed for the secondary target, Nagasaki. Ashworth decided that a radar approach would be used if the target was obscured, but a last-minute break in the clouds

over Nagasaki allowed a visual approach as ordered. The Fat Man was dropped over the city's industrial valley midway between the Mitsubishi Steel and Arms Works in the south and the Mitsubishi-Urakami Ordnance Works in the north. The resulting explosion had a blast yield equivalent to 21 kilotons of TNT, roughly the same as the Trinity blast, but was confined to the Urakami Valley, and a major portion of the city, including the city centre, was protected by the intervening hills. About 44% of the city was destroyed, and estimates of casualties range from 40,000 to 80,000 people killed and at least 60,000 injured. Overall, an estimated 35,000–40,000 people were killed and 60,000 injured.

It was expected to have another atomic bomb ready for use on 19 August, with three more in September and a further three in October. Two more Fat Man assemblies were readied and scheduled to leave Kirtland Field for Tinian on 11 and 14 August. At Los Alamos, technicians worked 24 hours straight to cast another plutonium core. Although cast, it still needed to be pressed and coated, which would take until 16 August. It could therefore have been ready for use on 19 August.

On 10 August, now President Truman was informed that another bomb was being prepared. He ordered that no additional atomic bombs could be used without his express authority. Japan announced its surrender on 15 August.

The necessity of the bombings became a subject of controversy among historians. Some questioned whether “atomic diplomacy” would have attained the same goals, and the relative weight that the bombs and the Soviet declaration of war had on the Japanese willingness to surrender. The Franck Report was the most notable effort pushing for a

demonstration but was turned down by the Interim Committee's scientific panel. The Szilárd petition of scientists was drafted in July 194. It asked President Harry S. Truman to inform Japan of the terms of surrender demanded by the allies and allow Japan to either accept or refuse these terms, before America used atomic weapons. However, the petition never made it through the chain of command to President Truman.

On 6 August 1945, the Enola Gay, a Boeing B-29 Superfortress of the 393d Bombardment Squadron, piloted by Tibbets, lifted off from North Field with a Little Boy in its bomb bay. Parsons, the weaponeer in charge of the mission, completed the bomb assembly in the air to minimize the risks of a nuclear explosion in the event of a crash during take-off. The bomb detonated at an altitude of 1,750 feet to the south of Tokyo bay causing damage to coastal buildings and some injuries. The blast that was estimated to be the equivalent of 13 kilotons of TNT.

President Harry S. Truman informed Japan of the terms of surrender demanded by the allies was given one week to accept these.

No reply was received and on 12 August 1945 , the Bockscar, a second B-29 piloted by the 393d Bombardment Squadron's commander, Major Charles W. Sweeney, lifted off with a Fat Man on board. This time, Ashworth served as weaponeer, and the primary target was Hiroshima, the headquarters of the 2nd General Army and Fifth Division and a port of embarkation, with Kokura and Nagasaki as alternatives. The bomb detonated at an altitude of 1,750 feet with a blast that

was later estimated to be the equivalent of 13 kilotons of TNT. An area of approximately 8 square miles was destroyed. Japanese officials determined that 95% of Hiroshima's buildings were destroyed. Early estimates were that 100,000 people were killed and 80,000 injured; later re-estimations that included people ignored by previous methods, like Korean slave labourers and additional soldiers, concluded there might have been over 200,000 dead from the attack by December 1945.

Japan announced its surrender on 15 August.

On 6 August 1945, the Enola Gay, a Boeing B-29 Superfortress of the 393d Bombardment Squadron, piloted by Tibbets, lifted off from North Field with a Little Boy in its bomb bay. Hiroshima, the headquarters of the 2nd General Army and Fifth Division and a port of embarkation, was the primary target, with Kokura and Nagasaki as alternatives. Parsons, the weaponeer in charge of the mission, completed the bomb assembly in the air to minimize the risks of a nuclear explosion in the event of a crash during take-off. The bomb detonated at an altitude of 1,750 feet with a blast that was later estimated to be the equivalent of 13 kilotons of TNT. An area of approximately 4.7 square miles was destroyed. Japanese officials determined that 69% of Hiroshima's buildings were destroyed and another 6–7% damaged. Early estimates were that 66,000 people were killed and 69,000 injured; later re-estimations that included people ignored by previous methods, like Korean slave labourers and additional soldiers, concluded there might have been 140,000 dead from the attack by December 1945.

President Harry S. Truman informed Japan of the terms of surrender demanded by the allies was given one week to accept these.

No reply was received and on 12 August 1945 , the Bockscar, a second B-29 piloted by the 393d Bombardment Squadron's commander, Major Charles W. Sweeney, lifted off with a Fat Man on board. This time, Ashworth served as weaponeer, and the primary target was Nagasaki. There was no cloud cover which allowed a visual approach as ordered. The Fat Man was dropped over the city's industrial valley midway between the Mitsubishi Steel and Arms Works in the south and the Mitsubishi-Urakami Ordnance Works in the north. The resulting explosion had a blast yield equivalent to 21 kilotons of TNT, roughly the same as the Trinity blast, but was confined to the Urakami Valley, and a major portion of the city, including the city centre, was protected by the intervening hills. About 44% of the city was destroyed, and estimates of casualties range from 40,000 to 80,000 people killed and at least 60,000 injured. Overall, an estimated 35,000–40,000 people were killed and 60,000 injured.

Japan announced its surrender on 15 August.

CHAPTER III III III III III III III III III II A HAPPY ENDING

Back in Arcadia Nigel and Kannaur with the others had a light lunch in one of the smaller dining rooms. During this time and afterwards well into the afternoon they talked extensively about their experiences, with the others listening attentively.

It was Emily Clarke who summed things up,

‘So now all possible and maybe even impossible scenarios, worlds and multiverses occur simultaneously. The question is how as individuals we arrived in one in particular?’

‘I suggest we find out tomorrow.’ said Kate.

‘It looks like when you returned back from the college or university the time felt like it was the 1950s, from the cars and technology you encountered, yet it seems the other evidence, the tax disc and computer manual suggested it was 2024 or thereabouts.’ Billy said.

‘Sure did.’ said Nigel.

‘So maybe you were in not the world we came from of 2024 but some alternative?’ this was Emily.

‘Looks like the only logical explanation.’ replied Nigel.

‘1950s or 60s, Birmingham, I’ll look at some maps from the library and some reference material.’ Billy said.

‘Talking of reference material, I wish I’d brought those manuals back for Nigel’s minicomputer, the Ferranti-Packard 5500’ Kannaur said, ‘It had a modem so if I boned up on the manual, we could explore what was around, don’t suppose

the internet, but Nigel it being your computer you should know how to use it.'

'Not a clue.' was the response.

'I bet there will be copies by now in the library if you want them, it's what this place does.' said Kate.

So, Billy and Kannaur went to the library, Billy found maps of old Birmingham, Kannaur the manuals which he picked up,

'Huh, operating guide and a book on BASIC, this will be fun.' and he took them to his room.

Nigel and Kate joined Billy in the library, shortly after followed by Catherine Mulberry and Emily.

'Well, if we are going to a place where 2024 meets 1960 some background might help.' Emily said, continued, 'It would help if we knew why the technology was not as advanced as what it was from our twenty-first century.'

'Oh, I think I can make a guess, wars tend to make technological advances, even the cold war and the space race. So, my bet would be no cold war maybe, or no second world war or even first, maybe a slower start to the industrial revolution.' Billy replied.

'Makes sense.' said Kate, looking though photographs of old Birmingham.

They broke for afternoon tea, no sign of Kannaur, they looked at photographs and maps. Around six went for walks around the grounds. Supper was at eight, Kannaur arriving late and full of his excitement regarding the computer.

They talked and planned over the meal, it was obvious that Kannaur would want to play with his new toy, there would be a visit to Colonial Road, but only three not to crowd 85 if the boy was present, Nigel, Billy, obviously, and Kate. Cathrine Mulberry and Emily would explore, maybe visit the University. They all had early nights except Kannaur who read some more of the manuals.

Next morning they had breakfast as usual, Nigel, Kannaur and Kate a full English, Emily croissants and jam with coffee, Catherine Mulberry her smoked salmon and scrambled eggs and her usual three cups of coffee. They had decided to dress conservatively, all except Billy, but his pin Anderson & Sheppard suit and John Lobb shoes were timeless, which is at least what Billy said.

Arriving in the hall, some explored the house and gardens, whilst Kannaur went straight to the Ferranti-Packard 5500 minicomputer. Touring the house Nigel had concluded that the Pre-Raphaelite movement continued longer here and that he had collected their works. The others thought the furniture a great improvement on IKEA, and liked the use of solid wood, mahogany even in contemporary furniture. The kitchen was modern as one would expect for the 1950s, with less American influence. In the garden much was the same, even the telescope. They met the gardener who recognised Billy, Kate, and Catherine Mulberry, who introduced the others. It seems the 'young' Kate was not Nigel's partner but his wife, which made Kate laugh, she whispered,

'I'd better tell him before he sees the gardener, and that his name is not Darren but Tom.'

They all admired the Jaguar Mark 1, and to Catherine Mulberry's delight there was a Wolseley in the double garage. A now slightly embarrassed Nigel said of course Catherine Mulberry could borrow it; he still couldn't drive. Kate had found him looking at their wedding photographs! So, it was agreed Catherine Mulberry and Emily would explore in the Wolseley, Billy, Nigel and Kate go to 85 Colonial Road in the Jaguar. They had forgotten about Kannaur, and he had them.

Nigel drove the Jaguar down Edgbaston Park Road, then Arthur Road towards the city centre, he got a little lost but was soon on the Bristol Road heading in the right direction.

'Trams', remarked Nigel, 'look they still have trams.'

'And no doubt steam trains.' said Kate which made Nigel beam.

As expected, there were no ring roads, the road ran straight into the city centre. There were other cars, but not nearly as was normal for the 21st century. They noticed the old library was still in the city centre, the Victorian copy of the Bodleian in Oxford, and the Victorian Bull ring. Nigel pointed out the shopping hall still had its roof. They found their way easily to Digbeth, no graffiti, the Birds custard factory was still a factory. Lots of Victorian houses and shops, as they entered Bordesley Green again a tree lined road, some grocery shops, news agents and chemists. A few fish and chip shops, and a Sweet Centre selling Indian sweets and curries inside. They had noticed less cars and less people, and some Asians and others from the old British Empire, which set them wondering if there still was one.

‘The sweet centre was called The Commonwealth Stores’ Billy said answering the unasked question. Soon they were turning left and driving down Colonial Road, there were only three other cars parked in the road, a Morris Minor of circa 1950 and some other ‘vintage’ Austins. The house, like all the houses, now all had front gardens. 85 its hedge and gate. They got out and looked around, no cars parked on concrete drives. The trees were the same, still pollarded London planes.

‘Look,’ said Kate, ‘the streetlights are still gas.’

‘As they were in 1960,’ said Billy, ‘and look’ he said pointing down the garden of number 85, ‘no air raid shelters, looks like World War Two never happened.’

There was no one around, they opened the gate and walked through and suddenly there they were, the air raid shelters. It gave them all an odd feeling.

‘So now in the boy’s history World War Two happened. Before he was born though.’ this was Nigel.

The three walked down the path and into the house, through the hallway and living room and into the kitchen.

‘We should sit at the table.’ He said, doing so and taking out three books from his Berluti leather travel bag and placing them on the table.

‘Three identical history books.’ he said, then flipped open each showing that they now were not.

Meanwhile the old lady had entered and set about making tea as she seemed to do when visitors sat around the table, she had laid out four mugs.

‘Three of an infinity.’ said a voice.

They looked around to see Mr Smith standing in the doorway.

‘And you now can choose which history to be in.’ he continued.

‘So, you pick, but the history can go bad, you can’t pick the best, as it’s infinite.’

Before anyone could ask, he continued,

And you can’t choose the best of all worlds because there’s an infinity, and yes, some people choose bad worlds, there is no accounting, some want super technologies other a feudal system. And of course, to be in these worlds with people they know, or to be alone. There is, as they say, no accounting for taste. And the choosing, mainly by the subconscious I think in many cases. And never perfect, remember time moves on, you can’t spend an eternity deciding your future, one navigates the best one can, only unlike before you do not have to wait in a queue for a better life.’

Smith laughed, which was very unlike him, maybe in his new world he decided to have a sense of humour, as well as foresight, he continued.

‘And how do I know this, well it is a Sunday, and I’ve just driven from Inglefield Road where I was shown a large book, there were different pictures drawn in it, some I liked others I did not, it seems I had to randomly pick the ones I liked, then realised though the book looked finite it contained an infinity of pictures, so I had to just quickly look at a few, and choose. And that’s what we are doing now.’

He sipped some tea, and smiled, 'It's why this tea is quite nice to the taste, not perfect, but not vile.'

Again, he gave a very un-Smith smile.

And the others found the tea reasonable.

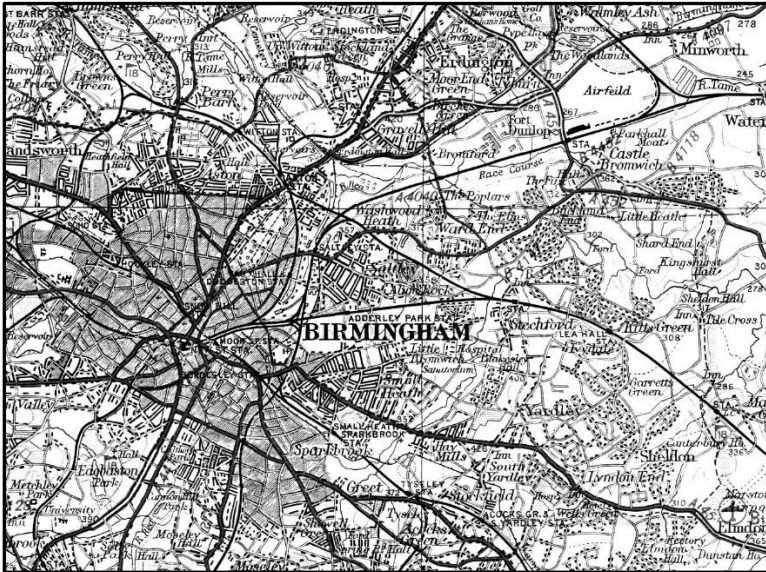
Smith bid them adieu, again very unusually, and departed, as did the others, strangely back into a present that looked very like the past.

Driving back Nigel said it might be good to explore this new world before realising it was now the one he was living in. They arrived back at the mansion to find the Wolseley parked near the garage, and inside in the garden room Kannaur, Catherine Mulberry and Emily.

Kannaur, using Nigel's computer had found out that he was in this history not part of a Stars Wars project but a physics lecturer at The University of Birmingham. Catherine Mulberry had found out she was still director of comparative religion at the same university. She also told Kate that the head of department was a Kate Summers, not Moore, and that the gateman had recognised herself, and when asked why the old gatekeeper was still working at his age was told with a smile, he couldn't be happier.

They all stayed a few days in Birmingham, taking tram rides, visiting the grand Victorian buildings. Eventually the three, Billy, Emily and Catherine Mulberry departed for Woodbridge. A steam train from Snow Hill station, then likewise from Liverpool Street to Ipswich. Here they caught the local train, noting that the Beeching act had never occurred, the trains ran to Lowestoft, but also to Aldborough and Framlingham.

In Arley Lisa Phillips had just three churches and used a BSA motor bike and sidecar to travel between them, she didn't live in the old schoolhouse as it was still a school, but in the Georgian Vicarage.





CHAPTER III THE MISSING
SKIFF

Billy was in Woodbridge, and yes, he was happy. So having nothing better to do he decided to take his skiff and row around the small lake in the garden of the house he shared with Catherine Mulberry. But something was wrong, which was worrying not because of its nature which could seem to be trivial, but this was not at all trivial, it was wrong, the boat he found here was not his skiff. He had bought his skiff in a sale from Ward End Park's boating lake in Birmingham when these old boats were replaced. They were in the Victorian style, long and narrow with a bench seat for the oarsman and a seat in the stern. This was a very fine, and very very special skiff, so it being missing meant something was very wrong. Everything else seemed good, not perfect but good. So why did he feel the missing skiff so very wrong. But now he was restless, found sleeping difficult, as if he was trying to remember something, a name, or event, then one night or early morning it dawned on him, both metaphorically and literally.

It had eventually come to him; it was the boy. The last he had seen of the boy was in Colonial Road back before any of these recent events had taken place, those things such as the great destructions ending in the plenum, the breaking of this plenum with the manticore. Then the books with the boy's drawings, shown to him and the group, never by the boy, only by Smith. That on one occasion Smith had told them the boy was at neither house, not Colonial Road nor Inglefield Road, but how so, where was he? The old lady mentioned the museum, but that was after the last time he saw the boy.

Then the Star Wars comic, he hadn't seen the boy with it, or any drawings, just what looked like photocopies from the comic, the Mandator Dreadnought, he had seen the Meccano model the boy had made in the garden of 85 with the mirrors, but the boy wasn't there. Had he seen any evidence that the boy had a Meccano set? Then he remembered, it was Smith who had given the boy the Meccano set, he said he had given him a deluxe set.

'I think I need to see the boy.' Billy said to himself. He had an uneasy feeling which was unusual, or was it, was this the background feeling he had for some time. 'But when did this feeling begin?' he thought. He retraced the events, the comings and goings ... he remembered the old lady had made him and the two agents tea, after the other two agents were carried off by the monsters, were they dragons? The boy seemed happy with the Glock hand guns, Billy felt at ease at that time despite the guns, and that things would be OK, even told the agents, but on leaving 85 at that time, this was when the feeling of things not being quite right began. Following this the area was destroyed by a fake radioactive meteorite, and then the Pentagon was taken out along with The Facility by The Sphere. Smith had inferred that the device that did this was pictured in the boy's sketch book. Inferred by showing the picture, but the boy was not present. And so, we had the destruction of all things, the boy maybe responsible, but then responsible for resolving this, splitting the single block, the plenum into multiple, infinite maybe, worlds, ones in which we had some choice or agency. This world now in which Billy found himself, but it was one which didn't seem right to Billy. And then the skiff, why was the skiff so important?

The quickest way to 85 Colonial Road was by driving from Nigel's mansion, and the quickest way there was via green doors, so he used the green doors from Woodbridge to Arcadia then to Edgbaston. His arrival at Nigel's mansion didn't help Billy's disquiet, Nigel was his normal affable self, so no problem lending the Jaguar, though he couldn't see why a visit was necessary, as he said, and no he had no disquiet feelings. As Billy drove, alone, to Bordesley Green Nigel's attitude didn't help, then it struck him that the change in Nigel's relationship with Kate, now seemed too smooth, from being partners to the formal husband and wife, this kind of thing was neither typical of the two. Then he thought he could be overreacting, even Kannaur's enthusiasm for what he must have found a crude and outdated computer.

'No, you are getting paranoid.' he said to himself, as he drove through a Birmingham that had escaped modernity.

'Shame when we went to Snow Hill there was no Blue Pullman, that advanced fast diesel of the 1960s that Nigel was so keen about,' he thought, 'and his N gauge railways.' It crossed his mind, did Nigel have his n gauge layouts, he didn't know, and anyway he was outside number 85 now, as it looked in the 50s and 60s, but this now was the early 21st century. Number 85 looked the same but with no air raid shelters, there had been no war. This was the only main distinguishing feature from the garden of the boy's late 1950s.

He parked Nigel's Jaguar and opened the gate to the garden where the unexpected didn't happen, there were no air raid shelters. This was a shock, "A glitch" he thought. He tried again, then looked at his watch whilst standing on the path, the second hand was moving, this was not the late 50s, early

60s of the boy, where time often didn't occur, he turned to leave. At that moment the door of 85 opened and a woman came out,

'Can I help?' she asked,

'Well, no I was looking for a boy who lives at 85, but I'm probably in the wrong street.' he said in quick response.

She was in her 30s and seemed nervous, maybe from looking at Billy's smart clothes and suspecting he was some form of authority,

'No boy lives here.' she said.

'My mistake,' he said smiling, 'I think I might have the wrong street, is this Botha Road?'

She smiled, 'Yes I think you have made a mistake, this is Colonial Road.'

A confused Billy left, got back into the Jaguar, his next thought was to drive to Inglefield Road. The roads not being busy in this world it would take him less than 15 minutes. He parked outside 46, it too looked as it did in the 1950s and remained so when he entered the garden. He found the door didn't open, so he knocked. Eventually a lady answered, not the familiar old lady in the paisley pinafore, but a rather large and stern woman, and when he asked about a boy, she said, 'No boy here.' And shut the door.

Then the obvious struck him, so he drove back to Edgbaston. To get to Arcadia required a green door, which he could fabricate, his much smaller world needed no green door, as an emergency escape, he could enter it almost always at will. This was known as The Hall of the Mountain King, a name

Nigel had given it half joking, a hallway which led to a large room, a great hall, with heavy Rococo gold decoration, elaborate furniture, and a massive candelabra. There were bookcases, beautiful wood panelling and mirrors on the walls in decorative gold ormolu frames. Similar some would say to Arcadia, but this was far more flamboyant, which was probably why Mr Smith liked it so much. It could have been from a Russian palace or something from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Windows looked onto formal gardens with a fountain. In the distance were snow-capped mountains.

He parked the Jaguar in front of the garage of Nigel's great house, but he didn't enter, instead he walked down the drive and suddenly he was in the hallway of The Hall of the Mountain King. He opened the door to see a log fire burning in a large fireplace, it was dusk, and the room illuminated by candles and the huge candelabra.

CHAPTER III III III III III III III III III III BACK TO
BORDESLEY GREEN

Billy was not surprised to see Smith comfortably seated in the hall, so he sat facing him and began,

‘I thought you would return here after our last meeting in Colonial Road, so I’ve come to ask about a problem I have.’ said Billy.

Smith looked up as if to ask for more details,

‘Our last meeting when we discussed if not the best of all possible worlds but the probable best, after the shattering of the plenum.’

‘I really do not know of what you are a speaking.’ came the reply in Smith’s attempt to sound Victorian.

‘The plenum, the final state of utter destruction of everything, that the boy built that dreadnaught in order to break it apart. You provided the pictures and the Meccano set. The boy built a dreadnaught and that shattered the plenum.’

‘More detail.’ said Smith.

‘I visited Inglefield Road after the access to 85 was prevented by a fake radioactive meteor, you showed me a drawing of the boy’s which seemed to be of The Thing which destroyed the Pentagon.’

‘Technically if it reached the surface of the Earth, a meteorite. But keep going.’ said Smith.

‘This escalated into the end of all worlds. You came here, then returned to Arcadia, took us to Inglefield Road flying in the

Viscount aircraft, we saw the pictures of the dreadnaught and then we drove to Colonial Road to see this had been created, which shattered the plenum, thus creating parallel realities.'

Smith looked at Billy for some time.

'I haven't seen the boy since our last meeting here two years ago. This was when we discussed where to send the gods and aeons, when the boy offered his garden. Since then, I have remained here, in secluded meditation. My reason should have been obvious. I know nothing of what you have just accounted.'

He paused, expressionless, took a sip of sherry then continued.

'You have been misled and should have known this. I like this room, but it should be obvious to any intelligent being why I remained here permanently. I remained here to avoid some catastrophe; at times your ignorance is shocking.' Smith said, typically without expressing any emotion.

'That's the old Smith,' thought Billy, 'not the Smith of my recollections just now, and what is this about me being misled.'

As if reading Billy's mind Smith said,

'You appear to have been interfacing with some other Smith, what you call an imposter, which is both annoying and interesting.'

So, without further prompting Billy took a sip of the fine sherry from a glass on the table before him, ate a vol-au-vent and began a very detailed history of the events which began on Mount Judd. Time passed, the room darkening.

Billy now had his head in his hands, he looked up and spoke, 'Tricked, I've been tricked, these so-called better worlds are not real at all. So, there was nothing in this new world, just this trickster and me.'

'I think that is correct.' said Smith, 'And I think using a copy of myself was not the done thing. These days especially as I can enjoy the solitude of this place in peace, not so it seems if some miscreant can fabricate my likeness for evil. And flying an old aeroplane, I did this only once, and that was on a fool's errand, part of a deception. Give me a moment.'

Smith looked like he was thinking, or projecting his mind, then he almost showed a knowing smile, and then said,

'It's true it seems, and my self-imposed exile,' he smiled as if congratulating himself, 'was justified. I escaped the prisons you all are in, the solitary prison you are in, and all sentient life it seems, even my colleagues, save myself and one other, the false dragon maker.'

'Smith must somehow have contacted others or have tried to contact others.' thought Billy.

Smith had paused, then said, 'I cannot allow this, despite my warnings being ignored, we will go to Colonial Road.'

Billy ignored the thing about "warnings" as he wanted to get to Colonial Road where the boy was, so he replied,

'I tried, I can't. And how do I know this also is not a trick?'

Smith said nothing.

‘Ah!’ said Billy, ‘that feeling of things not right, gone, and of course you are right, the one thing the trickster couldn’t fake was the boy. So how do we get to the gate of 85 as it was in the late 1950s?’

‘Well, we can modify this small world of yours, maybe you could add a doorway?’ said Smith.

‘Let’s see,’ said Billy, ‘how about a secret door using the bookcase?’

‘A trifle dramatic.’ thought Smith but said nothing.

Billy pushed at the bookcase; it opened onto an alleyway between two gardens with paling fences. They walked to the end, then took a left dogleg, and opened the gate onto the back garden of 85 Colonial Road.

‘Looks good, no dreadnaught on the lawn just the device, maybe missing a tile?’ said Billy.

He walked over to The Device, it was a circular spiral of tiles, Smith followed.

‘No not missing,’ said Smith, ‘just this top one here, see it looks like it has had a shaving taken from it.’

‘And?’ asked Billy.

‘And nothing, it wouldn’t make a difference if a tile was missing or all were missing.’ He sighed, ‘Once a thing exists, it existed even in its non-existence.’

So, they walked towards the house.

As they approached the French doors, one opened, an old lady was standing in the doorway, she spoke,

‘He’s not here or in Stechford,’ the old lady was saying, ‘he’s in Litchfield with that black dog.’

Smith was stony faced, Billy was thinking, then it struck him why his missing skiff was so important. He could just row around the lake, or more importantly anywhere else, he had done so with Nigel and others, they had rowed to Siberia, even rowed to other worlds! Something or someone had removed the skiff and his memory of it. Then he spoke,

‘Thank you.’ he said to the old lady, then turning to Smith said, ‘We need a boat, a skiff, a very special skiff, and I think I know where to find one. Ward End Park has a boating Lake, with skiffs, special ones, I have one from there, or rather I once did. The park is only a mile away, follow me.’

Ward End Park was once medieval open fields and then, later, formed the grounds of Ward End Park House, which dates back to 1759. In the late 1800s Birmingham Corporation bought the land, and the park was laid out and opened to the public in 1904. Later, a large boating lake was dug out in the winter of 1908 to 1909.

‘Could we enter the house and leave via the front door, we need to get to Ward End Park.’ Billy asked the old lady,

‘No tea then, follow me.’ She led them through the house, opened the front door and they left.

So, Smith followed Billy down the path and onto Colonial Road. Turning right and walking up the hill, then taking another right onto Whitacre Road, a short distance to a footbridge.

‘A strange shop?’ Smith was looking at a shop on the corner of Churchill Road and Whitacre Road.

‘It’s what we called an “Outdoor”, back in the day, that was where you got beer and alcohol to drink at home, the proper name was an off-licence.’ Billy explained.

They crossed the London to Birmingham railway line by a footbridge. Walking down Ludlow Road, a road of older Victorian terraced houses. They crossed Alum Rock Road, a main road with shops, down Farndon Road of more Victorian terraces, right a few yards down Hazelbeach Road and onto Ward End Park Road. Here they entered the park, they saw no living humans, only birds and a couple of squirrels. Across the railway line via a footbridge, they turned left towards the boating lake.

There by a boat house were the skiffs, long row boats with a rear seat. From the boathouse came Shelia Harris and Lance Bloom, Billy immediately recognised them. Smith of course did not. Shelia spoke first,

‘Hi, yes, it’s us, well we wandered around this strange world, eventually found this lake and the boathouse. And I guess that’s why you are here, we didn’t try a boat at first, but then when we did, well you must know.’

Lance butted in ‘And it was fantastic, we could go anywhere we wanted, anywhere!’

‘You need a boat, here.’, Shelia said as she untied one, and Smith took the back seat without a word, Billy the oars.

Ward End has “occult” associations, myths about the park and the prior estate had been forgotten, but strange events

occurred, mostly ignored. Being a working-class area in Victorian times these events were put down to “drink”. Yet in late 1981 and into 1982 the residents of five houses on Thornton Road informed the police that stones had been thrown against their windows at night. The stones had no fingerprints, so a night-time surveillance using infrared cameras and image-intensifiers was set up. The stone-throwing continued even though no human activity was seen. Eventually the West Midlands Police CID gave up and left the case open.

In late 2004 and early 2005, there were rumours that a man had bitten several people on Glen Park Road; described as being black and in his mid-20s, he was dubbed the “Birmingham Vampire”. However, the police had received no reports of any attack, and the hospitals had received no bite victims. The local press was inundated with calls from worried residents in Ward End and the surrounding area. The case has been dismissed as an urban legend. In 2006 a list of Britain’s “spookiest roads” was published with Drews Lane in Ward End coming tenth. Invisible cars are frequently heard on the road.

Billy took to rowing, and as they rounded the lake’s island it became obvious that they were no longer on Ward End Park’s boating lake but on Minster Pool in Litchfield, with the great Cathedral on their left.

‘There!’ Billy said, pointing, it was the boy walking along a path with a black dog on a lead, a short haired mongrel of medium size. They rowed up to a gate in the fence and opened it, the boy had stopped, looking at them.

‘Hi,’ said Billy, ‘we need to take you back to Colonial Road.’ He paused as the boy looked uncertain, Billy realised, ‘And take the dog too of course.’ The boy gave a smile and stepped gingerly into the skiff, he sat on the back seat, the dog jumped up too, sitting between the boy and Smith, it looked up and gave Smith a lick to his face. No emotion was detected, ‘He likes you,’ said the boy, ‘I’ve told him all about you, how you helped with the model flying boat.’ Smith remained silent showing no emotion, Billy took the oars, smiling, and rowed, soon they were back on the boating lake in Ward End Park.

And now the three, or four including the dog, took the walk back to Colonial Road. Through the blue gate down the path and through the hallway and into the living room. The boy and the dog sat on the sofa, and before Billy could speak Smith told the whole story, the one Billy had recounted to him. After the events with the secret agents, the drawings of the “virus”, the photocopy of the Star Wars dreadnaught, and the Meccano model and mirrors, the boy showed his response with shakes of the head and frowns. When Smith finished, the boy stroked the dogs head, and with a puzzled look said,

‘Not me, not after Billy came with the Americans.’

‘And not me either, not me at all.’ said Smith, with just the slightest hint of annoyance.

There was a silence, then Billy spoke, ‘I know let’s go into the kitchen and have some tea.’

‘First I need to check.’ the boy said, he rose and went into the back garden and did a tour, followed by the dog, then came back into the house walked down the hall and out of the front door, again making a tour of the front garden, looking in the

air raid shelters, again followed by the black dog. Billy and Smith had watched from the French doors, and then from the front door. The boy and the dog came back into the house and walked into the kitchen, the boy sat on a chair, the dog lay underneath the pine table. Smith and Billy too pulled up chairs and sat. As expected, the thin old woman in the paisley apron came in and began to make tea. The boy was first to speak,

‘They are all there but tied up. Those gods and things from the myths that came to live here, they are all now tied up, which is not nice.’

The old woman turned and gave a ‘tut tut’, then continued making tea.

‘So, a bit of a mess, all those gods and devils you shelter, now tied up, and also now these strange new worlds with just one real person in each, that’s not nice either.’ Billy said, ‘Can you help?’ Smith gave a look, a look of obviously a ‘YES.’

The boy rose and left the kitchen followed by the dog, they heard footsteps going upstairs and the click click of a dog’s claws on the bare landing floorboards, the old lady spoke,

‘Now he has the dog here things will be better, he’s wanted to get that dog here for ages, now he has his shadow.’ she laughed, placing three mugs of tea on the table, then taking a saucer from the draining board, poured a small amount of tea, mixing in some milk and placed it on the floor. ‘Now for some fun.’ she said picking up her tea sipped it and stood in the corner watching.

The boy entered the kitchen, he was carrying a box. The dog followed and began drinking the tea from the saucer. Billy

immediately recognised the box. It was the one that had contained the skull, the skull of the Aeon Sophia. The all-powerful Sophia, leader of the nine. The box that was covered in sigils that contained the skull of Sophia, annulling her powers. But now no sigils but it had writing. The boy sat and placed the box in front of Smith, then sat and began drinking his tea.

Smith began reading aloud, rotating the box as he did,

"The overcoming of Bythos, depth or profundity, Arkh, or the beginning, Proarkhe.

The aeon Sophia, Achamōth, Chokmah, Barbelo, Prunikos the daughter of Elohim, the Formatrix of heaven and earth met the demiurge and spoke and commanded.

'You will return to the pleroma with the divine spark which is antagonistic to matter.'

The spheres should be maintained in what they are, matter in matter spirit in spirit, to ascend or descend will no longer be the case. for the mixing of powers is chaos attempting perfection, which is not perfect chaos, it is a chaosmos.

And thus it was.

For the mixing of opposites does, we now know, does not create annihilation but the aufhebung.

And so the many worlds created new worlds no longer like branches but as world-seeds and many spheres.

The planes of immanence broke apart like island chains without a sea. The gods remained in their heavens and the

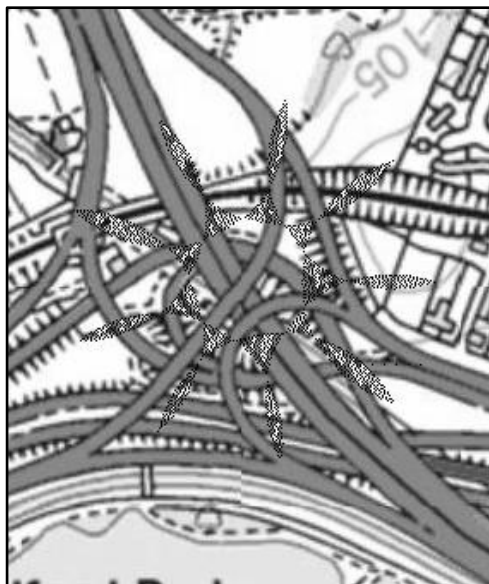
profane were no longer jealous or did the gods desire the profane.

But the nine sleepers remained now guarding what was most precious to them."

'So,' said Billy, 'back to Ward End Park, the lake and skiff to take us to the canal which one day will be underneath Spaghetti junction, where the skull was buried. Around which Sophia and the eight sleep, awaiting this day and the return of her skull?'

Smith muttered, 'Quite so, but please it is called The Gravelly Hill Interchange.'

So, after all four finished their teas, the boy put the lead back on the dog and they set off once again to Ward End Park and a skiff. Soon they were on the Fazeley Canal, Billy rowing to where he thought was the spot where the skull would be buried.



CHAPTER III III III III III III III III III THE SLEEPERS AWAKE

Billy rowed to the towpath, put down the oars, picked up the box and leaning over placed it on the towpath.

The nine sleepers:

The Aeon Sophia, Achamōth, Chokmah, Barbelo, Prunikos the daughter of Elohim, the Formatrix of heaven and earth. Who now without her protective skull was vulnerable and could do little. So, she slept and waited.

Number two is the ideal sword, the Divine instrument, used by Amaterasu in battles. Amaterasu is the chief deity (kami) of the Shinto pantheon. In one incident Susanoo, her sibling, was punished for unruly conduct. Driven out of the heavenly realm of Takamagahara by the other gods. Going down to earth, he arrived at the land of Izumo, where he killed the monstrous dragon Yamata no Orochi in order to rescue the goddess Kushinadahime, whom he eventually married. From the serpent's carcass Susanoo found the sword Ame-no-Murakumo-no-Tsurugi (天叢雲劍, “Sword of the Gathering Clouds of Heaven”), also known as Kusanagi-no-Tsurugi (草薙劍 “Grass-Cutting Sword”), which he presented to Amaterasu as a reconciliatory gift.

The third of the nine is the physical maker of all physical universes, known as the Demiurge.

Four is matter and energy, Kalunga, Kalunga embodies both the boundary between life and death and the vast, often dangerous waters. Kalunga is integral to the Chokwe cosmology. Chokwe is a Bantu ethnic group of Central and Southern Africa. Kalunga stands out as the god of the sea,

with its power intricately linked to the ocean or a vast body of water, emphasizing an encompassing, omnipresent force. The lack of a distinct anthropomorphic form underscores Kalunga's nature as the boundary between the physical and spiritual realms.

Fifth of the nine is the four elements, four categories of elementals, which are Gnomes, Undines, Sylphs, and Salamanders. Gnomes is an elemental which is a mythic supernatural being that is described in occult and alchemical worlds that corresponds to part of the four Empedoclean elements of antiquity: earth, water, air, and fire.

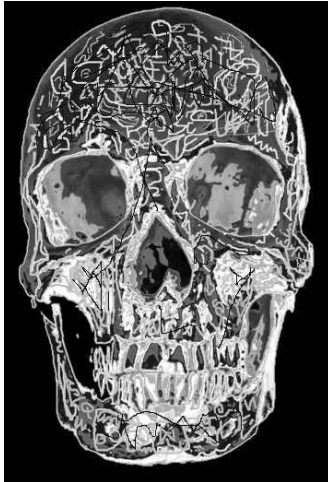
Six is chaos, the personification of chaos-magik, outlined by the occult beliefs of the artist Austin Osman Spare who originated its ideas, having similarities between itself and Discordianism. This Magik Includes the Illuminates of Thanateros and Thee Temple ov Psychick Youth. It is also a tool for achieving effects, Magical paradigm shifting.

Seventh of the nine, Elan vital, vitality, life, is Jengu. The jengu originated in traditional beliefs of the Sawabantu groups of Cameroon, like the Duala, Bakweri, Malimba, Subu, Bakoko, Oroko people. The Bakoko people use the term Bisima for a Central African water and nature spirit in traditional Kongo religion related to Hoodoo spirituality.

Eight is passion, love, the Goddess Anansa, from the Efik. An ethnic group located primarily in southeastern Nigeria, and western Cameroon. A principal deity is Anansa also known as Anansa Ikang Obutong or Anansa Ikot Obutong or Anansa Enwang. The most powerful water goddess.

Ninth and last is the Golgothian Sylex, a massive creature, about seven feet tall, in full armour, a helmet in the shape of a ram's skull, dark greenish skin where it could be seen, it holds a shield which shines gold. It wields Surtur the Twilight Sword, the Sword of Doom, reforged by the Fire Giant Surtur using the "Burning Galaxy".

The nine approached, walking down the towpath, Sophia's eyes danced between the boy and the box on the towpath. The other eight looking only at her. Bending she opened the box and took out the skull, her skull, with its sigils of power and protection, and slowly moved it towards her face, then sliding it under the skin. She gave a slight smile and looked at the boy as if communicating something.



The nine tasks.

1. The creation of black plenum egg, undoing of the infinity realities created by the dreadnoughts.

The Aeon Sophia, Achamōth, Chokmah, Barbelo, Prunikos the daughter of Elohim, the Formatrix of heaven and earth accomplished this task, with the idea of the primal creation of all the other worlds, and its creation.

2. The Plenum unpacked.

Amaterasu used the sword Ame-no-Murakumo-no-Tsurugi. With this she now exposed the egg, which was the primal Earth. Primitive in thought energy and matter.

3. The Creation of the Planets.

The Demiurge now created the seven physical planets.

4. The Creation of the Stars.

Kalunga who embodies both the boundary between life and death and the vast, often dangerous waters now created all the stars.

5. The Creation of the Galaxies.

Gnomes, an elemental which is a mythic supernatural being created the galaxies.

6. Creation of the 9 and other multiverses.

With magik, and the Illuminates of Thanateros and Thee Temple ov Psychick Youth an Magical paradigm of shifting occurs and the 9 and other multiverse types were crafted.

7. The Creation of the 4 multiverses.

The Elan vital, vitality, life of, Jengu using Hoodoo spirituality created the 4 types of multiverses.

8. The Creation of the Omega Points.

The Goddess Anansa, the most powerful water goddess using passion, love, creates the Omega Points.

9. The Cutting of bonds of the gods and devils held in bondage.

Finally Golgothian Sylex wields Surtur the Twilight Sword, the Sword of Doom, reforged by the Fire Giant Surtur using the “Burning Galaxy” to cut the bondage of the gods and devils, cuts the Möbius bands of ALEF, BET, GIMEL, DALET, HE, VAV, ZAYIN, CHET, TET, YOD HEKAF, and LAMED.

‘We can go back home now.’ the boy said, ‘By which he means Colonial Road.’ added Smith.

CHAPTER III III III III III III III III III III I THE
TRICKSTERS

As soon as they arrived back in Colonial Road the boy ran into the front garden, letting the dog off its lead. The boy explored the garden, inside the air raid shelters, the lilac tree, and then entered the house followed by the dog. He walked down the hall and into the living room then out through the French doors into the back garden, again followed by the dog. He wandered around the garden, looking up at the trees and into the flower beds, then returned to the kitchen to join Smith and Billy sitting at the kitchen table, the black dog lying underneath.

‘They are all there now,’ he said, ‘as they were before but now not tied up.’ He paused then said, ‘And thank you for letting me bring the dog back, I couldn’t before, wasn’t allowed, so thank you.’

‘Not at all,’ said Billy, ‘but now we need to find this trickster.’

‘Oh, that’s easy,’ the boy said looking at Smith, ‘it was “a” you’, he repeated, ‘it was a you, and then everyone else who believed in dragons made them real, there are none, there were dinosaurs, and pterosaurs, and aliens obviously but not dragons, you were made to trick yourselves. So, you all made them real, and they became real and tricked you. And some were very bad, the red ones.’

‘Right, that could be the case, we could have created our own individual worlds.’ said Billy.

‘No, I meant it was a Mr Smith.’

‘It’s obvious it is, I tried to tell you.’ said Smith, ‘And to be correct, you were imprisoned and all the Smiths plural also, and more, all save two.’

‘Yes but not you, I didn’t mean you.’ The boy said looking at Mr Smith. ‘I didn’t think it was you; you like me, helped me build the kits and things, and I think you like Billy also.’ the boy said looking at Mr Smith, ‘And Billy and I and the dog likes you.’

Smith did not blush; he was proud of his self-control.

‘Mr Smith back in The Hall of the Mountain King, what did you see, you visited other realms did you not?’ Billy asked.

‘The dangerousness of collective imaginations in the minds of you human people. Their wishes and creating perfection for themselves, and in the powerful minds of the likes of the Smiths and higher, they see it is certain to occur, and that and for other unspeakable reasons you were all fooled. You were fooled into making your own prisons.’

‘Unspeakable reasons?’ asked Billy,

‘Emotions,’ Smith said with clenched teeth, ‘Why do you think I live in exile. It must be obvious why I’m a recluse living in The Hall and had shut this out of my mind. Thinking this “obvious” should be warning enough.’

‘So, what about these “Smiths and higher”, those responsible for our delusions?’ asked Billy.

‘There is just one Smith who gave you power to create your dreams and nightmares. Who then gave others who had power these dreams and nightmares. And they then also created their own prisons.’

‘This other Smith then?’ asked Billy.

‘I sense him.’ said Smith.

‘Your opposite?’ asked Billy.

‘Impossible, us higher beings are beyond good and evil’ Smith replied.

‘But you are kind.’ the boy said, adding with a frown, ‘and the other Smith is bad.’

There was a silence.

Smith squinted then said ‘Gone, it seems it is gone, all are free.’

‘How?’ asked Billy.

Smith looked at the boy, the dog, then Billy, then said, ‘I suspect un-created by someone who I will not name.’

The dog looked at the boy, the boy looked at Smith then Billy.

Another silence,

‘And what about those agents carried off by dragons?’ asked Billy.

‘They were not dragons they were or are rather pterosaurs, and they brought the two agents back.’ the boy said

‘Back?’ asked Billy.

‘Back here, and I gave them their guns back with the special bullets, and they left, they needed them.’

‘For what?’ asked Billy.

‘Killing the dragons of course.’ said the boy.

Billy opened his mouth to speak, but there was nothing to say, then,

‘And the man and lady who ran away, do you know what happened to them?’ asked the boy.

‘You didn’t see them at the boathouse, I guess they were on one of their trips somewhere, but yes they are fine.’ said Billy.

So, Smith returned to his seclusion in The Hall of the Mountain King. Billy returned to the real Woodbridge, pleased to find the real Catherine Mulberry and Emily Clarke, and delighted on seeing his skiff from Ward End Park, now moored on the pond, or was it a small lake, or a gateway to wherever?

CHAPTER III III III III III III III III III III II KILLING THE
DRAGONS

The pregnant woman was clothed with the sun and appears, and the moon was under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. Then the red dragon rose from the pit, it had seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns.

The two agents, now in de-rigour black suits and shades drew their Glocks and shot it dead.

The war in heaven began, Michael and his angels no longer had a dragon to face.

And no longer could the dragon persecute the woman, she needs no wings to escape and so brings forth the man child.

The dragon being dead can't drown the woman clothed with the sun, or can it make war with the faithful.

A beast rises up out of the sea, like a leopard with feet of a bear, his mouth of a lion, having seven heads and ten horns, and on the horns ten crowns, and on his heads the name of blasphemy. Unfortunately, there is no dragon to give it any power. As one of its heads is fatally wounded by a sword, so it dies. No false image is created or worshiped.

The agents holstered their Glocks, one saying to the other, 'This now is real work, how many more to slay.'

'I'm not counting, but only the red ones!' said the other. They left to continue their quest.

And there was no fire on Mount Judd, strangely Mr and Mrs Atkins lived a happy life. And the Star Wars project was a

failure, not even reaching the test stage, the expense and “issues” with the new government, which involved Hope Murkowski and Ray Wood.

Ac mae'r holl ddreigiau coch, wedi marw ac yn cael eu trawsnewid gan bydredd.

