

POP

POWER OF PARADISE

A Tribute

P.O.P

power of paradise

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For further information please visit the website

Powerofparadise.org

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POWER OF PARADISE ----- P.O.P

The Power of

Paradise

... Is a choice away

The folly of wisdom is the ignorance of the unknown. But to drop a seed of beauty in the unknown is the wisdom of character.

All mankind are born with great gifts, some of whom you have nothing in common with; you are one of them. How you use that gift is the prelude to Paradise.

By Desirel

Dedication

To the child in all of us

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To all the teachers in my life, most of whom I never saw: I consider them the greatest inspiration in the world.

To all my family for their support and encouragement even though they may never understand me completely.

To those special friends who took their time to listen to me and gave me a reason to stay focused, when it was hard to keep pressing forward.

To the networks of families, charities, and organizations who show us all the strength of character.

To the heroes who died in their own way to make us part of a greater truth.

To those who make all our days a pathway of sharing and discovery for the greater good.

You make it all easier to count my blessings.

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INTRODUCTION

"The greatest knowledge of self any man will ever have is to know the character of his heart. Indeed, this is where the true complexity of man resides, the point from which all mankind connect, the place where we define ourselves and find our paths."

We all have within us a silent cry to be fully accepted. Extreme differences exist between individuals of the same race, nationality, gender, etc. who use it as a weapon against each other. This understanding of good or bad, acceptable, or unacceptable has been applied within the very structure of families beyond the stratification classes of society. It must be noted that outward appearances are not complete revelations about any individual at any time. Sometimes we train our minds to understand people in a different way and in the process develop automatic responses that are not truly justified. There are so many polarities within us and society; so many levels of opposites that may look irreconcilable but are the very ingredients necessary for the greatest transformations and breakthroughs that can ever be known. "Are these differences really absolute opposites or mirror images of who we are?" It takes a man and a woman to bring life to the earth.

In the same way I believe it takes what we consider opposites to create the greatest transformations. In this way the greatest achievements of anyone is a result of quiet moments, which I like to call dark moments of preparation, as in the night when we all sleep so that we can experience a new day. We are all connected for a greater revelation, even though some of our differences will never be eradicated, those differences summarize the complete set of keys to our greatest transformations if we take the

courage to sit down to truly learn, laugh, and transform together.

If every community taught themselves to embrace the best truths about each other, then we would see each other not as threats but as channels to create the most enchanting worlds ever known to man. We would see each other within the reflections of all generations.

Power of Paradise

Enjoy the short stories

Living Colors

All definitions are not created equal, therefore define yourself with the best representation of you and live beyond the page of collective stereotype.

I was running late. If I did not get out of the house within the next five minutes, I might not make it on time to this lecture. I recalled Professor Dr. James R. Harding was the special speaker.

I was in the bathroom dabbing my face with some ethyl alcohol. It felt refreshing to be clean. The brown bottle containing the ethyl alcohol had letters on it that spelled out "SPIRIT". I really wonder why they call it Spirit, must be a generic English term for alcohol. It doesn't really matter other than I can get the clean after-shower effect. I dabbed my face, took the cover and closed the bottle. I could still smell the strong scent of the "SPIRIT" as I walked out of the bathroom.

7:21PM the clock in the living room was speaking to me. I ran back to the room to get my leather coat. I made up my mind to wear the black one with the Kenneth Cole brand name. I started thinking of the collections of black leather jackets in the wardrobe. I really never get to wear them. I get so self-conscious of the kind of dominating presence it could sometimes exude. I was going through them frantically looking for the Kenneth Cole brand. I was whispering the names to myself in an attempt to locate the jacket speedily. "Eddie Bauer, Tommy, Perry Ellis, Klein, Ralph, Yves Saint Laurent, Armani, Gucci, Hunt, Cardin, dust! Where is this jacket?"

I started going back in memory tracing my steps in time. I remember meeting John at the Lavender Hotel Lounge on Vistroy Avenue. It was actually at the top suite of the hotel. He said something about the jacket. "You and your mobster styles" he had said. I had told him to cut it out. The finish to the product is exceptional" is part of what I must have said. I believe I was supposed to hear from him yesterday. He told me he would get back unfailingly five days from then.

I dashed out of the room and meandered through the kitchen with the whitewashed walls, eggshells I was once told by a painter. I love the kitchen looking sanitized and clean. It speaks a form of sophistication.

"Angelic" a guest of mine had said. "Light bounces off the surface of the walls and creates an extremely lively presence. Then you start chopping up the greens, yellow peppers, black olives, you bring out the cinnamon, brown sugar, and make a barbaric mess and then you eat and have to clean up." What else did she say?

"What are you doing?" I was thinking out loud. "Find your jacket, bozo! Your jacket is not here." I remember. The dark room downstairs in the basement.

I had converted the room in the basement to a dark room. To get a better effect on how dark I could make the room, I got a very rare black color paint from the Household Departmental Store. It was in the evening I now recall, and I knew dark or not, I needed to paint the room before dawn the following morning. When I had finished painting the room it was so black, even if you opened the door and light was shown elsewhere in the basement, it somehow managed to retain that dark impenetrable composition.

The paint had spilled on my skin that day, and I had to use the "SPIRIT" to get the black paint off, because so stark was

the difference, it looked like I had acquired a rare skin abnormality.

I had taken Photography at the Mason Art Institute. It was a two-year program that engaged some of the best and brightest mind in the field. Zhuhong Xu rated one of the best photographers in the world was actually in my project group in one of the classes. I remembered we called him Collins. We had once spoken about what a black room would look like, now I had one.

7:45PM the living room clock was speaking to me. This time the clock ticked more loudly. Tick tock, tick tock, a modern digital analogue wonder. I had to catch the subway train at 7:55PM. That would put me at the Peabody Lecture Hall at exactly 8:00PM, all variables being constant.

I would actually be cutting it close and hitting the lecture just when it starts. I should have been out by 7:30PM to ward off any surprises that could come up on my way to the lecture.

I started walking down the stairs of the basement three to four steps at a time. Almost there, almost there, I did a hard left, took a couple of quick paces and opened the door of my black room.

I know they say the world is going digital but developing a roll of film in the black room feels like I am taking part in that picture process of life. It gives me a different kind of attachment to memories, and a kind of serious appreciation of time. Well, that may be relative considering I am about to be late for James Harding's "Psychology of Colors".

The switch... I feel for the switch and tap it up with my fingers. The lights came on in the black room. "There you are." I

picked up the black leather jacket from the hook attachment, shook it firmly and warmed up into it, then raced back up the stairs.

7:53PM. Tick tock, tick tock, tick tock, it seemed the clock was moving ever faster. I took my keys off the oak wood dining table that could seat four in a communion with their hands.

Doing my last-minute checks, I walk out the door locking it behind me. When I got to the road I looked back! I left the lights on in my black room. It was cold and chilly outside and in the hustle of the street one could see the faint beginnings of a snowfall. It was already wet and slick. This was going to be one night!

I picked up my pace heading towards the station. The assortment of cars were cruising along with reckless detachment. Alas, a couple of yards away from the city's train station.

Someone was talking to me. I turned my head in the direction. What was he saying? I began hearing him clearer, staring a little too long at his black leather jacket and that yellow container in his hands jiggling with pennies, lots of pennies.

"Got change to spare? Need to get a brownie, just need something to eat tonight."

He had long dirty brown hair curled around the nape of his neck, and an open collar shirt revealing yet another encroachment of hair from his chest. When he spoke, you could smell a strong whiff of alcohol in his breath. I brought a dollar bill out of my pocket, constantly looking at the station while envisioning the stairs that would lead me to the 7:55 train. I could not miss this train. I was about to go down the steps but stopped.

I looked back at the man with the can of pennies. "Sir," I called out. He came running. When he got close to me, he raised his brow as if to ask and receive at the same time.

"What kind of jacket are you wearing?" I asked out of a curiosity that had suddenly taken over me.

"KC" he says.

"What is that?" I asked.

"KC, Kenneth Cole," he voiced it out with a resonating articulation so unlike how he spoke a moment earlier, and just as quickly changed back to a low and monotonous tone,

"Got more change to spare, need to get a brownie, just need something to eat tonight."

The train was arriving, and I could see the passengers approaching the platform. I took my leave running without looking back, breaking my pace only briefly to swipe my card.

"Hey!" the man with the yellow-can bellowed out, "You can have the jacket for ten bucks, you can dry clean it, it'll look like..."

I was running even faster, just a few more paces someone was barely making it through the door.

The door closed.

"Stand clear of the doors," the door to the coach I was to enter opened again.

I stepped in.

It looked like a festival in the coach. It was crammed up and I could see a little girl with long dark hair smiling bewilderedly as if to ask, how did you open the door?

The coach had started moving.

The people around me, most of them had wild paintings on their faces with tree leaves attached to their heads. The paintings on their faces seemed to be paintings done with the black tar used in paving the roads. They also had glossy dark colors, with green, yellow, white, and red markings. I caught the eyes of one of the standing passengers. He was looking directly at me. I look back with curious acknowledgement.

All of a sudden, he bared his extremely white teeth in what was seemingly a smile. So white were the teeth they looked like they had been painted with chalk. He kept baring, it changing his smile into a kind of menacing grin, and then suddenly turned his painted face into a concocting swirl of graffiti.

Then he started shouting with a breath as loud as he could muster, "Toouuuch Dooooown, weeeeeee maaaaaaaaade it!" So deafening was that noise. I was even more shocked when the rest of the coach passengers began drumming and banging every surface that could make a sound on the inside body of the coach.

"Peabody," the coach speakers alerted the passengers. The door opened. I stepped out of the coach just as quickly. They were starting another chant drumming with the insides of the coach.

"Good Lord," I took a last glance at the coach. The little girl with the long dark hair was now the center of attention. She

was dancing with a hysterical sway of her hips, swinging her hands over her head as if she were really walking with it. Just then I saw a group of people running towards me. I controlled my steps, calculating my moves. Just as fast they brushed past me. "Stand clear of the doors," the train speakers were alerting the passengers. I continued walking.

I was elevated out into the streets directly opposite the lecture hall. Lights littered the street. A bicycle was chained to a pole sign that read, "STOP" with its red and white markings. To my left about twenty feet away, I could see ladies near the shops talking seductively and men cajoling themselves with blissful disregard of the cold, hugging their hands under their armpits and chirping away. On a different occasion, I would have gone for a snack at the Tenzo bar adjacent to the entrance of the train station. From where I stood, I could see Tapar, the Bartender through the window divide. He knew I was not a drinker, but he always passed me a beer as if hoping I had managed to get a taste for it.

"Life is too bitter to add a beer, Tapar," I always said. Sometimes I would buy an O'Doul's just to indulge the day.

A slick black Mercedes Benz pulled up to a side of the curb opposite the bar, and a green Volkswagen bug was attempting to squeeze itself between a Yellow Dodge Viper and a Blue Ford Mustang on the other side of the road.

There was a perennial tree with its wide branches next to the cars, off the wide sidewalk not far from the curb. Probably the driver of the bug was looking for some shade.

The town was alight, and though it was dark out, many wandered in both directions as if in search of an arriving ship. Most of the city pedestrians walked fast while some walked slowly as if oblivious to the weather of the night. Still there were some who walked with aimless ambition, though

they all seemed to know where they were going. I guess that's why someone nicknamed this place downtown Sailor Spring, not that there is any dock around the area.

I crossed the street, looking to my left and then to my right as I did, then walked up the wide steps leading to the Peabody Lecture Hall. As I walked to the doors of the 19th Century Victorian building, I could see the dark, menacing sky taking a turn for the worse. The ground was receiving the first signs of snowflakes. Elsewhere, on another part of town, outside this city, this would be an empty, dark and cold night. I pushed through the revolving doors and walked up to the attendant nodding my head in a greeting.

The attendant was dressed in a navy-blue uniform wearing a cap that looked like one a navy officer would wear on duty.

"Room 625," I extend my pass to the Lecture. "Take the elevator to the top floor and make a left. You'll see a water fountain on the corridor, with a sign on it leading you to the room location. You have a good evening."

I said to have the same, nodding my head as I walked into the elevator. Someone in the lobby was approaching the elevator as well, by the looks he was of Asian ancestry.

I placed my hand on the door to allow him an opportunity to enter. As the elevator doors began to close, I could hear someone running towards the door. The click clack sound made by the shoe was controlled yet determined. The person stuck a hand into the elevator to stop it from closing, just as the oriental looking man pressed the open- d o o r button on the console. A woman stepped in. She was dressed in violet silky attire with silvery beads weaved about the neck of the dress. On her left hand she had a fur coat folded with neat precision and quiet elegance.

I was tempted to bare my teeth but gave up the thought. Instead, I nodded my head tilting it slightly to the left. She smiled as if thanking me for changing my mind.

The Asian man pressed the number six button on the elevator console. I had an uncomfortable thought but shrugged it off.

"You gentlemen going to the lecture?" she did not allow us to respond but continued talking.

"John Adams is such a great psychologist." I was tempted to correct the name. I did.

"Harding you mean."

"Yes Harding, Harding exactly," she took a quick breath and continued, her eyes taking on a different glow.

"He has three PhDs, he is an extensive traveler, and as a matter of fact I was at his lecture in Liverpool, England when I was on vacation. Such an amazing speaker. He is the Chair of the Scholar Society in Cambridge University. He is such a brilliant man." The woman's eyes were in a kind of awe. I was scared the class would be over once she stepped into it. The woman was asking the Asian looking man a question, something about where he was from.

"Second generation American" the Asian looking man replied. His English was so distinct and polished; it looked like he had memorized every phonetics and syllable of the American English Dictionary. The door to the elevator opened and just as quickly the woman's mannerism became extremely proper and focused. She stepped out, the Asian looking man motioned for me, and then he stepped out. We all headed for Room 625. We did not speak but like soldiers on a mission walked towards our destination.

The water fountain directed us to make a right. There were Vincent Van Gogh paintings, Monet paintings and other

rare paintings on the wall, including Presidents in full portraits lined across the walls. The corridor was large, full of subtle hues and

shades that harbored an inviting presence of opulence. It opened up into a big room full of woolly drapes and curtains of lush Persian designs. There was a dark colored oak wood partition dividing the room and bearing on its flat polished oak body a full live portrait of Abraham Lincoln, The President. The speaker was on the other side of the wood partition in the lecture room. The entrance to the Lecture Hall was one without doors, where each side, on the left and right of the partition one could see the hierarchy of guests as they sat in step like progression as in a movie theatre hall.

I could see the full audience now. The Asian looking man and the woman with the fur coat had gone ahead of me.

"Welcome, welcome, come on in," Professor Dr. James R. Harding declared with oratory indifference.

"I apologize, sincerely so. I notice some of you probably never received the memorandum explaining a slight change in the events of the day. We started at 7:00PM and would be out in the next fifteen to thirty minutes. Please have your seat and get comfortable. I will now continue on the definition of the color black, and feel free to ask questions when you want."

It was a large audience. A lot of nationalities were there represented. Asians, Middle Eastern, Africans, Europeans, Islanders, Mid Atlantic Countries, and the South Americas, It seemed they had flown in from all parts of the world for this lecture.

Professor Harding was speaking, "...being of the darkest achromatic value, producing or reflecting comparatively little and having no predominant hue. Having little or no

light, a black and stormy night, often black, of belonging to a racial group having brown to black skin especially one of African origin. Dark in color, as from soot, dirty, wicked, evil, cheerless and depressing marked by anger and sullenness. Often black, attended with disaster; calamitous, deserving of, indicating or

incurring censor or dishonor," he kept reading. His voice carrying with it a strong vibrant echo bouncing off the walls and pillars of the auditorium. With every word he spoke it seemed the quieter the room became. I did not think he even noticed what was going on in the audience, and if he did, he really didn't care.

Then he stopped. If someone had dropped a packet of pins on the lush carpet at this moment, you would flinch in fear of the taboo that had come alive. He kept the silence going for about ten seconds, but it seemed like an eternity.

"Fellows, comrades, this is the dictionary definition of the color black. Now I will try to go into my own psychological definition of the color. But before then what do you think of the definition? Remember it is to the extent that you participate in the world around you that you will define yourselves."

"I don't think there is anything wrong with it, it's just a definition of a color. Sometimes we take the meaning overboard." One of the members in the audience said.

Someone interjected, "I don't necessarily agree. I don't believe a race of people should be aligned with such outrageous definitions of a color."

Professor Harding raised his hands speaking, "Hush."

An eerie wave of silence fell on the audience.

"Can I hear from a black person please?" the Professor was speaking with a commanding eloquence. He was an older man, and the curves and lines of his face were Aryan in nature, with well-kept full black hair and a strong forehead. He wore a native looking shirt, more tropical in style, and you could tell he had some form of enculturation in the African Continent with the neck beads he wore. Would I dare say he was white and yet be mistaken?

I never really understood why most races were represented by their nationalities while races like the Europeans or their descendants were referred to as the white people and the Americans with an African origin were referred to as the black people. It would be interesting to see what analysis could be deduced from this lecture of multicultural diversity.

Someone was speaking.

"I am proud of the color, and I believe we have come a long way trying to make sense of the prejudices harbored against the color," someone interjected.

"I am from Jamaica, and I have the African skin, but they call me a Jamaican. I believe it is so wrong to call anyone a color because no person is an absolute color. I believe in love, and I think separating people into colors promotes hate."

Out of nowhere, loud animated conversations began in the audience; it seemed suddenly, that everyone had something to say. Even the quiet people around me had gone into a volley of discussions. A man to my right, a step above me was shouting.

"I'm Arabian, I am married to a black woman; I don't have a problem with that color."

"Thank you. I am a white man married to a black woman. I don't have a problem with the color."

The Professor was speaking, but I was swallowed up in the drama-taking place in the audience. Pens were jotting furiously. I had not noticed the cameraman, but now he was rolling his film, darting across the room in trained focus trying to capture conversations. Almost everyone had stopped looking at the Professor from their seats.

I looked at the board, passed the shoulders of the guests who were now in procession about to crowd around the Professor. Written on the white board were the letters in black "The Psychology of Colors". I could also see the woman in violet flirting with the Professor, but it seemed everybody with the Professor wanted some form of acknowledgment. Someone was walking down the steps to my left next to the Victorian window.

"Nice jacket."

"Thank you," I said, smiling up to the face at the same time. She was extremely beautiful, with long black flowing hair that seemed to reach the curve of her back. It would ache simply to look at her without getting to know her. It may do me good to catch up with her mind later on. Did she like the jacket because it was black, looks expensive, or is she looking for a night out so she could carry on a deep conversation on the topic on the board? I may be a better person for it. She smiled back and kept walking.

I looked outside the Victorian windows; the snowflakes were coming down. You could see the misty haze and panorama of the falling crystals as the wind drew languages and faces on the empty stretch of land. Across the divide you could see the flakes as they made that Christmas like pattern across the trees that separated the wing of the building I

was sitting in from the other wing. Suddenly, on the other side of the building, separated by the well-partitioned trees, a light came on in one of the dark Victorian rooms. There was a silhouette etched close to the window. I looked through my window at the silhouette a little longer as it moved against the backdrop. Then I looked up at the dark clouds streaming across the full moon in the night sky and closed my eyes.

The Professor was saying something. The last words I heard him say that day. "Fellows, comrades, the Washington Redskins are playing at the RFK and some of us would be heading in that direction. Feel free to come along and join us as we make a choice to celebrate the day."

In the dark room of my mind, I could not help but utter, "Welcome to the Capitol, Professor."

"...What if blacks were called Solarics, indicating a race of people who live where the solar heat of the sun is unusually high."

~ The Professor

The Pin

Who you are is not who you were but who you can always choose to be.

Open the fridge and get me a coke while you are at it."

Big Bun tried to cross his legs but stopped. He couldn't even lift it. But it didn't matter. You see Big Bun in his earlier days was one of the fastest running backs the Jets had ever had. He was sold to the Giants and that same year the Giants became the unbeatable maverick of the NFL championship.

Sometimes it takes just being part of the greatest memories to chill out and forget doing anything more. Big Bun believed he had done it all. He was looking at the food channel and then he stopped. Something was going through his mind.

"Shaitza, I am just 40, what the heck! All my boys are still partying, owning companies attending luncheons, looking young and handsome."

Leroy owned his parachuting company and has been flying out of planes ever since his contract ended.

John Divo is running his racecar company and is part of the fastest drag racing team in Florida. Eric Stanley is a football coach for the Blue Town Mavericks.

"Where is my bleeding Coke!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" he shouted with all the anger of a "touch down miss".

She was fine. She stepped in the room where Big Bun was sitting.

"Oh, Bun why are you so ang? Something I did? You know I got to tell you; you were a pretty good running back in the day." She puts the bottle of Coke in front of Big Bun and takes a seductive pose in front of him. You see beautiful is not good enough to describe Ms. Pearl Staten Lauren as she takes a step back revealing all those perfect curves that....

"You remember Tripper Joe," Pearl looked at Big Bun knowing fully well that Tripper Joe was the reason for the interception that cost them his last game. He was the best. Tripper had the highest number of interceptions ever recorded in NFL history.

Big Bun looked at her with a dirty smile.

"I think it's time you call it a day. Don't you have somewhere to go?" Big Bun looked at Pearl and knew he just had to give it to her. She was really good.

"By the way, these are the pack of pins you wanted... Hope it helps. I will see you tomorrow morning."

Pearl took her leave from the room and placed all four packs of pins on the soft leather couch where Big Bun was sitting. Each of the boxes had 600 pins with loose covers keeping it in place.

She smiled at Big Bun.

He heard the door close behind Pearl.

A big party was taking place in the basement and the first floor. His son was making a good noise of his own with all his friends."

Big Bun was once known as the best party MC in his younger days. He could keep the town going for days.

He looked at the pins, and he knew Pearl was being a little too smart with the pins she placed with the loose covers next to his buttocks. He didn't need all those pins, and he definitely did not need them in such close proximity to his butt.

He knew she knew it took him at least three tries or more to get off the couch.

He picked up the bottle of coke taking a long drink of determination. He had to go to the patio, something he never fails to do every night. It's like a ritual for him that keeps him going, looking at the city lights and the cars streaming past. He had worked hard to get to this point in his life. He was damn sure not going to allow the packs of pins to get in his way.

He looked at the patio, and then took a look at the pack of pins. "Do or Die." He had to find a way to get the pins off the couch, his first and best strategy. As he tried to get his elbow in position to locate the pins, he brushed on the covers of the pins, and they all spilled on the soft leather cushion.

"Not a problem" he said to himself, "I just have to get off this couch. "Staten!"

He placed his hand on the couch in his usual position to get off the couch and felt one of the pins nab at his finger. He held it in, and then it started coming back, all those football days.

The pins were all over the couch.

"Stateeeen!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! You f#\$%\$#@"

Big Bun was off the couch standing. He thought he would be on the couch for his usual second try but he was not. He stood for a moment with a smile on his face, and then he

fell back on the couch, all the pins poking him at the same time.

The truth was simple he had dealt with greater hits in his days; it's funny how a simple pack of pins was making him act like a baby. He was never angrier. In a flash all the hits seemed like a simple blow. He looked at the patio and got off the couch.

He grabbed the cordless phone on his way and dialed his doctor who just so happened to be a coach.

It was time for a change.

Doctor Vex was in his living room when the call came in.

"Doctor Vex speaking"

"This is Ben"

"Ben how are you doing? What do I owe this call to?"

"Vex, this is a little serious and I am damn sure not going to get anything but a YES from you." "What is it?" Vex holds the fun.

"Seven months you and I."

"I leave tonight. It's time for a change"

"Change I can believe in" Vex hangs up the phone.

The door opens.

"Anyone in? Hey there Big Bun, I forgot my purse." Pearl looked at Big Bun on the patio.

"I don't think you have ever forgotten your purse before. Did you come to get your purse or to check on your pack of pins?"

Big Bun looked at Pearl not knowing whether to thank her or to fire her.

"Oh, the pins I hoped it helped. I got more if you need it. I have one more pack left."

FIVE MONTHS LATER Big Bun? It can't be you! It's me and do me a favor call me

"The Rock."

The Pencils

Everything you do is a picture with meaning, able to carry a life of its own. To paint interesting pictures with time is the doorway to your greatest memories.

I am so beautiful in that picture, my curves, my body so elegant in that satin lace sheet.

Oh, did you see how I gracefully slept on the bed? I was ecstatic."

I had my voluptuous breast full and bulging as my hands dangled across the bed, the round hole of my belly button, the lashes of my eyes, the life in my eyes and my full lips. Oh, the parting of my legs was so perfect, my hair was silky, just makes you wanna touch. Oh how I come alive when he enters the room."

"OK, OK, OK, we have heard enough, actually I am beautiful too. It's just that I happen to be dressed. You should see me in my fur coat, with the plaited hat, my high heeled shoes, my diamond necklaces, while I sit at the elegant ebony table, with the glass of champagne and oh the elegant man next to me. Isn't he just gorgeous?"

"Well, I would like to keep my mouth shut but I can't help hearing you gals over here". I happen to be the most handsome guy in the room given all my competition in the room, and if you just look at my car, you can tell nothing was left to the imagination when it comes to how hot I can really be. Check out the rip in my shirt, the muscle lines that get all the attention. Something about the bar I came out of that night is really out of the ordinary with all those people taking

pictures of me. Wow if you could see the attention, I was having...

"OK young man, don't get too carried away with your fancy. I happen to be one of the very first guys to make it on the file. I am the most enchanting and the wisest guy in the room. This is why I occupy the most important location in this building right next to the man himself, except for the wife who is quite breathtaking to the look."

"Thank you, somehow you all forget that I am his most cherished, and the most loved of all. I don't want to sound too special; but it is me that makes all of you worth his presence. I am the one who puts the fuel in his ability, don't you guys ever forget that."

"Alright, I can hear you from my room, and I am not exactly impressed by your arrogance. If I did not have that boy, you would sit somewhere getting booed out of a crowd. So, get your facts straight. I was his first...

"Well now, before saying you were his first remember, when we got married and had him, I encouraged him to do what he does now. He does it so well. As a matter of fact, I was his first. I can remember telling him to sit down and....

"Shhhhhhhhhhh!!!!!! I think I can hear him coming up the stairs."

As the door opens and the light flickers, the guests take on a greater life of their own, each one bringing out vibrancies that was so enchanting.

He walks over to the canvass and picks up one of his pencils.

As he does, her voice comes back to life.

"He's picked me again!"

Whispers

"He is drawing a baby."

"That's my child, *thank you.*"

Change Me

Every path has a past, but the step that gives a man his wings is in the life he gives.

What is the quality of your income Mr. Stringer?"

The bald-headed man sat at the desk opposite the business tycoon, a copy of the morning newspaper lying on the desk. He asks this question all the time when dealing with his clients. Max Forbes had met different kinds of men in his days. The world kept giving him this kind of clientele because it seems a lot of his clients had some kind of conscience driven agenda to take care of. He cleaned their slate by giving them a conscience driven portfolio to invest in.

Mr. Leech Stringer shifted in his chair looking extremely thoughtful for a moment and then he began to talk.

"I need to sleep well at night and run and play around like a child. I just can't find that side of myself anymore. I am tired." He stopped talking briefly.

"Tired of being a man behind a mask. I just need some peace."

"That's why I am here, Mr. Stringer," Max looked at the older man, his eyes sending an unmistakable message of trust.

The door to the office opened; Ms. Kevlan poked her head in. "Sir you have a private call coming in."

"Mr. Stringer, you must excuse me a minute." He stepped out of the chair and went to an adjacent room.

You could see Max between the glass partitions dividing the two offices as he walked towards the phone on a large conference room table. That was the private room for his most disturbed clients. He picked up the phone and started talking. Max turned around, his back facing the room he just left and began to gesture with his hands. You could tell it must be something important. The conversation carried on for about three minutes and then he dropped the phone. He stood in the same position for roughly thirty seconds. Then he looked at Mr. Stringer from the partitioned window. He started walking towards the door leading to the office where Mr. Stringer was patiently waiting.

As the door opened, the tenseness in the air was as thick as a wall.

"Mr. Stringer, why are you here?" Max's voice was tense, his face expressionless.

"I am in a kind of trade."

"What kind of trade?" Max looked at Mr. Stringer.

Mr. Stringer smiled with tightened lips and looked at Max squarely in the eyes.

"Everything there is; Engineered diseases, prostitution houses, drug manufacturing, child exploitation, kidnappings, organized gangs, assassination camps, funded military coup d'etats and a whole lot more.

I try to be good, so I have serious shares in major pharmaceutical companies, health care infrastructures across the world, everything business out here both the good and the bad. I create wars with carefully orchestrated timetables and own some of the largest law firms in different parts of the world. I could buy a soul without raising a finger."

He stopped and looked at Max, his eyes taking on a strange coldness. Suddenly his voice took on a different tone.

"I have not been very happy with myself lately. I am running out of territories to exploit, and it seems I may have started exploiting myself."

"I am listening," Max gestured with his hands to continue.

"Max," his voice had a peaceful calm within it, "I would like to transfer all my key assets to your security holdings."

The room was silent as both men looked at each other, a calm confusion going on in Max's mind as he tried to digest his new arrival.

"Would you help me, Max?" His voice was calm yet determined.

"I don't know how to begin," Max looked at Mr. Stringer.

"Who are you?"

"I am Leach Stringer."

The conversation on the phone had startled him. Someone had sent him a parcel in the mail. It was waiting for him at home. A note accompanied the envelope which read, "Do not judge me by my gift; judge me by my will to change."

These words echoed through his ears as he stared at the older man.

All Max's workers were veterans whose principle of operation was strictly under a mission statement. Receive assets of any client who wishes to invest in a free world economy ensuring the quality of living in a safe environment for all, with the understanding that their continued business activities are revised to demonstrate this mission statement as well. It was a non-profit organization.

For all he knew this kind of man could not appear on the news if in fact he is who he claims to be. If they even thought of working with him, he has to come clean with all his records something Max could not begin to conceive.

"I do not know how you keep track of your assets Mr. Stringer, considering the magnitude of what I am hearing. I am not even sure we are qualified to manage your kind of assets."

Something about his eyes was without guilt, but you could tell he needed some consolation that no man could give him.

He looked at Max and began to talk.

"I had a boy once, but I lost him. I never found him again. He would be your age if he were alive. But anything could have happened to him."

"I also have a girl, very beautiful but she's been in a coma since the day she was born. Who knows what kind of life she would have had? But I watch her growing on that bed totally oblivious to this world we live in. Who knows if she sees us? I lost her mother to cancer when it was still not clear what the causes were. She was the mother of my son as well."

He looked up at the ceiling of the office, his eyes taking on a concentration that looked out of this world.

"I lost all my brothers and sisters, including my father and my mother in a war I did not understand." Mr. Stringer stopped talking, his presence filling the room with a calm that was heaven like.

"I have no regrets, because I cannot afford to have one to be who I am. I just need to find a way to forgive the world." Max looked at Mr. Stringer. He did not know what it was but in that short period he had come to like the man.

"I don't know what to say Mr. Stringer, but you alone have the power to change your world around. I regret to say, but I do not have the kind of resources that can help you. I know you can change your world around if you so choose."

Mr. Stringer squinted his eyes with a tight smile, the type of smile that seemed to say, "I understand".

Then he stood up from the chair he had been sitting in all along. He had his hat resting on his lap, which he now picked up and placed on his full white hair.

"Thank you for the time." Mr. Leach Stringer tipped his hat. He opened the door and walked out of the office.

After the door closed Max Forbes responded, but it was in a whisper, "anytime Mr. Stringer."

He stood in the same position for a while trying to comprehend the meeting with the tycoon.

He had to go home. The thought of Mr. Stringer lingered over his mind as he made his way around the desk to retrieve his personals. He knew Mr. Stringer was sincere in his desire to exercise his conscience, but he really did not know where to begin with that kind of account. Max was more than a little disoriented. He would have to record this meeting for the benefit of a board decision over issues of this magnitude.

He stepped out of the office.

Ms. Lucy Kevlan was sitting at a desk typing away.

"Ms. Kevlan, did you see the elderly man who just walked out of the office?"

She was puzzled.

"I did not notice anyone. I am busy working on the minutes of the Teflon case. Is there a problem?"

"No not at all," Max looked at the elevators then at the staircase leading to the entrance of the building.

"I am out for the day, Ms. Kevlan."

"Have a good day, Mr. Forbes." Lucy smiled briefly and continued with the minutes.

Where would he be without her? He thought briefly.

He headed for the staircase moving faster than usual. Something about Mr. Stringer was contrite. He could not give up on it.

The rotating doors of the building led him out into

the streets. He scanned the street looking in both directions. Mr. Stringer was nowhere in sight. He took his keys out of his right pocket and proceeded to the garage.

It was a cool day, the breeze of the evening bathing him from all directions as he opened the door leading to the garage elevators.

Mr. Forbes' vehicle was on the third floor. The elevator door opened. He pressed the number three on the console.

The doors of the elevators opened revealing two men standing next to a Porsche sports car presumably talking business.

He started heading in the direction of his car when his phone rang.

It was Lucy.

"When would you like to schedule the meeting tomorrow?" Lucy's voice was sharp and crisp as usual.

"Let me call you back in an hour." Max opened the door of the BMW.

He entered the car and started the ignition. He checked his rear- v i e w mirror; the two men were no longer there. He pulled out of the parking space and headed for his house. It took him barely fifteen minutes to get home navigating his way through the expanse of green fields and golf courses. "Good afternoon, Mr. Forbes," Ms. Ruby Dilwood greeted him. She was taking the dogs on a walk.

"Good afternoon, Ruby."

He opened the door to the house, his mind leading him to the anonymous gift.

He saw it. It was lying on his coffee table. Mr. Forbes picked up the envelope.

He placed his index finger beneath the perforated seal and opened the envelope. He lifted out the contents and placed it on the table. There were title deeds, ordinance survey maps, contact numbers of attorneys and a number of other documents.

Max took his time. He picked up a title. It was an absolute title registered to his company "Business Alliance Security Holdings". He counted seven titles in all. He picked up the survey maps and began looking at the details. The absolute title deeds were registered land titles for seven different islands, all uninhabited. He looked on the table and picked up a card. "Do not judge me by my gifts; judge me by my will to change. I trust you to do something beautiful with this."

It was signed "L.S".

Max Forbes picked up the phone dialing away.

Divergent Doctrines

Crossing over to the world that takes you higher is only a dream away, as real as the next journey you take.

I have been in here too long, Mr. Limer, I need someone to r e l i e v e me right away." The phone reception was breaking, and he needed a response.

"Someone should be there in thirty minutes. Hold still and keep the light burning."

Dell held up the tungsten light in the tunnel, the droplets of water echoing throughout the length of the discovered route. He placed the light closer to the side of the wall of the tunnel. The distinct face of a child was carved on the wall. Curious, he used his hands to brush the white dust off the carving. A lot more was going on beneath the dust. More faces were lined across the section of the tunnel where he stood.

His adrenaline was rushing.

There was a name on the wall. On a closer look he saw several names. Tione Quane 127, Evelyn Cole 812, Trisha Mark 515, what was he looking at? The numbers of carved faces were becoming staggering as he began walking the length of the tunnel. Dell was doing a routine investigation, but this job had been quite peculiar from the start.

"Watch for any strange activity," he had been told.

He was informed that the route was under surveillance. The surveillance had been going on for six weeks after a strange

light was spotted over the skies directly above the tunnel. The light had been focused with such precise glow over the radius of the location where he stood.

He looked at his watch. It read 1.00am. He looked at the ladder leading directly to the exit at the top of the tunnel. It was ten yards away from him. Something about the tunnel was so calming and peaceful. He wondered whose faces were painted on the wall. He started following the trail of faces. The tunnel was roughly eight feet wide and twenty feet high. The grooves of the granite stone that shaped it in place were impeccable. The water droplets started getting louder as he made his way through the tunnel. It was dark but the light he held made it bearable. Then something strange began to happen. The granite stonewall was becoming bright and began giving out its own light. Dell stopped, holding on to his tungsten light a little tighter. The source of the droplets of water was now clear. A sudden thirst came over him. He proceeded to the water source walking towards it as if pulled by some force.

In a trance like motion, he cupped his right hand holding the tungsten light with his left until the water was a handful. Dell took a gulp.

Suddenly light filled the tunnel as far as the eye could see. Dell was in a state of utter peace he could not understand. He could sense deep within him the sounds of a new world. He could hear it all around him. "Hello Dell, we have been expecting you, not to worry we have a place made out for you."

The voice was leading him. He was walking and yet not walking; it was as if he was floating. He started to see the circular exit of a cave like an entrance as it revealed a clear blue sky.

A City.

He tried to take a deep breath but realized that his whole body was breathing.

"Welcome to Sai." A being dressed in what looked like natural fur was standing beside him.

"You will need to wear one of these." The being handed Dell a fur looking attire. Dell accepted the suit, and just as he thought to wear it, he was dressed in it.

"In this city Dell, shelter is everyone's right, and the most beautiful thing food is grown everywhere. A cloud castle is arriving for you.

Are you ready?"

The being was not talking but was simply communicating thoughts to Dell.

Dell had stopped speaking for a long time. He understood what was communicated but he had been awe struck for a while. He began to regain his composure. Then he started speaking before uttering the words. Dell realized he was no longer making use of his mouth.

The being continued to communicate.

"In this city we speak with our thoughts. Every thought form is measured according to the energy of light transmitted. Your thoughts are a necessary tool to the survival of the city. It cannot be used against any neighbor. It cannot be used for destructive purposes against another. You have only to think a bad thought and the epsilon cloud layer will redirect the thought to your domain. Your thoughts if shrouded in good will exhale back to you a healthy living domain. In

other words, you can choose how your state of affairs will be simply by the way you think."

"I understand." Dell's thought was speaking.

"We enjoy different sports in this city, and that's what I will show you next. No one enjoys staying at home if they can work while playing. You get to develop your mind through the right thoughts and thereafter you will be positioned next to your desires. You will be seeing a lot of Sai princes and princesses very soon, so I suggest you be prepared for a warm welcome like no other.

Do me a favor and answer me a question. In the land of your dwelling how come your people don't understand this gift of existence?"

"What do you mean?" Dell's thought spoke.

"They do not all work while playing. Many work to survive which always tends to destroy them after a while, because their means to survive can be lorded over them."

"It may seem so, but everyone fends for themselves to allow the life of play they truly desire." Dell thought out.

"Then you will understand why in this city it is unnecessary to die. We cannot die because it is not an option that is welcome. We are so preoccupied with the next great thrill that we do not have time to die or nurse babies too often. And when a baby is to be born everyone is involved in making that child exceptional to the creative pool of this city. You see, every child is a gift of creativity, born with such unique abilities that have its own applications to the play capacity of the creative pool."

"How are they born?" Dell asks with a thought.

"They are born much the same way your children are born; except they are always born within the thought of good. Remember our city is highly developed in comparison to yours. Your dwelling has much to learn in terms of how they choose to think. Pain is not always a good thing if not accompanied by the right thoughts towards its fellow man. But I beg to continue about my city for you will see many things here that will make you understand why there is a gulf between us that cannot be easily decrypted. Even if you did, the epsilon layer will destroy most of you by virtue of your own thinking. The epsilon layer happens to be a prerequisite to our existence much like the gravity of your world."

"When you say thinking what exactly do you mean?" Dell's thought was speaking.

"Just think good thoughts all the time; it is the simple rule."

"Well, it is not easy to think a good thought if other's think bad thoughts." Dell spoke out a thought.

"True, but it is a choice to consider another's negative thoughts towards you. You have a choice to think good thoughts regardless of their thoughts. This is why you are here. The epsilon seeks out a specie of your kind for the uplifting of your kind. Your world is truly a strange breed; if they master the art of good thinking then they will understand the thrill of playing. Unfortunately, most of them will not see this kingdom simply because of the placement of their hearts to the good."

"How so?" Dell's thought spoke.

"Right now, the doors of epsilon have been breached by your dwelling in a quest for gains, and our universal law by nature will have to destroy thought forms that arise from your

domain. If any vessel of your land chooses to approach the epsilon, they will all be destroyed by virtue of their thought, especially if the thought does not align with the laws of this universe."

"What is the law? And by the way I never got your name."

"I am Lord Arowar," the being bowed its head.

"The law is within all. It is that which seeks the best in all. It is conceived of love."

Something was approaching fast, and Dell could see the lines of light waves making grooves in the Sai sky.

"Rise with me," the being communicated with Dell. Dell's thought was transformed into action. He rose from what appeared to be a cloud of precious stones. He was suspended in the Sai air. The vessel doors opened to reveal a woman like creature.

"Beautiful," the thought escaped Dell's mind and was uttered.

"You did not think before you thought. She is beautiful and she is your guide. She is also your partner in this journey of the Sai Kingdom." Lord Arowar patted Dell on the shoulder.

"I am Elswin, Princess Elswin. Come with me, I would like to show you your castle."

Lord Arowar looked directly into Dell's eyes putting a hand on his shoulders.

"Dell remember always think a good thought."

Suddenly Dell began rocking sideways. Dell opened his eyes and looked around. He was in his jeep parked by the side of

the road. In his right hand he was holding a bottle of Sky. The sun was rising.

A Warning

The priorities we live by determine the pleasures we live by, therefore define your priorities before you define your pleasures.

It was summer in New York; the birds were perching on the balcony of Ms. Denver's home as they usually do in the afternoons, beautiful birds of different colors. I looked at the building a little curiously and thought, "Oh my God, I hope the kids were not playing next to the new pool being built behind my house."

You see, the ladies love having fun. Nothing wrong with it but I had a problem with the undivided attention when they get carried away. You can't seem to ever get their attention once that happens. I will be having fun very soon, it seems that's all we do here, dance till there is a reason to do something a little more involved, and that could be anything from painting, playing violins, playing cards, shooting pots and cans, climbing trees, building cellars, pools, all kinds of stuff. Seems like there is nothing short of fun going on in the building because it is about the only thing that makes time a welcome affair.

Now this was not the first time we had little kids at the building. It was important we kept them safe, comfortable, confident, and as daring as life will carry them. There is nothing like growing old too soon. Seems like we all grow at different rates, but time is a gift we all share somehow and that is why everyone is a cherished gift here in my sweet home of New York right in the heart of Manhattan.

I flicked on the lighter and put the flames to my cigar planting a kiss on its round butt. I could see her across the street as I walked towards her building. She was my second wife, they get spoilt and prefer women and there is nothing you can do but love them, because the alternative is much worse. So here is my cigar smoking away.

The pool was on my mind as I blew the air out my nostrils. Mr. Jenkins wanted to throw a party for the kids at the house; he was my teacher in school so I knew it would be a respectful thing to do. But I was just a little concerned. For precautionary measures, I had asked one of our smart wire guys, as I like to call them, to keep the pool perimeters taken care of. So he put all the little gizmos together to alert anyone in case we went past the boundaries. Well, was I up for a surprise or what?

Someone or something must have made a dash for the invisible beams because the alarm went off with a blare so deafening, I actually had a momentary paralysis. He must have thought I was dealing with grownups.

I should have been a little more specific and outlined that the main reason I needed the trippers was to keep kids out of the pool. Then I would have opted for a more cautionary solution to my concern, more like building walls!

I was looking at her transfixed as if in shock. The sound of the alarm continued throughout the building. I looked at "Miss Too Wild" my nickname for this naughty beauty. I was already at her place and had gotten comfortable in a towel. Hot coffee was on my lips but before I knew what was going

on, I was running out the door with the towel on my bum.

Crazy!!!! The kids are in the building. I threw the coffee cup on the grass to gather more momentum. I tried holding onto my towel a little longer, but I needed more momentum and

had to let go. Somehow, I knew I had to sprint across to the house. When I got to the gates, I remembered I left the remote at Ms. Too Wild.

The ladder: Lucky enough the builders had left one not far from the wall. Woo, I was sweating. I dashed for the ladder, climbing each rung as fast as I could. I went for the walls and dashed towards the house and then through the doors. The doors were open. The security cameras were on. The intensity of the experience was so overwhelming. Well, all kinds of things were going on to say the least.

I busted into the room

Mr. Jenkins was with the kids.

"How are you doing student, tripped the alarm to get your attention?"

I looked at Mr. Jenkins with a smile on my face.

"Not bad at all." It changed to a kind of self- directed smirk.

"Hey there young ones, this is my student, Mr. Roy"
Now on the anatomy of the body I have a few things to explain to you.

Jasper was smiling, still, and acting like a statue. She was naked.

Turn around Mr. Roy, I am teaching a lesson showing the differences between a male and female anatomy.

Quietly I told myself, "Never let your guard down like this again."

Cultural Insanity

To break away from sanity is to forget the bridge of unity that connects us all together.

Trying to understand this analogy of the melting pot society, you gain insight into something a little more profound. We cannot all be sane depending on what we call sanity, because one man's level of sanity is equal to insanity in a different plane of reasoning."

Chi Zhong stopped and looked at the group of different students from different cultural backgrounds.

Chi continued.

"I have a level of sanity through culture that has been passed down from many, many generations that brings out the best in my thinking and my character. Not only do I see progress I see possibilities never imagined by virtue of this cultural upbringing."

Chi tapped his palm with a ruler.

"So, I would like to know how you define the sanity of your generation or your culture."

A lady responded with a level of understanding on the subject.

"Culture could be an abstract way of looking at things. For instance, a culture learns to be patient with their young

ones, stern, when necessary; learns to respect their elders, and engage in a host of other behavior that has proven successful for many generations.

However, if the teaching curve changes and the younger ones think faster than their parents then the burden of responsibility shifts. They start thinking for their parents and indirectly become parents on several issues."

"And why is that so?" Chi looks at Pat.

"...Because the parents are incapable of making decisions with the same level of understanding. They are forced to make compromises to think along with their young ones to co-exist in a rapidly evolving culture. It just so happens that the young ones seem to have a better exposure to the subject in a way their parents never had access."

She stops talking.

Chi raises his hands and stares at the class for a moment.

"I guess this will account for the unruly child who believes he or she knows everything and must not be spoken to. I like that analogy, anyone else?"

"I believe technology plays a big factor in changing the cultural way of doing things. It places a lot of options in our hands and gives everyone the room to take on values outside their culture that could be self-destructive or self-enlightening," another student said.

Pat was sitting in front of the class not far from Chi who was pacing the length of the front of the class periodically.

Pat kept talking.

"When changes take place so rapidly in a particular culture that defines the activities of the world then you must keep up, or you will be left behind by that culture or endeavor. It is even more challenging when factors that guide our use of information is uncontrollable."

"I would like the class to treat the culture of a society as the mind of a society and I would like to engage a discussion."

He tapped the ruler on his palm.

"You will agree that once a mind or culture stops to think or is not capable of thinking in its accustomed way you are in a state of death, even if you were breathing or saying words that have meaning. In a culture experiencing death, it means the society can no longer think coherently by itself and has to be led by uncertain guidelines. Now when that culture tries to merge previous ways of thinking to an accelerated way of thinking, chaos erupts because it defies previous patterns of reasoning. This is simply because our way of understanding within a culture has evolved beyond the rules that guided previous understandings within the culture. When man starts to fly, he cannot be governed by the rules of men that only know how to walk on land.

The same way people that live together and learn together within a culture have a better chance of evolving together. As long as the rules that govern chaotic tendencies within the culture are applied to ensure that it blossoms to its full potential."

Chi paused and then continued speaking.

"For instance, if the only transport vehicle you can operate is a car, and I give you a plane, you will be extremely

intimidated by the proposal. And if I decide to teach you how to fly a plane but you insist that you will use the rules of driving an automobile to operate the plane, you will be in for a rude awakening. Now if I took you through a learning process of operating a plane and you are a willing student, you will master the skill even though you have only learned how to operate a car." Chi stopped talking and motioned for a student to voice her opinion.

"Mushta go ahead, what do you have to say on this?"

"When an evolving mind or culture creates things unknown before, that one exercises reason and transforms his or her mind and the state of the world in the process. It really does not matter what that person creates. Actually, we all have a freedom of choice to exercise reason."

Suddenly as she was speaking an explosion tore through the building next door. The glass shattering noise sent the whole class to the floor; flames rising through the building as more explosions sent shattered glass ricocheting into the classroom. Three windows in the classroom shattered and then the lights went out.

Chi was lying on the floor; all the students were positioned on the floor. There was a quiet moment before the flames tore through the classroom. Chi was thinking, and he knew any delay on his part could cost the lives of his students. He knew all the students by name. He had a plan. He could hear some of the students in pain. He started calling out their names.

"When I call your names say, "YES". Then crawl immediately to the wall where I am. He started rattling off names of ladies first.

Carolyn

"Yes" Beth

"Yes"

"Tisha, Agah, Lopez, Mushta, Namib, Britney, Corey." They all answered crawling to the side of the wall where Chi was.

He was calling out the guys; three had crawled over to the side of the wall.

"Antoine, David, Hector, Bruce, Ali, Malik, Shawn.

Let's get out of here."

They were all accounted for. Some of the students had been cut badly. Chi pulled out the mobile phone in his pocket and dialed the campus security.

"Campus Security" a woman answered.

"Twenty students including myself are located at the southwest wing of the cultural science department building. One of the buildings has just gone up in flames and some of my students are cut badly. The fire is seeping through the building, but we will try to make our way out." Chi waited for a response.

"Your location has been noted. We will be sending a team out. Proceed with caution through the fire exit doors. Can you hold the line?"

"I really don't think so. We have to get out of here as soon we can." Chi hangs up the phone.

The smoke was getting heavier. It was dark except for the occasional flare of light. The exit doors were located outside the classroom at the end of a long corridor. Chi and the students were on the middle floor of the building. At first it seemed it was only the building next door that went into

flames. However, the building where Chi was teaching had also erupted into flames.

They had to get out as soon as possible. The door to the classroom was ajar.

"Everyone place your hands on the person next to you because we will be moving very fast out of the doors. On the count of three we will all file out the door. Please try to hold your breath and march with your backs bent and your heads towards the floor."

"1! 2! 3!"

The procession of students headed for the door, the sound of their shoes crushing the shattered glass on the floor. They were marching along fast. The building was spitting fire and the smoke was becoming unbearable. They headed for the fire exit doors that would lead them to the ground floor. Chi went ahead of the marching class guiding the way through the corridor of rising flames and dark smoke. They moved with their hands on each other's hips steadily approaching the exit doors.

Mr. Potter was in the helicopter hovering over the burning buildings. The sound of the rotors alerted the surrounding community of the disaster. Two other helicopters were hovering a distance away in what looked like a triangle. The spreading flames were proving fatal to the other buildings at the outskirts of the campus.

From his sky view Mr. Potter could see several fire trucks and ambulances as they made their way toward the location of the burning buildings. The siren lights were making patterns on the road as they weaved in and out of the traffic. The traffic on the road was accumulating steadily with several drivers stepping out of their vehicles to take in the scene.

Mr. Potter was a trained member of the ambulatory team. He had been radioed in at precisely 9.02 pm. As he looked at his two other team members off in the distance, he couldn't help staring at the picture of his two children taped to the dash panels. Kerry was six and Jonathan was eight. He remembered how long it took to have Jonathan his first child. When Betty finally became pregnant, he could not contain his joy. He had loved Betty with his very life at that point. The pleasure of having a child was the most rewarding experience of his life. He made a vow the day he heard the news that he will protect the lives of every child out there in his world. He immediately volunteered for the fire department. And when he had his daughter, he knew he would lavish every good gift on her.

It could have been one of his children in that building trying to make it out. As he waited for the signal that will allow him to lower the craft something kept nagging at him. Two weeks earlier he had been at a fire scene that took the lives of several residents at a commercial building. It was a prank played on unsuspecting people. The arsonists have still not been identified.

Now, as he watched the fire trucks below extinguishing the flames, he wondered what Jonathan was doing.

Suddenly his team's audio relay cranked to life startling him from his thoughts.

"Triangle team, the building is down. No trace of the students or the teacher. We have lost communication with three of our men in the building."

On the ground the firemen were working with their hoses trained on the buildings, the anxiety of the crowd rising in anticipation of the rescue of the teacher and his students.

The rescue team had been working tirelessly to penetrate the collapsed building.

It was dark at the base of the stairs. Somehow, she knew they were all trapped in a very cramped up space but there was no sound. She remembered Chi pulling the pin out from one of the fire extinguishers on the wall, and spraying the contents to make way for them, when suddenly the floor gave way beneath them. She was slowly passing away. Her hand was in her jacket holding onto the notes she had made in the classroom to share with the class. She closed her eyes.

The rescue team had gone in full force as soon as they got the call. The fire that enveloped the building made it very hard to enter the building. Three firefighters from the Bravo team had gone into the building. Andrew had lost communication with all three of them. For over three hours they tried to penetrate the wreckage of the burning building. The heat was unbearable.

As Andrew lead his crew through the wreckage according to the emergency exit plans, his audio relay came to life.

"Bravo Team this is Patrick. Patrick calling in to report location, we have found the bodies."

Andrew pressed the relay "Proceed with location."

"We are at the Southwest building, must make access through the basement of the building."

"Give me status of James and Courtney," Andrew radios back.

"James and Courtney present at location."

"Can you give status of the teacher and the students?" Andrew radios back using his hands to direct the rest of his team to the back of the building that will lead them to the basement.

There was a brief silence as the radio relay came back to life.

"I don't know how to start but they all seem to be in a kind of deep sleep. Something else that looks quite strange. They are all lying next to each other. I really don't understand. This is really out of the ordinary. We need at least twenty beds immediately."

As Mr. Potter lowered the craft, he wondered how he could do more for the world around him. The medic team was pushing the last of the victims. Police cars were all over the place bringing order to the chaos around. Several ambulances had scuttled away with several of the victims toward the nearest intensive care facility.

Drew, one of Mr. Potter's assistants was at the back of the hovercraft with three other assistants.

As he landed the craft on the ground, he went to the back making a hand signal to Drew to catch his attention.

"Can you take over the craft?" Mr. Potter was speaking quietly to Drew. Drew stood up patting him on the back and taking over the controls of the craft.

As the last of the victims were rolled towards the craft Mr. Potter kept wondering why someone would go out of their way to make a scene of this magnitude.

A month earlier a friend had told him to seek political office where he can make an impact with his ideas. As they rolled the last of the victims towards the craft, he walked toward the moving bed taking over the pushing of the bed. The oxygen mask on her face could not hide the beauty of the girl. She must have been in her late teens. As he rolled her into the craft something about her presence made him reflective. They lifted her into the craft joining six other beds with oxygen masks on their faces. He sat beside the young woman. Suddenly Mr. Potter decided to place her hands over her chest. As he did, he could not help but notice the paper in her hands held so tightly. As he unfolded her fingers, he would release the writings that will define a new chapter for his life.

Three weeks later Mr. Potter announced his decision to run for office. His speech was short.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, I come before you today, because it's time to give our children a reason to hope once more; a reason to believe in the strength of character, where all men, women and children can put their hands together and define a culture of virtues and morals that have stood the test of time. It's time to separate our minds for the good of all mankind and shun the vanities that steal from within and kill without. It is time to make our minds count once more for the future generations of all our children. I run for this office not to sway you with mere words, but to fight along with the dreams of a girl who died two days ago when someone brought down the building that gave her a beautiful mind. A dream that echoes my dreams of a safe world for all. If I am nominated for office then I know there is life after death, the kind Carolyn Vaughn inspired in me. As he pulled the paper from his jacket, Mr. Potter could not help the tears that were coming to his eyes.

He took out the paper and began to read the cursive writings of Carolyn Vaughn. The whole auditorium was silent as he read.

"This is my opinion that a mind exploring its infinite nature can define infinite natures for the body in the process. In fact, how you use your mind will determine what your life becomes and how the world around you evolve. It could evolve positively, or it could evolve negatively. Everyone's choice holds within it the seeds of a culture. Therefore, every decision we make must be carefully weighed before making it a way of life. With the wrong seed one could raise a culture of thorns and a legacy of destruction. With the right seeds or choices, we can usher in a prosperous culture in which all nations of people are numbered. I pray our choices promote the higher truths inherent in all of us."

After a long pause, Mr. Potter thanked the audience, took a bow, and walked off the stage.

Open Mic

You never know the power of your gift until you take the stage with your gift.

The house is full of unbelievable talents! We have Ryan X, Sweet Matrix, Kenny P, Smooth, Jack Dipper, Princess Sway, Twinkle, Pepper Crème, Pink Smoke. You have not seen anything just yet," she slipped a finger through her hair, and pulled out the event flyer with her other hand.

"Oh my God, Jazzy Spell is going to be on stage tonight." "Have this," Sussy passed Jenny an event flyer. I was standing close to Jenny. She offered me an event flyer.

The host was on stage introducing the first performer for the night.

"Starlight will be doing one of her numbers called "All the Way to Sweet Comfort," Please put your hands together for the starlight girl."

The light on the stage started to dim introducing the petite beauty with straight curls reaching her shoulders with a smile lighting up the building. But something else about her was untouchable, and totally unreal like a glimpse of a different world. Then she released her voice, ever so gently, the angelic sound enveloping the room with so much warmth you were held in a spell like awe.

"Let me free you from within. Release peace through your veins, Cover you in love's current, in the endless breeze of

pure desire. Oh, so real and eternal my touch and embrace,
rising with you like the mist from living springs All the
way to sweet comfort."

Something was happening in the large auditorium; the once loud and chattering room gradually started getting quiet. That angelic voice kept pouring out into the room, and then something strange happened. One by one in the auditorium, guests including myself started becoming unbelievably calm, quiet, and still.

Something strange was happening to me, a strange hypnosis. I could not fully describe the emotions. It was coming from within me, a cool breeze spiraling from the base of my feet and through every passage of my mind. A high, like the ancient sky transcending all of time; my feet elevated from the ground, even though all eyes saw me stand. I saw a different world in a flash with many smiles that never fade, filled with timeless wonders of endless beauty. I smelled a rose of no shape and no colors, endless fields unbothered, all fear vanished, all the losses I have ever known turn to gain, my pains become a memory never to be remembered, lights spill out of my skin, and then I shed a perfect tear.

Where am I? I feel the waves of oceans holding me up; something about this place is beautiful and free, full of true friends, creatures with hearts so pure. I am carried by a wind and suspended under a star. Floating harmonies, melodic sounds, the joyous connection of times meets me with open arms. I just am. I start to see patterns like ripples...
"Can you hear me?" The voice was faint, but I could hear it. It was coming from a distance and drawing me ever closer to its strength.

"Can you hear me?" The voice was much clearer. I was floating faster to the entrance, and then I saw the lights. It was not clear at first, several conversations taking place around me. A large room with so many beds as far as the eyes could trace with several rows of these beds. Different faces sitting up covered to their chest area with bedspreads. So many people I could not count. Many of them were engaged in some form of excited conversation, the energy was ecstatic, so many exchanging comments from their beds. What was going on?

There was a young lady in front of me engaged in an intense conversation with someone on another bed. In front of her two others were engaged in a conversation as well. A couple of faces simply stared into space with tear-streaked eyes. Everywhere I looked a very excited exchange was taking place. Three bed rows away and ten beds counting to the left of my direction, was a face that looked very familiar.

Was that Sussy, tears streaming down her cheeks?

Someone was approaching me; must be the nurse on duty. She smiled.

I waved my hands in the air to get her attention. I can tell she sees me because she starts coming in my direction. She stops in front of me.

"How can I help you?"

"Where am I? I am a little confused."

"I can tell you have been out for some time," she responded.

I nodded my head, puzzled.

"You were brought here two days ago by the County squad, something about an "open mic" session that knocked everyone out of their consciousness. Helicopters were all over the place transporting everyone out of the building. You and your peers have been on the major news networks for the past 48 hours. Reporters are lined across the street outside the building, and they keep flying in from all over the world. The event that took place at the open mic session is receiving international attention from the music community and a number of special interest groups in the country, and very soon all across the world."

She paused briefly, her tone taking on a different seriousness. "The scientific community is heavily involved. I think you will be here for a while. Be prepared to answer lots of questions."

"Wait a minute I need a little clarity. What really happened?"

"From what I hear, her voice shifted the consciousness of everyone in the auditorium." "Whose voice?" I asked.

"The singer's voice, Starlight," the nurse replied.

"Starlight," I repeat it to myself. It starts coming back. I can see her on stage... The nurse got comfortable and took a seat on the edge of the bed adjacent to me.

"Nothing of this magnitude has ever happened before. Even the President is scheduled to give a speech to the nation on account of this event. A lot of citizens are curious as to what took place. They want to see Starlight. They have nicknamed her "The Arc Angel.""

She looked at me, "all of you in this room will be part of history in a way never imagined."

She smiled, "they call me the Starlight Nurse."

She turns away from me and faces a young man who looked in his early twenties on the bed next to mine, his eyes beaming.

"Do you remember anything? I mean after you passed out?" The nurse was gesturing with her hands.

He had been quiet all along. He looked at me and then at the nurse. And then he smiled, the word "unbelievable" written all over his face,

"Oh, oh (uttering with awe), as clear as day."

Perfect Hostess

The time you spend touching a life is the greatest wealth you will ever know.

I am a wealthy person for the right reasons because I am a giver. I have so much wealth they don't know how to count its monetary value anymore. So, this is what I am going to do. Give it to a steward who can help everyone that has a true need. Give them a chance to be better men and women who respect their neighbors not because of what they own, but because of their passion for one another. It is a lifestyle of Agape."

"I gave away billions before I even had a dime of my own through accrued assets of one kind or another not summarized with paper bills. Now I am going to show you a new way of making wealth. Look every child in the eye and give a gift from your heart. A gift from the heart that is beautiful, and watch the world turn around and become wealthy by virtue of a child's deed."

"A true deed is from the heart and does not seek its own glory but glorifies the truth. Being zealous about what is good, and fair is important in all works of life. So, with that I would like to say, carry on the good work. One more thing, I could not have made this decision without my wife." The applause began, Count Donatus stepped away from the podium tipping his head slightly and signed his monetary wealth over to the National Government Foundation for the Future, a department of the treasury catering to children, youths and willing adults interested in making lifelong contributions with their time.

The account will be open to rigorous auditing by any certified public accountant, or accounting team ensuring that every penny is accounted for in doing those things that will create a vibrant community here and around the world.

Not long after, the wife escorted the Count off the stage, but conversations in the room start getting very agitated.

"I can't give up my hard- e a r n e d wealth like that, it is my money and if I have to die holding on to it that is what I am going to do." He lost it and kicked the ground with his heels. "What kind of wife is that? What kind of wife is that? I don't believe what I am hearing. That is ridiculous, just dggon crazy."

The room was turning into a kind of stock market frenzy.

"Mr. Green you understand this will have grave implications for the market, considering his monetary assets across the world. I don't know how he will get out of this rot. I really do not know. Everyone is putting their stock in the government, and I think this could have a strange level of mismanagement."

"Count Donatus had only one rule with his account," Mr. Green interjected, a slight smile forming over his face.


"For the perfect good of every child." Mr. Green was talking to himself nodding his head repeatedly in a kind of deep acknowledgement. He looked at the group around him speaking so they could hear.

"He believes every man is truly a child at heart when stripped of everything. His extensive field of lawyers have drafted an agreement that must guarantee this is continually in effect with his wealth as long as it takes; a

tough decision to make but his health, shelter, and community involvement is guaranteed the rest of his days."

Pure Science

Of man's greatest contributions is that which keeps his world happy and
alive.

ur body adapts to changes until our existence is no more adaptable and requires a complete transformation."

"Now you are losing me, John," I picked up the pen and twisted it in my hands.

"Stop writing for a minute; let's just talk."

"O.K shoot," I said, placing the pen on the journal.

"Last night when I was coming back to the apartment, I stopped at the waterfalls. I saw a couple of people standing and talking quietly. I was resting on the railings and looking at the falls. You know how the wind blows on your skin when you smell fresh water. Suddenly there was this explosion down the street. It was at the plant; a fuse must have gone off or something. And then the smoke started coming right at us."

"Wait a minute, an explosion at the plant. How was it contained?"

"It has this circular extinguisher around it that contains any explosion. When the fire trucks came there was no fire. Is that not kind of cool?" He was excited as if he were on a rollercoaster.

"But the smell, my goodness I thought I was going to pass out when the smoke started in our direction. It was like we were at a movie or something, the whole place..." Suddenly, someone busted into the room.

"You will not believe this," it was Shelby of the next- door apartment. "There is news going around that the area around the plant is showing some form of curative powers. A lot of people are camping around the plant and taking in a mouth full of fresh air. They are reporting that quite a number of people are getting a kind of healing sensation. I think I am going to check this out." Shelby stared at us, a little undecided. She headed back to the door and placed her head back in.

"Are you guys coming or what? This has got to be good."

I looked at John bewildered by the whole revelation.

"I am going to check this out again." John stepped out of the room with Shelby. I went outside the door of the apartment. I could see some of my neighbors stepping out of their door, a level of curiosity on their faces. I wouldn't be surprised if it had to do with the plant.

"Hey there," one of my neighbors was stepping out of his door. The hallway was curved with several doors leading to different apartments on both sides of the hall.

"Did you hear about the plant? I need to check this out."

"I heard. I will be paying the place a visit very soon. Hey, get as much news as you can."

I walked back into my apartment and closed the door. Then I went to the bathroom, picked up my toothbrush, applied some paste and began a mouthwash.

"Goodness," I need to get to work. I undressed and got into the shower, pulling the curtains to keep the water from the floor. Something about taking the shower and missing the news at the plant kept bugging me. I stepped out of the shower bath and walked to the living room. I was going to put on the

T.V then decided to go for the radio. I turned on the radio to a local news network in the area, blaring it out as loud as I could and then I walked back to the bathroom to take my shower.

Within five minutes I was done. I stepped out the shower and wrapped a towel around my waist. I picked up my shaver and begin to shave the hair off my armpit. The radio was blaring.

"And on the news of the hour, six men with cancerous lungs have reported significant improvement just sitting in the vicinity of Gracetown. Reportedly, activities around the Escrow plant located here in the city are increasing as members of the community rally around the plant. According to a spokesman at the plant, an explosion was contained creating an atmospheric chemistry in the area. Samples of the air are being analyzed presently at certain private and

government laboratories, as the community awaits news that may have a profound impact on environmental medicine becoming an alternative measure to curing terminal illness. The Coalition of the Clean Environment act have been extremely active in bringing about new measures that can create a more livable environment for many generations, citing this incident as a possibility of a new earth ecosystem. Joining me today is Cory Reeves, Professor of Environmental Studies at the Scribe University. Welcome."

I ran to the television, picked up the remote control and pressed the power button.

"...Traffic at the Escrow Plant is reaching its peak as more officers are being sent to the area to keep the plant secure. On a different development certain individual who witnessed the explosion are at the scene sharing their version of the night that is changing history. Please join our journalist at the plant, Ms. Chelsea Rivers as she brings you the news."

"Good morning," Chelsea the journalist was staring right through the screen into the living room, several people gathered around her.

"I am at the Escrow Plant where a phenomenon of extraordinary proportions is taking place. Several of our visitors here at the plant are describing the healing effects of this environment as a new chapter in our Ecosystem. An eyewitness gives his account of the story that took place here last night."

"Good morning, thanks for joining me."

"Good morning."

I moved closer to the TV.

"You got to be kidding me!" I exclaimed.

It was John on the TV screen. I ran to my room.

"This is simply impossible!" I exclaimed.

I looked for a videocassette in the book cabinet. I dashed out of the room and pushed the cassette into the recorder of the television. I pressed the record button. John was on.

"...and then the smoke started coming directly at us. It was dark and looked very dangerous initially. Most of us started backing away because of the smell, but I noticed the fumes started changing colors in the air. Initially it looked pinkish, then it turned bluish, and several different colors were appearing, disappearing, and reappearing again. The fire trucks got here but before they arrived the air was simply changing colors on its own accord. I know I saw the initial explosion and it was mighty big, but I still do not understand why there was no fire considering the size of the reactor." Chelsea brought the microphone to her lips, "So how would you explain this?"

John became animated the way he gets when he tries to describe events.

"I believe it was some form of recreated energy after the extinguisher surrounding the plant combined with the explosive particles of the reactor. It must be a kind of regenerative effect that created the clean air effect."

I could not hold my curiosity any longer. I dashed out of my apartment and closed the door.

I needed some fresh air.

Table Manner

Take a gift to the King. Take a gift to a child with no home, and you will yet see royalty if you choose to see.

In this part of town, it's acceptable to eat with your hands. Now two blocks from this same location it is a direct assault to generations of royalty. You see, anything you do is a form of interaction whether you are talking to a person, picking up a fork, driving a car, combing your hair, sitting on a chair, reading a book, walking your dog, even using the toilet."

She lowered the newspaper and stared directly at Hampton.

"For instance, how do you read a book?" She lowered the newspaper completely placing it on the table.

"That depends on the type of book," Hampton was curious, the brows of his eyes taking on a different slant.

"How about a cookbook?" She placed her hand over the other and looked at Hampton.

Hampton stopped to think for a while.

"Well, I would sit down at a table and open up the page I would like to read, and probably take some notes."

"Could you read it in bed?" She livened up.

Hampton stopped to think for a brief second before replying, “ Yep, and probably propped up in a sitting position.”

“Good, I know you are trying to avoid the inevitable,” she probes further.

“Give me an honest answer. Is it possible to sleep dreaming of how tasty the food recipe would be after you cook it?”

“I guess,” Hampton could tell that Tammy was up to something.

“Well, that is good enough for me.” She straightened up her back on the chair like a teacher.

“When you sleep with a book in your hand then you are not well mannered. Sleeping with a book shows you are not focused on what you are doing in an organized way. When you read a book, you read with the intent of gaining insight. When you have gained that insight, you close the book and begin later, ensuring that you get the most out of the book. The exceptions to the rules are books written to make you sleep.”

“Well then you said it yourself, what makes me sleep may be what keeps you awake with a pen and a notepad. I am humbled by this revelation, but what has this got to do with anything?”

“Well, if you want to get the most out of life, you have to plan every step you take like a perfect date.”

She stopped and then started counting on her fingers using the index finger of his right hand.

"That includes when you eat, how you eat, when you talk, how you talk, when you sleep, how you sleep, when you have sex, and how you have sex..."

"Would that not also go for who you have sex with?" Hampton interrupted.

"Who you have sex with... of course, who you have sex with?" she exhaled a long breath. "That becomes an issue because if you are known to have sex excessively or change partners as you see fit, then at your highest pedestal what people see is sexual and not what you are really made of. This is why people get married, stay married and keep it in the family."

"All you are trying to tell me is there is a dignified way of doing things and an undignified way of doing things." Hampton continued.

"Yes, there is." Tammy smiled with her eyes opened a little wider.

"Well let me ask you a question Tammy, where do you draw the line? For example, how dignified can you be when you use the restroom, and it stinks?"

"You can be dignified in that area because it's all about the timing. Use the restroom early in the morning or late at night when everyone is asleep, or better still always be discreet. And that stinking part has to do with what you eat, Hamp."

"Well there, Tammy, don't you think that will make you two-faced?" Hampton sat up in his chair ready to start a dialogue.

He looked into Tammy's eyes and spoke very softly like he was talking to a fond sister.

"Sometimes the things you do that make you look royal are actually the things that take away the simplest pleasures of life; like walking the beach or eating with the dirtiest stranger on earth and having a good time at it."

"And I believe the kind of company you keep determines the kind of choices you make, great or small. Choose one." Tammy looked at Hampton, batting her big eyes at him.

Hampton stared at Tammy, the silence between them holding within it a bond of many years.

"Talking from experience," Hampton held Tammy's hands in his. "The greatest gifts on earth are found in unusual places, places where many people reject as unfit for their taste. You start living when you appreciate the world many have learned to forget, and there can be great choices made with dignified people."

Hampton stood up extending his hands, "Care for a walk? I'd love to show you something."

The Gods

If only we can all observe a moment of silence for this great being we may never see.

“

...even the atheist may beg to differ on his or her understanding of the god factor. When the universality of man borders on a common language, we must succumb to the laws of that language. If its laws of reasoning and decision-driven tendencies will not allow for a creative outlet of nationalities, then that language must be revised to entertain the common ground of philosophies that promote the god-factor between nations." Esther stopped briefly waiting for me to digest her sayings then continues reading.

" Language is like a weapon of reason and can be a great tool of harmony or division. So, it is paramount that the bridge is well defined because it has the ability of transcending time and space. In other words, if the underlying principle behind the formation of a language can appreciate the genius of time and space, it will unlock the existential factor of a creative genius not easily seen by the common eye. This creative genius is necessary to inspire great ideas and creativity between the different nations interacting together."

"That's an ear full" Esther stirred her tea. She was quiet for some time. She turned a page.

"I will digress a little because this brings up a very interesting dichotomy."

"The creative genius is truly the GOD OF ALL THAT IS. Therefore, to destroy the fabric that holds this existential god-factor in a language and limit the ability of man to a physical universe of vulgarity, material consumption, or to a scientific process, you destroy that mathematical connection or creative connection. Once this connection is broken in a language, it will not transcend time and space and its end is imminent. The term GOD is like a mathematical formula throughout the universe that is not necessarily seen and should be feared, because it exists within everyone and is unchanging in restoring or destroying to restore the balance."

Esther picked up the pitcher and poured herself a little more tea.

"My good friend, I am still working on this writing, but when the creative connection within a person is broken, they become trapped in a matrix that shuts them out from their own true identity."

"Let me continue," Esther took another sip from the cup and placed it on the coffee table. "The term called God in a language could be given many names and different descriptions and rules like a constant. Every child must be equipped with the ability to own this intelligence, or else they will be grammatically insane within that language, or any subject they conceive with that language. Also, you have to be grammatically sane to be mathematically sane then you begin to understand the god-factor, which I also call the creative genius."

"Therefore, to strike out the god-factor in a language is similar to striking out the creative genius within a child. It kills the ability of a child or person to think like a creative being. Eventually, those who use the language become simple minded without the ability to act with the god-factor."

"Interesting." I raised my hands clapping quietly, a little confused but with a serious look on my face.

"Where did she get that from?"

"So, Esther, can you be mathematically insane?"

"In the scientific world you can, until you define the undefined, like 1 divided by 0. I believe everything physical and everything unseen has a scientific backbone."

She took a sip from the teacup and continued.

"No mathematical formula should be an unprincipled man's possession, or else the obsession with these formulas will create a dispossession across boundaries of cultures and nations."

She raised her hand briefly.

"It is like the insanities of trade secrets, and the warlords who fight to hold on to their secrets, secrets that can wield enough damage to the world at large. Secrets of such magnitude should be used and researched under global teams

knowledgeable on that subject with the safety of every man, woman and child, and its timeless credits given to its founders. I believe it is the right of every man, woman and child in every nationality to fight to maintain the balance behind all that exists. This includes things that are seen and those things yet to be seen as pertaining to their most noble existence."

A tight smile formed on Esther's face as she tilted her head making periodic taps in the air with one of her fingers.

"My opinion of a noble existence is a world of people well informed and always prepared to make the right judgments to advance the inner good within and around them."

Esther stood up from her seat and paced the length of the living room, stopping at the window. She stared at the ocean; its waves settling one after another on the shores, bearing with it secrets from the deep.

"I believe the best kind of fight you can engage in is the fight that protects the god-factor of everyone long before they are born. When the whole world works in this manner then the whole world will begin to see the true beauty locked up within. But it also takes a conscious world of people whose minds are singularly motivated to nurture that god-factor within themselves and their offspring."

"One last thing and I will let you go."

She took another sip from her teacup.

"The saints, prophets and gods of different holy books were levels of living, breathing, and walking universal formulas."

I looked at Esther, the rays of the sun bouncing off her hair, A smile lit up my face. At that point I knew the simple things of life are truly a gift, until we all choose to control more than a piece of it for ourselves.

The Lust Key

Who do you trust with the keys to your destiny? ...The very steps you take that make it your destiny. Watch your steps.

Beauty must be an aphrodisiac. I see quite a number of young women at your club, every one eager to make an impression." John was talking with a slight tilt of his head staring at Lucy.

"Here for the big dance, Hon?" Lucy responded knowing he was there to make an impression for the night.

"Taking in the moment, make a dash for the right signal." He looked at Lucy and locked his eyes momentarily into hers. She blushed and returned the gaze.

"John what are you really doing here tonight?"

He smiled with that cockish gaze in his eyes. She kept staring at him waiting for the perfect illusive answer.

"Making an impression, Lucy, can have different end results. You can get laid, something I believe is on nearly everyone's mind tonight. You can get paid, something I believe someone is looking forward to tonight, or you can get closer to the answer."

"The answer?" Lucy looked at John from the corner of her eyes.

"Yes, the answer is the hidden motif that has a face, one intention or one agenda. There could be ten such ones here tonight. There could be more."

Lucy moved closer to John, looking slightly to her left and whispering in his ears, "and what's your agenda?"

"You must be "The Zone.", A stocky built man interrupted the connection with a tap on John's shoulder.

"The Zone it is," John turned around to face the man. The stocky built man pulled out a small velvet cloth case from his blazer handing it to John and vanished into the club.

"Sweetheart, we will pick up from here later." He stepped closer to Lucy, "remember later is a gift I can't promise."

John headed into the thick of the club leaving Lucy staring at him as he disappeared into the dancing bodies. The lights swirled around creating moving shadows, elevating the sensuality of the mind and the vanity of the body. He slipped the chips into the velvet case and magically tucked it into his cuffs.

He kept walking through the dance floor toward his main focus for the night. This is the day he has been waiting for to hand over her father's secret work code, named, Andromeda. The codes were all in the chip. He has to be as smooth as the velvet case now in his cuffs.

The ladies on the dance floor keep staring seductively at John as he made his way through them, immune to their gestures, as his main focus started coming into view. He knew all eyes will be on him once he gets to Helen's table.

He could count seven of them idling at strange corners of the club. He will not break his pace; cool and detached saves the day. They were there to protect her.

He saw her clearly as he approached the carpet steps leading to the elevated stage of exotic looking chairs and tables. The section reserved for the most exclusive. She was stunning, the perfect lines of her lips, the dazzle of her eyes embraced with lashes of trancelike powers. The curves of her body disappearing under the transparent table glass where she rested her delicate elbows with grace, hands clasped over the other resting under her left cheek. She is the reason why the clock stops in this city, the only daughter of the late Edward Steele, multi- billionaire real-estate tycoon.

Steele had needed someone to trust with the program codes for his last project, Andromeda. Rumor describes it as "The door to Heaven". And not just a number of his competitors wanted their hands on it; even faceless rulers with ruthless determination have been on the Andromeda trail. Helen, like John, was trained in the protective art of secrecy and today will be the chance to link the final phase of Andromeda, a gateway beyond man's wildest imaginations. The countdown had begun from the other side of what is quietly called Heaven's Gate.

"Care for a dance?" John extended his hands in his most courteous gesture. He could see several bodyguards dispatched at different sections of the club. "You're late," her smile doing more than just a number on his delicate manners.

She was a phenomenal dancer, trained by the best. The dance floor had been cleared; the spotlights centered on the new couples now approaching the floor.

Helen's purple velvet dress reaching ankle length had been cut to reveal the smooth beauty of her legs just where they part all the way to her ankles. John held her hands warmly as they approach the dance floor. He knew he could not

afford to lose the perfect moment. He had to keep the velvet case well anchored to his cuffs reserved for the climax of the dance.

It had been planned and rehearsed for years under the late Steele's watchful gaze. And only the three knew what the dance was all about. It was not the first time John and Helen danced at carefully chosen clubs leaving the clubbers begging for more.

The Tango dance was coming on; the light started its play of emotions over their faces and off they went, moving around in circles, synchronized steps and perfect glances. Helen's hands held onto John's with such intensity of purpose, the electricity of the union simply breathtaking.

Two steps, three steps, circular motions, the head snapping, bodies touching, and hands caressing outlines of curves. The noise across the floor was deafening. They were moving across the floor with such grace and ease it looked like they were born together.

Her legs wrapped around him in a body spin and then she let go. John grabbed her ankles in a downward expression with his hands, just then the velvet case containing the chips slipped from his cuffs. He managed to keep it in, but he knew at this speed anything could happen. He retracted and pushed her away in a spin, giving her the center of attention. John clasped his chest to compliment her motion across the dance floor using the opportunity to tuck in the chips properly.

In five minutes, the dance would be over, but not until he suspended Helen and spun her in the air, giving room for the final ovation and the true reason for all the dances: The key to Andromeda.

The crowds in the club were clapping and tapping their feet, the lights dancing along with the couples; each rhythmic step revealing an acrobatic twist, one after another, after another and after another, making the rising noise of admirers a reason to lose Andromeda forever.

John was sweating, a little more and it would be over. A couple of times the velvet case had slipped but he had managed to tuck it back skillfully into his cuff links. Now that he thought of it, it would have been better with the cotton case. It would be very difficult to pull the next move off with the body twist over his head as he circled the dance floor. John braced himself and got a better handle of the velvet case under his cuffs. He had to remain positive. Helen was coming towards him fast, spinning with a calculated two-step approach, the flare of her dress rising and creating circular patterns exposing her beautiful legs. He took two, three, four, five, determined steps towards her, his focus unwavering as the hair of his skin brushed against the velvet case holding the coded chips.

John made a silent prayer and let it all go. His memory raced back to all the dance sessions he had with Helen. "It has to be natural like you were the only two in the world," the voice kept coming back to him, "like you were the only two in the world, ...like you were the only two in the world," the voice kept repeating over and over and over.

John picked her up.

The dramatic twist of her body in the air was as automatic as he had always done it before. The music was coming to an end; he was counting the bars when he lost control of the velvet case.

John could have sworn in his mind that he heard the sound on the dance floor. Beads of sweat had taken over his body.

Flashes came across his mind as a tear filled with anger dropped down his face. Finish the dance is all he could say to himself as he considers all the possibilities of a loss.

"Those codes must never be seen by anyone but Helen." The dying wish was simple, "get it to her and her alone. She will understand the rest."

He recalled his exact words in the telegram. "John, you have always been like a son to me, it is important that you do not make a mistake. I trust you will make the right decision and give the true definition of love a breathing chance. You are my final link."

Three more seconds and all the lights will come on. Then he felt it, it was in his hands, it was there all along, one more turn and the back of Helen's body will be resting on his front. He will place his hands over the split in her dress. He will find the linings of her undergarment and slip it in skillfully. Then Helen will place her hands over his and secure the chip. John finds the now wet linings of Helens underwear and slips the velvet case carefully into her as rehearsed.

Helen's right hand was resting over his right hand, and her left hand drawing a curve around his neck; Helen clasped on the velvet case with the walls of her privates, the intent as serious as life itself.

"It's finished," she whispers.

John stared into the crowd, tears on his face and an unfathomable smile that looked like a sigh of relief. His breathing was heavy as he blew air repeatedly from his mouth.

"See you in paradise," Helen whispered into his ears pressing John's hand.

The lights all around the club came on.

New Credit

A man never born was a man never seen whose home we may never know.

Community participation is not a common thing nowadays. Actually, who has the time for community participations?" Edwin climbed out of the truck and stepped on to the sandy desert of the Freedom plains.

Lexi looked at his watch and placed his binoculars over his eyes, the expanse of land coming to view in the sunny glare of the plains.

"Seems like we have company," Lexi passed the binoculars over to Edwin who was approaching him and extending his hands in a curious haste. He placed the binoculars over his eyes.

"Good Lord the Avalangras. They are the guardians of the stone. What are they doing here?"

Edwin squinted into the sun lowering the binoculars.

"It seems like you know a little about these people."

"A little, no no no I have lived with these people before." Suddenly, Edwin's countenance changed, and he took a couple of paces and stopped.

"They have a saying," his voice becoming soft and reflective. "Life is a gift through which we see all that exists

and mankind the gift through which we learn the virtues of benevolence. Let it be known the stars of the heavens number every man. We appreciate the beauty of the heavens because we appreciate the beauty of all the children of men. The earth is a sacred ground on which we stand to thank the one beyond the stars."

Edwin bowed his head in a ritualistic expression of thanks. "Every night they take time to look into the heavens and thank the mysterious one that keeps the universe in balance."

"What is that sound?" Lexi turned towards Edwin whose eyes were closed in some form of contemplation.

"It's their rhythm of the heartbeat."

The single beats echo throughout the desert. Edwin continues talking, not looking at Lexi.

"Soon they will light the altar of fire which will be blasted into the heavens. Then something strange happened," Edwin stared briefly at his assistant and looked back at the Avalangras, "it creates a purple smoke that spreads out in a circular way over the skies. They call it the holy cloud of smoke. This is when it gets very quiet as they voice from within the chants of the ancient."

Edwin paused briefly as he placed the binoculars over his eyes for another look at the Avalangras. He then placed the binoculars at his side and became very sober.

"I cried some hard tears when they told me their stories: they are a people that will do no harm. Their hearts are as pure as the heavens. When they told me their stories my heart turned, and I became as pure as hate itself to those things that were not fair."

"What kind of stories?" Lexi became inquisitive. Edwin smiled with a mixture of apathy and concern as if he were looking at a child.

"Promise me that you will not listen to their stories." Lexi stared into Edwin's eyes, a strange twist of anxiety welling up in his stomach.

"How bad?" Lexi put his two hands together rubbing them in a form of massage.

"Enough to quench your Spirit." He stared back at the jeep and the equipment to be used for the viewing of the stars.

Edwin started walking towards the jeep; they had walked a couple of yards away from the jeep while looking at the Avalangras. He climbed in, and Lexi followed suit. He started the engine. They were quiet, the dust of the plains rising as they drove off towards the gathering of the Avalangras, the rising streak of dust announcing their presence.

In the closing gap of the visitors, one could feel the intensity of two worlds coming together in a fury of unshackled events.

"Kabit mofut eli en to su"

The gathering turned in the direction of the approaching jeep. The drumming stopped. The gathering numbering men, women and children in the thousands horn their gaze at the moving jeep that was raising the cloud of dust and approaching over the plains.

Edwin looked at Lexi. "I don't think this was such a good idea, but I would rather be among them than on the outskirts when the cloud of fire rises above."

He stopped the jeep. It was time to walk the rest of the way.

"Lexi, you ready for a hike?" Edwin asked as he stepped out of the jeep.

The gathering was growing in number as they began lining up in quiet anticipation watching the two visitors walking from a distance.

"I don't know what they are thinking but we have got to be as calm as possible. This is a big disruption to their timetable, which signifies something of a warning to them." Edwin was speaking.

The wind of the desert picked up speed, the clear skies of the desert plain watching in silence as the distance between the two men and the gathering decreased. "Commi anatu su la mun" The words echo through the plains. "What has brought you here to us?"

"Lamit kabit la fru mini." Edwin voiced out as loud as he could.

At those words the gathering looked up into the skies; men, women, and children alike as they chant out loud.

"Kamu ni o"

So it is, they welcomed the new arrival, for though they see not where that one may lay, they know that of a blessing indeed are the mysteries of the heavens.

Wellness Inc.

The keys to your greatest achievements are an experience away.

There is a new generation on the verge of discovery, with a new way of thinking if you may. However, it will take some form of intentional eye-opening experience to bring out the best in them," Evelyn said.

"Why is that so?" I placed my hands on the kettle's handle pouring the hot water into the teacups.

"They have a lawless mind which may be a good thing in itself, if they had a mind and a conscience towards each other."

When Evelyn gets revved up, she can talk for minutes without stopping, and I was looking for a little wisp of her metaphysical edge, which could be quite interesting.

"Break it down for me Evelyn," I passed Evelyn a teacup.

"It is possible for these young ones to carry out actions that are lawful without the force of the law. They simply know what is lawful to do, like having a deep connection to each other's welfare and making the right decisions for the collective good."

"That's a great way to put it. I have always believed it takes a highly civilized society to achieve that kind of fit." I looked at Evelyn and took a seat on one of her couches.

"I think it takes respect and adoration for the quality of life in each other if that quality promotes harmony of mind and body."

"That is an interesting subject." I crossed my legs and got more comfortable.

"Mind and body." I repeated it back to Evelyn.

"Yes, mind and body. Come to think of it, our society has a way of making the mind and the body a secondary factor in determining the strength of the economy. I believe it should be a basic requirement."

She sipped her tea and continued,

"A healthy nation is a striving community of people. The health of a nation is directly proportional to the state of affairs of a nation; it is more or less the mind and body of a nation. If the health of a nation is compromised, then the mind and body of the populous of that nation is compromised."

"Then what would you suggest will be the best antidote for an unhealthy nation?" I asked Evelyn.

"Introduce a wellness program in the tax bill that makes it necessary for citizens to be healthy. It is the most cost-effective measure to medical expenses. For one, we can start with making work schedules include a section of the workweek that sends their workers to the swimming pool, tennis court, football field, hiking, or some sport activity one day of the week as a mandatory requirement within employment. That day of the week could be a particular day of the week chosen by the company for a particular employee."

"Continue," I was impressed.

"Well, the employee meets a number of fellow workers at the designated location and competes in some form of friendly sport orchestrated by the company. Then they return to work the next day. Now this continues throughout the week as different employees meet on different days to exercise their mind and body which gives them an outlet from the stress that could be associated with a work environment."

"In a sense you are creating a very lively work environment for your employees." I sipped the tea, my eyes staring at Evelyn above the tip of the cup.

"Exactly," Evelyn raised her hand to her face touching her temple.

"Everything OK?" I asked her.

"Oh yes, everything is OK, I have just been having these strange headaches recently."

"Have you checked yourself up?" I looked at her and then at the clock hanging on the wall behind her. Evelyn had put on some weight after the loss of her two sisters in a plane accident. I had always been a friend of the family since we met in school.

"Not really, but I will be fine." Evelyn took a seat at the dining table.

"Do you have any headache pills in the cabinet?"

"No." Evelyn stood up and walked over to the living room couch and took a seat on the softer cushion.

"Hey, I will be right back."

She smiled at me, as I walked out the front door of the house. The afternoon breeze greeted me as I headed to the sports car, a gift from my company executives the year before. I looked at the rows of buildings in the neighborhood. I began thinking about Evelyn's idea of a company wellness program. That was genius.

"...Time to pick up some headache pills."

A pigeon flew in my direction landing on the pavement as I headed towards my vehicle. It joined several other pigeons pecking away.

I removed the keys from my pocket and opened the door and took a seat on the leather cushion interior and started the vehicle. The automatic seat belt straps came on. "What station would you love to hear?"

"QZ 104," I said, driving off towards the nearest pharmacy.

I drove past the volleyball court, several young ones taking turns hitting the ball over the net. The street was busy in that tropical kind of way, young men and women jogging down the streets under the shades of the green trees as the rays of sunlight sifted through them.

It was a beautiful afternoon, a good time for a picnic. The whole environment was lively and strangely detached as everyone carried on with their activities. I was passing a large golf field. Mr. Jenroy as usual was sitting on the side bench and reading a book nonchalant to those around. I drove through the city hall and arrived at the massive shopping center, a twenty-four-story building, and an architectural glass house wonder.

I drove through the parking lots to the embankment at the fifth floor, parked the vehicle and stepped out.

The doors of the building opened as I approached, the shopping center was filled with people, having that tourist like atmosphere. The center was filled with so many shops with different goods and services to offer. The airport two blocks away explained the heavy human traffic. Children with their parents, elderly couples in straw caps, beautiful looking women, and handsome muscle cut men showing off their trim fit littered the floors.

I passed by a fitness store to my left, a lady's shoe store, and then a cosmetic store. I needed some direction. The traffic in the center whisked by me as I headed to the directory board. The pharmacy store was on the 8th floor.

I took the motion steps leading to the 8th floor instead of the elevator. I continued stepping, my eyes making contact with quite a few as they went down the moving stairs in the opposite direction. When I got to the eighth floor, the pharmacy store was directly in front of me. I walked into the store.

"Good afternoon," a customer representative greeted me.

"Good afternoon." I responded.

I walked into the aisle with the headache pills.

Suddenly my phone rang, I picked it up. "Hello."

It was Evelyn. I could barely make out what she was saying.

"Please hurry," her voice was so faint it seemed to collapse. The phone was engaged but she was not talking. I looked at my watch, picked up the bottle and ran out of the aisle.

I got to the cash register, opened the case, removed the bottle and handed over a bill.

"It should cover it. I have an emergency."

I ran out of the store down the spiral staircase bumping into shoppers, all the way down to the fifth floor, apologizing all the way. I exited the building and dialed 911.

"911 how can I help you?"

"It's an emergency I need someone at 15th Ave., Piccadilly Street immediately. It is an emergency." I hung up the phone, ran to the car, opened the door, and started the ignition. I reversed the custom made TX4 tires squealing as I pulled out of the parking lot, the spiral wall of the driveway whizzing past me, as I approached the exit leading out into the main road. I made a hard right and another hard right as I gunned the machine heading towards Piccadilly Street.

I could hear sirens somewhere. The road of assorted trees leading to Piccadilly challenging me, as the dial of the speedometer kept drawing the circle of suicidal rpms. The gates to the estate were open, the TX4 racing down the row of buildings. I stopped right in front of the doorsteps, opened the door and ran out of the car to the door of the house.

I could hear the ambulance somewhere.

"Evelyn!"

There was no sound. I ran to the bedroom on the first floor. She was nowhere to be found. I looked in the kitchen and then I saw her lying on the floor.

"Evelyn, Evelyn!" I walked closer to her body kneeling beside her a little disoriented.

"CPR," I whisper to myself. How do I do that again?

I took off my top, bundled it up and placed it under her neck to open her windpipe, using my two fingers to close the air passage to her nostrils.

I was about to place my mouth over Evelyn's lips when the door opened. "Anyone home?"

"Over here!"

The paramedics rushed over, their trained physician putting their kit on the floor next to Evelyn.

I stepped away from the paramedic.

The stretcher was next to her in no time. They raised Evelyn on to the bed.

"V.O coming in, diagnosis unknown at the moment."

I looked as the paramedics wheeled her out of the building, moving with skillful speed. I walked to the door as they place Evelyn in the ambulance, tears forming in my eyes.

The siren lights of the ambulance were on. One of them stopped next to me before walking into the ambulance.

"She is going to be fine, we read a pulse. We are heading to the Piccadilly General Intensive."

The ambulance drove away.

I looked up, a tear dropping from my eyes. I picked up the phone and dialed a number.

"Strauss and Company." Cecil speaking.

"Cecil, schedule a meeting for all board members immediately."

A Night in Crow Town

That which we fear is always overcome by the power we share with the ones we love.

It was not known whether the man knew where he was going, but they had seen him on Lantern Street next to the riverbed about six hours ago. The strange gust of wind that seemed to sweep over the town was not something this neighborhood was familiar with, and what made it more distant to their now curious minds was the strange cap sighted on the head of the wanderer. That cap seemed to have a life of its own.

Crow was a small quiet neighborhood, and until now nothing this strange had been sited around. The sun was setting in the distant horizon, and the town was about to get cozier in their homes.

Ringold stood in the balcony of the old brick house, leaning over the edge of the railings, his eyes peering into the woods about twenty yards from where he stood. He brought out a pipe from his vest pocket, was about to light the dish and then stopped. He placed the pipe back in his vest, took out a binocular and held it against his peepholes. He heard something. It had dashed across the woods so quickly. Whatever he heard was nowhere within sight. He stayed there a little longer, and then had an uncanny idea of going out into the woods.

Ringold simply hated uncertainties lurking around his mind. He was an asset to this small community, and he saw to it

that he remained just that, however at this point he felt more vulnerable than he had ever felt before. He had a strange uneasiness that was not like him. He would check on John, Juli, and Martha, and then he would scan the woods thoroughly.

The house where his family stayed was a block behind the brick house. He was going to stop by there quickly and make sense of whatever was out here. He took the hunter's rifle, held in a standing position against the pole railings that led into the old brick house, and headed towards his house making brief glances into the woods.

The light was on in the house, and he could see John and Juli running around the house from the glass window as he approached the door.

He paused briefly; the wind was picking up for some reason. He wondered if this was just another one of those quick gusts he had been noticing just recently. Ringold opened the door. At that very moment a loud thunderbolt shot through the clouds rocking the house with ear shattering noise. John and Juli froze in their steps, eyes bulging and their mouths wide open at the same time. Ringold gazed at them holding the gaze of his children with a calm awareness of what had just taken place.

"Just thunderbolts youngins; hey come on here, give daddy a hug." They stayed a moment longer, and then as if nothing had taken place, they ran toward him jumping as high as their feet could carry them. Just t h e n M a r t h a came down from the room upstairs. "Gold, did you hear that!"

Martha had always been a close friend of Ringold, which eventually led to a family life with John and Juli. They had done some crazy things together and had decided to settle

down together. They had gotten married six years ago in a very unconventional way. It was on a trip out in the desert plains.

They had driven out of town on one of their crazy cruises, and it had dawned on Ringold that he could not be any happier without her. That day he had asked her if she would be with him as long as the stars. Her response, "as long as there is an earth to see the stars."

They had stopped a total stranger on the road that night in the star lit sky, thumbing up their fingers to stop the vehicle. When it stopped an older man came out of the vehicle. They had made their vows to each other that day in front of this older man, and after that night never saw him again.

He looked at Martha, "What you think, strange evening?" "Yep, looks like it Gold, and remember you owe me a game tonight." He looked at Johnny and Juli now running around the house darting through the doors in the rooms.

"They call it hide and seek," Martha said, and then looked at Ringold, her eyes peering through his eyes as if she could read everything going on in his mind. "What's going on Gold? Is everything O.K with you?"

Ringold picked his words, as he did not want her getting worried.

"Hey, I just need to check out the woods. I'll be back. Could you look after "hide and seek" for me?" He was referring to John and Juli. He kissed Martha, keeping his lips on hers a little longer than he normally would. "I'll be back."

"Make sure you are." She escorted him to the door and held her hands on the edge of the door.

Ringold looked at her, "I owe you a game tonight." He took his rifle and headed out into the woods. After a couple of yards, he looked back over his shoulders. Martha was still at the door with her hand on the door edge in a pose.

He was heading towards the river.

He was looking at the dock that held the ferry. It was a medium sized ferry. He started towards the ferry. Ringold bought the ferry two years after they arrived to Crow town using the ferry to transport neighbors who wanted to get to the other side of town quicker. The river was a very interesting scenery, but like all small towns this river had its own stories.

He undocked the ferry, started the engine, and began navigating the ferry towards the other end of the river. The gust of wind was even stronger now. When the ferry was cruising steadily along at 10 knots he left the helm, took out the floodlight and flashed it periodically through the bushes that lined the edges of the river. The ferry looked like an open house on water with two side openings, and walkways around it, with another walkway that led to the front of the ferry.

Just then something moved. It was not in the bushes. It was on the ferry. He stood up from the squatted position he was in and very slowly turned his head around. He picked his pace carefully, walking towards the other opening of the ferry.

Ringold didn't see it at first and then he started making out the shape. It was the cap, the strange looking cap. Whoever sat under the cap was still and looked like nothing familiar to the surrounding.

It did not speak.

Ringold took a deep breath took two steps back and slowly reached for the rifle standing by its handle resting on the back end of the ferry.

He aimed the rifle and cocked it.

"Time is a gift; I play drums with the wind and make sense of the free. I am just going to the other side."

Ringold lowered the weapon still keeping the strange presence under aim. They were getting closer to the other side.

"Who are you?" Ringold asked.

"I play drums with the wind, and make sense of the free, time to go home your family needs you now."

At that moment he heard a loud gunshot, its ear shattering noise echoing through the night. He looked back in the direction of the house.

Ringold ran to the helm and brought the ferry to a stop. He went back to the edge of the ferry where the man was, but he was gone, nowhere to be found. He heard another gunshot echo through the night. Ringold was not thinking any longer, he turned back the ferry in the direction of his house moving the ferry as fast as he could.

His mind was racing. The pulse in his veins seemed to stop. Ringold was no longer himself. Everything around him was a haze, including the thoughts that seemed to take over his mind, his heart wrenching apart, tormenting him from within. He was at the bridge in no time, but he was working on a different kind of fuel. He jumped out of the ferry but did not tie the ferry to the dock. Another gunshot ricocheted through the night.

"No!!!!"

Ringold's voice carried through the woods; he was running frantically darting through the bushes.

He was getting closer. His house was coming into view. He was running with strength he could not understand. The light was still on in the house. There was no sound, and then he saw her.

Ringold stopped and then started walking slowly towards Martha. She was standing with her back facing him. Then everything started getting clearer. Martha was standing in a state of shock. She had a double barrel shot gun in her hands. He looked over her shoulders and what he saw nearly broke the life out of him. It did not matter now. It was dead.

He came closer and held her back closely against his chest holding onto the double barrel gun with her.

"Are you O.K?"

She nodded very slowly.

"Hide and Seek?" She nodded her head yet again.

Ringold closed his eyes, whispering softly with raw sincerity

"Martha," (He paused)

"Thank you."

Connecting Bridges

Every decision is a springboard to another day of decisions, towards confusion or towards harmony, so bring out the scales and weigh the timeless facts for your best decisions.

Melony looked at me then sipped her tea. Not that look, I thought to myself.

"Greed is a very dangerous environment if not cultivated in a positive way."

"Go ahead," I was not going to interrupt this analysis.

"Greed is a gift if exercised for the welfare of others. This poses a level of relativity in terms of the word itself. Greed cannot be self-motivated. But it can only be used for the benefit of mankind, not for self and not for a particular group of people."

"Why is that?" I asked.

"For instance, I cannot put the interest of my group in front of the interest of your group by virtue of greed, choice, or creed especially if your choices compromise life or the continuity of life."

"So, what do you suggest greedy people of different groups do if they would like to amass wealth or control for themselves?"

"What do you mean?" Melony looked at me a little hard. I placed my teacup on the table and crossed my legs. "Considering the universal nature of the earth, different beliefs, different cultures, different races, different mindsets,

they tend to look out for themselves or their special interest groups. How would you address the kind of greed that sabotages the higher truths that makes us intelligent beings?"

Melony took a seat in front of me. "Well in a global community of several races and special groups, we must all learn to use the greed of different groups or nations to the benefit of all mankind regardless of race, creed, religion, handicap or what have you. That greed must be able to support the higher principles in all these groups or else there will be clashes of interests. It cannot be defined by assets or monetary holdings, or by choices and agendas that disrupts the future of existence."

I interjected, raising my hand slightly.

"What do you mean the higher principles in these groups?"

"A true nation values certain truths that have proven resourceful towards their longevity. For example, when you disrupt the habitat of a dolphin over time they may migrate to a more favorable environment or simply become extinct. The highest principle in all nations is truly the ability to find the creative good within every man, woman and child that makes them timeless. In a global culture you must nourish this dolphin in every man, woman, and child or else there will be a silent revolt within that begs for liberation. It is that universal individuality within every creature that makes them unique and special, creative, and timeless."

She sipped her tea and continued.

"The noblest wars do not shed blood but understand the creative good within every individual of any culture, race of people, or religion, and fight with a dialogue of reasons. These reasons will guarantee an endless mind of possibilities for generations to come. So to determine the role you play

in any society you must consider the differences that could disunite you within yourself or without and work out a solution that finds you in the future. Every belief, action or choice must be properly weighed in terms of its future implications before making it a rule of law.

There is an adage that says, 'One man's meat is another man's poison'. It is this poison that must be separated so that every man's meat is edible. Greed must be cultivated in a way that seeks out the dolphin in different kinds of people and at the end serve the world with it. So, the question to ask is if your actions, choices or beliefs have a way of compromising or guaranteeing the future of existence?"

I stood up from the seat looking at Melony briefly, and then walked over to the window. I remember when I first met Melony; it was at a coffee house next to the Bond University. She greeted me and we have not stopped talking ever since. She was head of the Political Science Department at the University.

Looking outside the window from the fifth floor, I saw several students walking towards the classrooms, their dreams and aspirations only as good as the lecturer instructing them. I remember meeting a student who simply didn't know why she was in school. I had told her,

"Go back home and dream the impossible dream and see if the school can make it a reality".

I looked at Melony and continued speaking.

"I just opened an account with the Park Place Banks of Switzerland to support the World Youth Foundation. One of its key missions is simple; educate every child in the major language of every culture. I am going to do it with poetry,

science, music, arts, and crafts so we can appreciate our differences and be respectful of each other's history, including our creativity and genius. I know over time we can achieve a peaceful world."

I stopped talking.

"I tend to believe that the language you speak is what defines you, especially if your memories and experiences are coded within that language. The language becomes your subconscious identity, your partial or total connection to all you can be. For instance, if your greatest ability to communicate is in English then you are an English man, regardless of where you come from. But in the same breath if you understand all languages then you are without allegiance and everyone you meet becomes an extension of you. The world could be a much more beautiful place to live in."

"It's good you make these kinds of decisions as long as the process and legacy of life is not compromised. I am not sure how many people will go along with it, but I know every culture is worth a level of appreciation. However, you have got to be realistic, how many languages are you talking about?" Melony took a cushion and placed it under one of her elbows.

"Seven or more; I am just with the understanding that in a growing world of merging cultures we need to learn about each other and appreciate each other to get along properly so we can think together."

I walked over to Melony's reading table. What is this? I was looking at a paper titled,

"What is Wealth?"

Melony looked at me. "Help yourself. I am still working on it."
I picked up the paper on her desk and began to read.

Physical treasures are but this earth given life, so that we can marvel at the creation of our own hands or the glory of a possession.

And then I thought if only one's wealth could be determined by the quality of mind it can provide different races of people, then the idea of life will take on a different meaning. And if we amass wealth, it will simply mean the ability of one's mind to have even greater applications for the world here and beyond. True wealth is the gift you can pass on to educate the mind in a new way for a better tomorrow. Everyone has a level of wealth, and how they go about sharing it will determine who they really are. Credit ratings or monetary assets do not measure the richest of humankind; the richest of humans are measured by how much they give to inspire the world. The most powerful of humans do not kill to define their territory; they are simply powerful by the choices they make to bring the world together through the powerful abilities of the inquiring mind. I think of artists, musicians, scientists, intellectuals, executives, homemakers and many more, whose decisions make the world a better place for everyone else. But then I think of the original mind that has a new way of creating a more involved world.

No child must be raised to acquire for self, but every child educated with the principles of life that endears them towards making a contribution that transcends time itself. I told myself every generation must develop a strong conscience of giving, the balance of which lies in his duty to his fellow human. True wealth is measured by the transformation of one's mind, because in transforming the mind you discover the unknown beauty of the world around, and even the body becomes a mind that transcends time. Therefore, a truly mind conscious society cannot lack a good thing, because whether they like it or not, they will instinctively reach for higher grounds together. The society prospers because as a people they have learned

to make choices that protect and empower the use of the mind.

True riches are not controlled by a "buy to own" mentality, but by a "learn-to-discover" mentality. Monetary assets are most pleasurable when invested with the intent to discover new worlds of innovation and in the process create new wealth that provides a different application for the mind of many. Money becomes the tool that helps the process of discovery and during discovery finding even greater riches. The pleasure of discovering will ensure that money if truly needed circulates into the hands of new visionaries and new students of the future. For we cannot all own the earth, if it were defined by quantity, we can all own the earth if it were defined by quality, for in it all mankind is truly rich and content. In every choice to possess another must be dispossessed, either of the earth or of the accumulations of man. In a world that chooses to empower the mind of its people, wealth is internalized, and none can be dispossessed. For soon enough these subjects will become discoverers opening new doors for a brighter day.

And then another thought came to me even better than all this is if all humans had a way of learning together.

I looked at Melony, "have you ever considered starting a School of Thought?"

"No! I am thinking it is about time we joined hands together and do something for the planet, the rich and the poor, the mind and the mindless."

Walking together

Some of your best friends are the ones you may never see.

You do not need vows, if over time you will break the vow. You just need a partner that is a lifelong friend that can go through hell with you and come out a winner at the gates of heaven free to roam the streets of gold. It does not matter where he or she is from; you simply know you are going the distance together for a prize. You both live out a vow from the heart."

The older man picked up his hat and walked out the door.

"Wait a minute, where are you going?"

"I have somewhere to go," he muttered with an accent.

"Tell me," Tina inquired "why no vows?"

"You look for a true friend or workmate in that idea of a wife or a husband. Not the ability to be romantically connected because that is a false start that is easily replaceable with someone more romantically gifted, it has no substance of itself. We look for a partner who will push you forward while you do the same because of the understanding of a true commitment to each other's dreams and aspirations. It is not a love that is physical, it is love that transcends the physical and brings hearts together with their passions for everything fulfilling. You trust the convictions within your heart to be one within a purpose and hopefully it is a great purpose. You both have to share and draw together from

the well of aspirations. You both have to be willing to sacrifice for each other and take a chance together. One more thing never give up on what is right to do. You serve each other. You both live out a vow from the heart. Now you have an ear full young woman, do something with it." He tipped his hat, winked at her and walked out the door.

I know you can love someone dearly with the depths of all you are, and still be left with a doubt of where you are going together. I am a free ranger, she thought to herself, if anything I should love myself especially the good about life, including things of nature that come to end but are beautiful while they last. So many hearts hurt for lack of a true friend to be with. Sometimes the greatest comfort of a lifetime is in wonders we have around us that share their love with us unconditionally. I can take a look at the clouds, the birds, the heavens, the children, the gardens. Then I do a dance with the stars, keep several pets, and it's amazing what fulfillment you can find in these kinds of friends.

There are also friends that come along that are not of this world, refreshing to be with and charming to know, they bring along with them the gift of the impossible dreams. And then there are friends that have passed away to greater worlds who leave behind gifts that remind us of their undying passion for those not yet born, not yet known to exist. What a gift, a love that reaches far beyond the days of our dwelling, love that protects us from ourselves in the futility of our minds.

If only we could have a thinking world that understands the wisdom of harmony with the children of the earth, the stars beyond and all their tomorrows.

"Why are you staring out the window like that," Edwin smiled, picking up a newspaper and walking to the window where Tina gazed.

"Just trying to do something worth my time." She closed her eyes briefly and took a deep breath then smiled back.

"Enjoy time, make the best use of it, have fun, play; hey, do whatever makes you smile." Edwin paused very briefly.

"What are you doing now? Let's catch a train to the other side of town." He opened his palm and threw it up in the air in a gesture.

"Sounds like something to do," Tina looked at him thoughtfully.

She picked up her coat from the hook and looked at the watch on her wrist. It was early. Edwin placed the newspaper on the table.

Tina took a look at the headlines of the paper and decided to make sense of the news written out in bold. It read, "Watching the Skies."

"Forget the news; they make your days extremely intolerable," Edwin said with a wave of his hand.

"Not all of it," Tina remarked. "I think it is fair to look for the good news when you open the paper."

"Good news?" he looked at Tina from the corner of his eyes. "Why not let's make some news of our own?"

"News of our own?" Tina said back to him wondering what kind of news he had in mind.

"Yeah! We could dance on the streets of Melbourn all day with our music and create a crowd of our own." Tina

opened the door of the coffee house and looked at him. Edwin picked up his violin.

"Now let me understand one thing, what are you doing with the violin? I thought we were catching the train." Tina placed her hands over her hips.

"We are going to make some news; cheer up, it's going to be a lovely experience. Consider the kind of atmosphere we can create together."

He pulled out the violin bow and played several notes. Something about those notes was relaxing and at the same time exciting. He was smiling at Tina.

"I know I have what it takes," he said. Something about him was extremely radiant. It was like a new ball of energy had enveloped him.

"I am only here to support you till your act is together." Tina said using her little finger to warn him jokingly.

"Well, I like it when you support me. It's very refreshing. And I will need you to cheer up the crowd like I know you can."

Edwin gave Tina a thumbs up.

Tina's portable canvas was lying on a table at a far corner of the room where the sunlight crept in through the windowpanes; its lines of shadow doing a trick as the pane moved from side to side. A fan was blowing not far from the table, and a cup was resting on the table next to her canvas.

"Wait a minute," Tina walked towards her canvas, picked up several drawing sheets, fitting them into the canvas case.

She took drawing stencils off a rack adjacent to the canvas. Tina could see Edwin at the door to the coffee house, patient and quietly excited.

Several artists came around the coffee house to inspire their creativity, the older man was one of them. He came around once in a while when he happened into town. He had left one of his pencils on the table. Tina picked it up and approached the door, passing four more tables to her left and to her right.

Getting to the door three artists were making their way in. One had a guitar, another had a saxophone, and the last one had a bag on her shoulder. The perfect trio, but before Tina could make any comment the conversations began.

"Good heavens, where have you been? I saw you here the last time I came. Do you still play the violin with your feet? He places the guitar on a table. Come on show me something." He looked at his friends and then at Edwin. The young lady with the bag pack took a seat on the chair to the right of where Tina was standing. The young man on the saxophone took a seat as well.

Tina knew Edwin played but she had never seen him play with his feet.

He placed his violin on his feet and what he did next was out of this world. It was downright speechless. The whole room was ecstatic. The young man with the saxophone chipped in with his sax and the music began.

Tina opened up her canvas about to draw the whole experience, when suddenly Edwin stopped playing the violin.

The whole band stopped. The lady with the bag had a set of shakers in her hands that she got from her bag. Tina was puzzled momentarily and looked at all of them with a questionable smile on her face.

"I am sorry I stopped playing the violin, but did you know she is such a beautiful singer? She always brings out her paint brush. I believe she could have some fun singing to discover another side of herself. Tina, you can always go back to your painting." Edwin looked at Tina and smiled.

"Please sing for me, I have heard you and you are simply amazing."

Tina smiled a little disconcerted.

"If you can sing go ahead and blow that whistle," says the young man with the saxophone.

"As a matter of fact, what can you do to this?" the lad with the guitar played some cord. He was excited about the creativity.

"Show us something! Yea show us something!" everyone chimed in.

Rent is Due

Your greatest battle may not be with the one you are familiar with but with the ones you think to trust.

Glossary

"Cos meaning Cousin" "M.I.A" meaning Missing In Action

Derek: How many times have I told you to help with taking the trash out?

Ron: Actually, this would be the first time. I don't remember you telling me to do anything.

Derek: O.K I will say it again; please take the trash out. I have done enough cleaning for the day. I have been cleaning all day actually and I think the least you can do is take out the trash.

Ron: Got you!

(Ron points his finger at Derek his eyes gleaming with the strange twist in the smile.) I will be right back.

Derek: Please make sure you do because rent is due today.

Ron: Sure, sure that's why I am going out quickly to get this rent and I will be back.

Door slams ... Door opens in an adjoining room.

Ray: Hey Derek! What you doing cleaning up again?

Derek: No, it's not that, I just can't stand the filth. You know some things got to get cleaned and stay clean.

Ray: Yeah, you right, you right, you right. Hey Dee, did I tell you?

Derek: No... what's that?

Derek empties the dust packer into the trash.

Ray: She loves me man! She told me the first time she saw my gold teeth she fell in love.

Derek: She fell in love with your goatee or your gold tooth, which one? Or did she fall in love with both?

Ray: What do you mean goatee?

Derek: Goatee... your beard, the one that grows under your chin.

Ray: No mein, I am talking about the gold teeth in my mouth, Dee. Why am I even talking to you Derek? You guys don't have gold teeth, you don't understand the kind of emotions the teeth draws, mein.

Derek: First of all, Ray, I know quite a couple of my friends who have a set of gold teeth in their mouths. I even have a cousin who has a whole set of metallic in his mouth. So, I know this stuff and I don't think they get dates.

Ray: Well, well, well, go ask them the emotional chemistry they get with their teeth when they open their mouth. Then when you come back, you'll see where I am coming from. He flashes his "gold teeth" one more time.

Ray: By the way, this is the rent. Don't be coming up with the "rent needs to be balanced –BS." I got to see my girl au right. I talk to you soon.
He flashes his "gold teeth" again.

Ray: Hey!

Derek: What is it, Ray? I am kinda busy here, you know.

Ray: Get some quality time tonight "au right". You need it, mein. I am telling you; you need it, mein.

Derek: O.K Ray, O.K I will do just that.

Ray approaches the door. Door opens before he gets there.

Ray: Hey watch it, watch it! What's your problem? You trying to smack me with the door?

Ron: My bad.

Ray: You know the rent is due today.

Ron: Yeah, I got it. I can handle my own business.

Ray: I'm just telling you, mein, not trying to argue with you. Actually, I got an important date. Got to go now.

Ray: Take care Dee! I paid my rent! Read my lips: I paid my reeeeeeent!

Door slams.

Ron: I don't know why that dude is always in my business. That dude ticks me off.

Derek: So, Ron you got the rent?

Ron: Yeah, the rent, naaaa. Not yet. I just had a situation bud; you won't believe this. I don't feel good about this. I didn't plan it, bud. I am serious. You know those guys I wrote a check for, the guys I bought the stereo system from.

Derek: No Ron, I don't hold your checkbook.

Ron: Well, the check just cleared, bud. I feel like dying Derek.

Door opens

Chubby: Hey Ron, are you coming or what? We have been waiting for like twenty minutes.

Ron: Hey Derek, my bad, get this fifty right now, for real I am going to get the remaining two hundred like right now. Me and my boys are going to this competition. You know we always win.

Derek: Ron, you know I have never been to any of your competitions. I really don't know if you win or not.

Ron: I am not trying to play you, bud, I'll get the rent, my man. I am serious. I may have to return the stereo and you know you like listening to it once in a while. But I am going to get it for you before the end of the day. For real, my man.

Derek: First of all, I work two shifts and don't find time to listen to radios and especially "not your radio". If you have not noticed I have a radio in my room. It kinda happens that it's always around this time of the month you end up somewhere else before we get to talk again.

Ron: Oh no no no no that's not happening. Trust me, bud, for real. I'm not going to do you like that man. You are my bud. I will be right back.

10 hours later. Phone Ringing Derek wakes up 1.23am

Derek: Hello

Ron: Is that you Derek? Ooh my man, you the best friend I ever had man. You won't believe it, my man. I am actually in the hospital.

Derek: Are you serious?

Ron: I am serious Derek I got a sprain on my leg, bud, got a twisted ankle, bud. I am going to be out for a minute. I am going to be back before the end of the week with your money I didn't plan it like this bud.

Derek: So, Ron which hospitals are you at right now?

Ron: I don't even know, bud.

Derek: You know Ron its kind a strange how you become M.I.A anytime RENT IS DUE! Why not just call a nurse and ask her which hospital you are sleeping in, because I'd like to pay you a visit.

Ron: It's not that Derek; my mum already paid me a visit. My ex actually called.

Derek: How did she know which hospital to go Ron? Are you there Ron? I am going to hurt this dude! I am going to hurt you, Ron!

Dialing his Cousin.

Derek: Yo Cos I can't take this no more.

Fred: What is it now Derek? It is two o'clock in the morning. You know I need to get some sleep.

Derek: No, it just that this Ron kid is playing with the rent money again.

Fred: Oh no not again.

Derek: Again, and again and again and he's making a freaking gain. He is such a nightmare!

Fred: Relax, Derek. Does he have a contract?

Derek: A contract! Nooo. He doesn't have a contract.

Fred: Does he even live in the house?

Derek: Of course, he does, he has his stuff all over the house.

Fred: Tell you what, I will take care of this for you.

Derek: Cos, you can't take care of nothing. This Ron guy came right out of a snake hole!

Fred: Dee, I will take care of this.

Derek: Fred, whatever, I am gonna have to split his rent again. Thanks for your time, Cos, I just needed to load off.

Fred: Anytime Dee, I am going to look out for you.

Derek: O.K goodnight.

One week later in a chance meeting, Derek meets Ron in the house. Too angry to talk he goes straight to his room and closes the door. Five minutes later Derek comes out of the room.

Derek: Ron, can you hear me, Ron?

Ron: Yeah, I am listening. It's been a very bad week you know.

Derek: No, I don't know. I don't know if it's been a bad week, a week of jokes on me, or a week of reckless spending. I really don't know, but what I know is you either pay the rent or you find somewhere else to do what you're doing!

This has been going on for the better part of four months and I have been extremely patient with you!

Ron: Man Derek, I don't think I ever told you, you are the coolest dude I have ever known. I got a hundred dollars I will split it with you right now, fifty-fifty.

Derek: Well, there, Ron, acting responsible, why not spare me and for a change try to bring the whole money at once.

Ron: Then I will do that Derek.

Derek: No no no no. Ron, why not put the hundred dollars down and go get the rest. I really don't have any choice, but you will have to find another place to stay.

2nd week house is unnervingly quiet.

A tap on Derek's door

Derek: Yah, who is it?

Ron: Yo Derek this is Ron. I know you are hardly at home except on weekends and Ray is always with his girl.

Derek: OK, so what do you want?

Ron: Derek...aaaagh my wristwatch is missing I have been looking for it for the past three hours.

Derek: So, what am I supposed to do, buy you a wristwatch? Stop playing games with me.

Three days later another tap on the door

Ron: I know you probably don't know about this Derek, and I know you are pretty tired and all working round the clock, but I got to tell you my laptop is missing, bud. It is the latest OS version. It was a gift from my ex.

Derek opens the door of the room.

Derek: I don't know what is going on Ron, but if you are trying to pull another prank, I am not falling for it.

Ron: Chill out I am serious. I am dead serious.

Derek: Why not check in your mom's house or those places where you go out to study, you know the places where you go... I think you need to start checking these places because I don't know what's going on here. You still need to balance your rent.

Ron: This is a bad time, isn't it? Don't worry I'll get another one.

Derek: I hope you do. I really do. I don't know what's going on, and feel free to put a lock on the door if it helps. I am too busy to even pretend I can keep track of what's happening in your room. It may also be a good idea to get any spare keys you gave to any of your friends.

Ron: No, they don't come around here. I know my brother has a spare, but he does not come around here... Don't worry, Derek, go back to sleep. You want to be well rested for your next shift, bud.

Derek heads back to room

Derek: Have you spoken to Ray about this?

Ron: You know Ray is never at home. He's always getting quality time... you know.

Derek: I am sorry Ron. I don't know how to help you.

Ron: But I will get the rent for you before the end of the month. You know I will.

Derek: Like I said...

Ron: No, don't say no more, I will get the rent.

Two days later. A tap on the door Ron: Yo Derek, this is Ron, dude.

Door opens

Derek: What is it now!?

Ron: Creepy, crazy stuff is happening in the house. I don't understand I can't take this nonsense. I look in my closet and my Nikes brand name. It is a one of a kind. Yo the thing is missing. I look under my bed, a whole rack of stuff is missing. This is getting scary.

Derek: You're not joking, are you? Have you filed a police report?

Ron: Nooo why should I file a police report when I don't have a clue what is happening? You know I am going to have to take all my stuff and put them somewhere, because I don't want to come back to my room and all my stuff is gone. I mean this is scary Derek. I can't even sleep in that room without having a feeling someone is watching me. It's getting scary man. The Rolex, my laptop, my Nike's and everything under my bed, don't you think that's creepy?

Derek: Ron, I really thought you were joking all this time. It seems you're quite serious for a change.

Ron: Damn it, I am serious! I am so freaking serious! This is freaking the daylights out of me. 'Scuse me, got to check this out.

Door slams

Four days later

Ray: Hey Derek, you cleaning again?

Derek: What you up to Ray?

Ray: I told you it's all in the teeth, the "gold teeth" not the goatee. She loves it, mein.

Derek: Your gold tooth or your goatee?

Ray: The gold teeth Derek, the gold teeth, the gold teeth.

Derek: You have only one.

Ray: O.K the gold tooth, the gold tooth, Derek, the gold tooth. You satisfied now Derek?

Derek: Yeah, I'm satisfied.

Ray: I have not seen Ron around lately.

Derek: That's because you have not been in the house lately. I have seen him for the better part of two weeks now. He says his stuff has been coming up missing in his room.

Ray: Really? That's kind strange.

Derek: Yeah, it is.

Ray: You know where he is right now?

Derek: Probably trying to cook up another excuse why he can't pay rent. First it was his Rolex, then his laptop, his Nike's, and said he looked under his bed and everything was gone. He didn't say what it was under his bed. I kinda think something is out of order here.

Ray: I know his stereo is not in the living room.

Derek: Oh, don't tell me someone stole that too.

Ray: Let me see if he is in that room stealing his own stuff.

Ray approaches the door to Ron's Room

Ray: Hey Ron, Ron, (Ray taps continuously on the door.) I know you in there. Rent is due next week you know. NEXT Weeeek! Open the door or I will have to open it. I ain't splitting the rent no more. Hey Ron.

Ray opens the door.

Ray: OOOOUUU what the funk happened in here!

Derek: What's going on?

Derek bolts to the opened door.

Ray: The dude disappeared, mein.

They look at each other; mouths slightly opened with a perpetual "WHAT" without completing the T.

Ray: RENT RON! When did he disappear? PAY YOUR RENT RON. WHEN DID HE CLEAN UP THE HOUSE...?

Derek: WHAT THE HECK IS GOING ON ... RON RENT IS DUE IN FOUR MORE DAYS ...MY GOODNESS.

Three days later

FRED: Hey Cos, I know it's kinda late, I just wanted to know what your status is with rent. Ron no more stays at your place, does he?

Derek: To be frank I don't know what's going on.

Fred: Tell you what Derek, I'll spot you six hundred dollars for this month. I will drop it off tomorrow.

Derek: That's pretty nice of you. Wow where do you get that kind of money? That's a lot to be helping me out with. I really appreciate this... you really don't have to Cos.

Fred: Anything for you Cos, I will drop it off tomorrow.

You don't have to wait around. I have the spare.
Catch up with you later.

Fred hangs up. Derek sits up on the bed

Derek: Wait a minute..... Fred has a spare!
oooooooooSSSSssH@#&!!

The Flash Kid

There is a truth behind a mystery not easily defined by the common eye in the age of awareness.

Grace , I just logged into the account. The site is very interesting. I am very happy you shared it with me. I am working on something very unique for myself," Diesel said, going to his wardrobe and picking out a clean suit

Grace placed her hand on the laser gun. "Still working on the racing cars?" she asked.

"You bet. You know what Grace? All I need is a little push to do those things I love to do. Now I can go to work and come back home living my own dreams. When my site is up and running, I will let you know. Thanks for sharing." He walked over to Grace and planted a kiss on her lips.

"You sweet thing you," Diesel said, holding her hands in his. Then he let go of her hands. "I am expecting Clay very soon," Diesel said putting on his suit. Just then there was a knock on the door.

"Come on in!" Diesel walked out of the room to the glass table and removed the books from the table. Clay stepped in. Beside him was a young boy. Diesel looked at Clay and then at the young boy. "Who is your friend?" "This is Western Lee, owner of Real Time Gaming Networks," Clay replied.

The young boy stood relaxed as the two men exchanged glances. "Can I see you for a minute?" Diesel motioned for Clay to come closer to him as he walked over to the window.

"How old is he?" Diesel whispered. "He is thirteen. It's a long story," Clay stopped talking. Just then Grace stepped out of the bedroom. The look on her face made it clear she was confused as she looked at the young boy and the two men standing at the corner of the window.

Clay looked at Mr. Western Lee. "Mr. Lee, we mean no disrespect, but my friends are a little confused. They did not expect to see someone of your age."

He smiled. "I can understand your dilemma. Then maybe I must give you all a little understanding of who I am. May I have a seat?" the young boy asked Diesel.

"By all means," Diesel replied.

The young boy bowed his head briefly in a form of contemplation and then raised it back up.

"Fifteen years ago, a company started a project in a little community off the coast of Madagascar. It was a water project. My parents were one of the scientists allocated to that project.

Something happened during the project. The company was working on isolating and altering the genetic composition of certain water bacteria. In the process they created a chain reaction throughout the water system that affects only newborn babies.

I am one of the first generations of that creation. We master many skills at a very young age. I can see things before they

happen; I can hear words before they are said, I can change the course of events simply by looking, and I am not the only one. We are many."

The boy looked at all three of them. "I know you didn't expect to be hearing this today, but I would like you all to listen very closely to what I am going to say next."

They were all quiet in the room as Clay, Diesel and Grace fixed their gaze on the young boy.

"I have credible sources that inform me that there are certain factions within the world working day and night to stop my kind from procreating.

"I am also aware of a silent genocide going on. Presently, they are keeping track of any newborn child in the world."

He looked at Diesel. "Grace is one month pregnant with your child, but the truth is every pregnant woman is being marked as a potential threat. It does not matter who they are or where they are from u n t i l they find a way to reverse this phenomenon. In all honesty, it is irreversible. We are all in an upward definition of the greatest of our realities."

Diesel stood up from the chair and looked at Grace.

"Are you pregnant?"

Grace looked at Diesel, "I was going to surprise you." Diesel looked at Mr. Lee a little differently. "How can I believe what you are saying is true?"

"When your site is up and running by this time tomorrow, I will link you to my world. Do not turn back from your dream, Diesel. You are in a race with time."

Mr. Lee looked at Grace.

"You are carrying a generation of our kind. But yours is special."

He stopped talking and looked at all three of them.

"He is called Flash."

Children of the World

We will all one day sit down together and not believe we came thus far to live in each other's arms.

to have daylight all over the earth without the notion of night.

It was like living in

a new kind of world with twelve months of daylight, non-stop daylight. However, it was still experimental.

It didn't take much to create the hovering light satellites over the earth that showered our universe with a new sense of hope and oneness never before imagined.

It was a new dawn. All the leaders of the earth had found a way to invest in their pride of life and happiness.

Children of the World Month, as they call it, brought festivities to the streets. All kind of transactions stopped for a whole month as different parts of the world experienced twenty-four hours of day light for a month. It was so well organized with the communities working hand in hand with entrepreneurs, government authorities, and international communities.

Contributions were made all over the world in different currencies that added up to hundreds and hundreds of billions of dollars. It was a month of shameless giving. One simply goes to the airport and picks a flight to any country of their choosing where they want to experience "Children of the World Month."

However, one had to have made a reservation to the country of their choosing and it was mandatory that they return unless he or she stated otherwise that it is a one-way trip; in which case the country would have been aware of the decision. When these c o u n t r i e s reached the maximum intake allowed based on factors of accommodation, one was given the choice of another country to visit for the duration of the month. Then the government of those countries made a kind of exchange where they both benefited from the tourism.

Every country had found a reason to make their land one full of cultural pride and heritage embodying all races of people. And all these countries were equally sought after for the experience of the "Children of the World Month"

Michael sat in his office chair facing the window on the 25th floor; the sky view was breath taking. Michael had never met his parents. He grew up in an orphanage not far from his office buildings, a testament to his will to survive and make an impact in the world.

"Sometimes the conditions that plague a child are the very ingredient necessary to effect a powerful change," his guardian had told him repeatedly at the orphanage. He had seen so much and had seen the pain through the eyes of so many of his friends and colleagues, but he also saw hope; a kind of sweeping change that could bring the world together and put an eternal smile on everyone's faces.

Michael swung the chair around putting his hand briefly on his desk and stood up. He arranged the stack of documents on his desk, using the flat edge of the desk to align them properly. He slid his briefcase over to his front and opened it placing the stack of papers neatly into it. He walked over to the door, taking a final look at the office, and closed the door.

The Fossil taxi drove up to Ms. Ferez's driveway. Gogo tapped the horn in short, repeated bursts to alert Ms. Ferez. He took out his pen from the visor above his head and began jotting down some ideas. He had a smile on his face.

One level up, Ms. Ferez stood up from the chair and took her time holding Brandon's hand in her hand as she walked down the staircase.

"Brandon, where did you put your baseball cap?"

"I don't know," the young boy replied. He was three years old. She had adopted Brandon when he was two. He had very fair skin; a golden yellow and his slanted eyes gave him that oriental appeal that was simply ecstatic.

She stopped briefly looking at the living room from the railings. The cap was on the sofa. She continued down the staircase making sure Brandon did not trip on the stairs.

Her bags were packed and were lying not too far from the front entrance of the door leading outside where the taxi was waiting.

Her phone rang.

She flipped the phone and answered it.

"Ms. Ferez speaking."

"Your cab is waiting," the voice at the other end alerted her.

She went over to the sofa, picked up the cap, placing it perfectly on Brandon's head. She then held on to Brandon's hand as she walked towards the front door and the suitcases.

At the Leibniz Space Tower, the light team had a view of the earth that was amazing. On the earth stationed at all the continental coastlines were mini nuclear light stations that worked in unison with the space towers.

Light ambassadors in these nuclear stations represented all countries lined across the earth's longitudinal within 30

degrees. In the next 30 degrees across, all countries located within that longitudinal were also represented by their light ambassadors. As such, there were twelve of such stations across the earth and every nation of the earth was represented throughout these stations.

"So where are you from?" Angie asked the young man.

"The land of the Ever Braves. You won't find that on the map, but it is there." He replied.

She looked at her brother and shook her head in that ridiculous way of hers.

"Well, what are you waiting for guys? Let's get on the blue train." The full voice interrupted their conversations. It was Aswan. Behind him were ten others who had flown into the country.

Kerman Street was a spectacle to behold. The museums, the artifacts and great temples were something to admire and celebrate. The music throughout the streets brought out the celebration in you. The smell of delicious foods from different restaurants coupled with the fact that it was a month of shameless giving made not just Kerman Street, but so many streets across the globe a true moment in history.

They were moving towards the cross-country train rides. So many people were on the streets; the festivities were kicking off. Aswan gave everyone a train pass.

Aswan looked at all the visitors and began to speak, "At precisely five o'clock this evening when the day starts turning to night, and the lights from the space towers are switched on, the celebration will begin. For those of you who

are new to this part of town, I will show you everything worth seeing."

They all took turns boarding the train. After about fifteen minutes the train started moving again. They knew the routine; nevertheless, one could not possibly see everything in one month. One simply took pictures with as many people as they saw and appreciated the currents as it flowed.

Aswan was talking to the group.

"That is one of the great temples of our fathers. All our temples have been dedicated to the All Knowing One. As you all understand that was the only way to truly appreciate the highest of all wisdom within each one of us."

"That is the Obelisk Museum where we will stop momentarily." Aswan continued.

As the train stopped several men, women and children with fruit baskets got on the train and gave bagged fruits to everyone.

Suddenly there was a loud soothing sound, ripping across the country and alerting every one of the time shifts. Even though it was not the first time they had heard it, they all seemed to freeze momentarily. For a moment it was quiet, as everyone looked at each other in anticipation of the transition. Then out of nowhere you could see light sifting through the clouds in a great display of wonder. It was like a new sun around the earth with the full spectrum of light waves sharing its different colors and bringing a kind of unified Spirit to everyone under its glory. You could feel that oneness around you. You could feel the touch of a great whole. For a whole week this phenomenon will be played out as everyone took time to look into the eyes of everyone else and find a sense of awe and completion.

Angie held on to her brother's hand.

On this belt of activity across the longitude of the earth, you could be sure almost everyone was quiet. Nova could tell his sister was crying and drew her ever closer to his side. Aswan and the rest of the tourists were outside the train on the street and a whole lot of people alike. Then one by one they wrapped their arms around each other. The chain of arms growing ever so larger as they all looked up and saw each other through the eyes of a deeper truth. They begin to hum a song.

Ms. Ferez got out of the taxi in front of the airport. A bag helper offered to carry her bags to the ticket terminal. She held on to Brandon's little hand as she took in the air. The breeze was beautiful. Her curls moving back and forth over her face; she was stunning in the setting rays of the sun.

Her phone rang.

Michael saw the baseball cap being carried away by the wind, as he walked towards the airport terminal. He could also see the young boy pointing at the cap from a distance. He picked up his pace intercepting the line of movement of the cap, waited for it, and then picked it up. He walked towards the two strangers, sifting through so many travelers who were heading towards the airport terminals.

The wind played with his jacket as he approached them. He was holding his briefcase in one hand and the baseball cap in the other.

Ms. Ferez had just got off the phone. Her sister just informed her that in two hours they would experience the transition.

Her sister was in Africa. Now as she looked at the young man approaching, she realized why Brandon had been pointing.

Michael got closer to the young boy holding the cap in his hands. He stooped to the level of the young boy and placed the cap over his head looking into his eyes.

Ms. Ferez stooped down as well looking into Michael's eyes with a smile.

Something about Brandon struck a chord in Michael.

"May I carry him?" Michael asked. "Oh yes, please by all means." Ms. Ferez watched the young man carry the boy in his arms. As she looked at her son on Michael's arm, she felt a strange connection that defied all her reasoning.

"My name is Michael." Michael extended his hands to the young woman.

"My name is Valentine." Ms. Ferez smiled. "Valentine Ferez."

"So where are you going?" Michael asked.

"Australia." Michael looked at his space watch for a brief minute, and then looked back at Valentine.

"The transition is still eight hours away." Michael looked at Valentine still carrying Brandon in his arms.

"Yes, I know," Ms. Ferez replied.

"I work for the space towers," Michael said, pausing briefly. "If it's not too much to ask I would like to experience the festivities from the towers with you."

He was still holding on to Brandon.

As he spoke, that loud soothing sound they had come to know every year, swept through the air, the rich spectrum of light taking over the area.

One by one everyone stopped rushing towards the terminals and became calm, taking in the warmth of the spectrum. Many got out of the terminal as they watched the spectrum in awe, holding hands and wrapping their arms around one another, humming a song.

As Michael and Valentine held hands in the spectrum of lights their happiness will forever be linked.



Author-Desirel Calvin Lawrence

Paradise

... is everyone's home to live in, if we understand the precious gift of all who live and are yet to live. Never was there a man who gave up his right to think, if he thought to think, for in it are his choices to be. Every destination to a kingdom must be preceded by the presence of the kingdom itself whose form was once a thought. To every man paradise will be who sends a smile of great purpose with a handshake of sweet dreams to the world ahead of him.

Desirel Calvin Lawrence

A Tribute to All Pure Souls That Inspire Good