

Mr . Grumles Awakes

by

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Mr. Grumles' Awakes

The final novel in the Inner Chapters of the Path
and the *Way*.

Part 1

The Awakening

Mr. Grumles stirs in his sleep. He comes around from a dream outside of his normal reality. A dream that has its own meta-reality but one which has become so familiar as he has spent so much time there. He opens his blue-blue eyes and smiles — what an adventure.

He stretches; pushing his front paws out as far as he can while sticking his backside as far in the air as is possible. He slowly collapses this extreme posture until he is resting in relaxed repose on his stomach.

His position on the open balcony of his apartment gives him an un-interrupted view of the magnificent vista he now gazes upon.

The base line lies below the balcony's floor line. With his head in a raised position, he is in fact looking down on the open terrace some 4 metres below. But this he cannot see as his position on the balcony is such that the base line of the balcony matches the base line of the terrace; a chance alignment.

What this vista — in all honesty one could not call it just a view; it is that magnificent — what this vista affords him is the 3 moons rising as the red-dwarf sun sets over the purple ocean. The normal red tinge to everything first changes to purple before changing to the shadow black of the night; this takes about a half an hour.

It's as if he's in a trance. He remains in this transcendental state until the transition between night and day is complete.

Then, as the galaxy begins its rise over the third moon, he sits up. The moons, stacked behind one another, rise to a half for the nearest to 3/4 for the third. They take up nearly a half of the vista before him but leave the heavens above and to the side, free and filled with stars.

The galaxy rise is a visual phenomena of great beauty in its own right. The White Hole at its centre radiates an intense white aura with flashes of brilliance as suns arrive from the Black Hole world.

The length of his dream making the night's sleep seem like an age; this 'rising' is as bewitching as if he had never seen it before. What a world, what a life!

Casting off the trance like state the questions begin.

“Why do I dream of this other *world*?” — Which leads to — “Is this other *world* the other 3-D world in the 9-dimension theoretical world that is so popular amongst present day theoretical physicists?”

[A note to the general reader: this may all seem academic but let me assure you the 9-dimension world theory just about explains everything. For those not acquainted with it let me give you a brief outline here so that you can keep up with my train of thought as well as current thinking in theoretical physics..

Once our universe came into being via the chance differentiation in the primordial state and known as the ‘Chance Beginning’ to one and all, a set of physical laws that govern this universe of ours came into being at the same time. These laws, it is assumed, are delivered in the form they are because of the type of differentiation that occurred in the primordial state. However, there is no way of knowing what differentiation occurred and as we only have our own universe to reflect on, it is impossible to determine the type or the kind of taxonomy that exists to determine the type of universe from the type of differentiation. It is just something we have to accept at present.

However, the 9-dimensional world theory is so popular amongst theoretical physicists because it explains so much of the world we live in. It is also in keeping with the concept of the ‘Unformed Block’; a concept of proven worth because it explains the direction of time and the ‘hidden paths’ we all tread through the ‘infinite paths of possibility’. The 9-dimensional world theory and the concept of the ‘Unformed Block’ can be said to be in synchronicity and as such everyone, and not just physicists, should be conversant with the 9-Dimensional world theory so here it is.

The 9-Dimensions are as follows:

6 Space Dimensions divided into two 3-Dimensional worlds, plus one Time Dimension that governs both Space Dimension worlds, one Gravity Dimension that operates in both Space Dimension worlds and one Consciousness dimension that also operates in both Space Dimension worlds. Making 9 dimensions in all.

Our world of 3-Dimensions has this parallel 3-Dimensional world operating along side of us and which makes up about one fifth of the mass of our universe. What if — I hope you forgive my speculation, which I am well known for — what if this other 3-Dimension world that runs alongside us, is in fact the one that I dream off.

As Consciousness is universal to both Space Dimensional worlds and dreams are experiential experiences thus making them part of consciousness, could it be that my dreams are in fact *real in this other world*.

Here I would like to draw your attention to the nature of this other world where Gravity is so strong that matter collapses under its own weight, as it were, and disappears into what they, in this other world call a ‘Black Hole’. This is almost the opposite of what happens in our world where matter and other forms of energy spring forth from a ‘White Hole’.

I'm sure you can see the connection as this other 3-Dimensional world is sucking itself into our world via Gravity. Slowly but relentlessly disappearing in their world and being, as it were, reincarnated in ours.]

“So why not consciousness. And as dreams are part of our consciousness, why not have dreams that have been sucked through along with everything else. Are these dreams my dreams or are they some other entities dreams — could they belong to C de V? A ‘naked ape’.

And what about those other ‘naked apes’ Angie and Salter and the Little Buddha. Are they all real in this parallel spacial world? Or, are they just figments of my imagination. And, am I going mad?

This is not the best beginning for a book that purports to explain the Nature of Reality. But then again ... if this is only one universe in an infinite number then it could easily be true, if not in this particular universe but in some other one. Now that makes sense! And I feel much better. And I am no longer entertaining the idea that I am going mad. But at the very least I now hope you — my dear readers — will have an insight into my thought processes and into what I think about the most important subject of all — The Nature of Reality.

However, we should ask if any symmetries have been broken in this explanation of The Nature of Reality. Symmetries are important as they balance reality out on different levels on the scale of reality. As reality is infinite, then the scale of reality is infinite also. Therefore a symmetry across the entire scale is quite impossible leaving only symmetries on each level possible; the difference, as always, between the infinite and the finite. So is there a broken symmetry on this level on the scale of reality — that is the one that contains our 9-Dimensional universe and one that can be viewed from the perspective of the ‘Unformed Block’?

I can't see one at present but then I haven't spent that much time thinking about it. I do know that there is a faction in the Librarian's Guild that do subscribe to a broken symmetry in our 9-Dimensional universe on the scale level of our universe. However, the faction is comprised mainly of young librarians who are very radical in their beliefs. I always try to keep an open mind in these matters unless the evidence is overwhelming, which, in this case, it is not.

Then what about those ‘naked apes’ in my ‘dream world’? Yes we have ‘naked apes’ here too but they seem different and I don't mean just in their size, or smell, or attitudes; but something in their realistic deportment. By which I mean: would ‘naked apes’ even under extreme provocation consider murdering their own children. Although I have heard parents express such views it is only ever rhetorical.

I suppose because we have ‘naked apes’ in our real world and they exist in my ‘dream world’, which may or not be this other 3-D spatial world, no symmetry in regard to ‘naked apes’ has been broken. But I can't help but feel that the similarity is rather frivolous, if that's the correct word. Perhaps a better word would be disingenuous — meaning: insincere, not candid and possibly even having secret motives. But why would I have these misgivings about my own valuation of a broken symmetry. Perhaps I intuit that my young colleagues in the Librarians Guild are right. Which of course leaves me somewhere between no evidence and hence no proof, and, feeling that there is a broken symmetry on

this scale level of Reality. It's most annoying and even more so because I can't see anyway of resolving ..."

'TRUMPTY, TRUMPTY, TRUMPTY — TRUMP, THERE GOES THE GALLOPING MAJOR. TRUMPTY, TRUMPTY, TRUMPTY — TRUMP, THERE GOES THE GALLOPING MAJOR.'

"The doorbell, my doorbell."

I stroll through my award winning apartment press the clarifier and there before me are 2 'naked apes' looking very officious in the clothing of their office; the Censor's Office, their department; Office of Investigation.

Official 1: "I have here a warrant to search this apartment."

"Indeed. Then you must exercise your duty."

They enter followed by several more members of the Censor's Office among which are 3 cats. Then finally, last but definitely not least, a full Deputy Censor in the magnificent naked ape form of Gloria Good-n-Rich. Tall, leggy, slender with large firm breasts wearing a gold, paper thin, gold disk dress, of her Office, cut to show off these last two attributes to perfection. She glides rather than walks and as she passes Mr. Grumles she pulls a number of his whiskers forcing the skin away from the mouth and revealing his outsized canine incisors.

"And I'm delighted to see you again Gloria."

"You are the only one who could have taken them." She says this to the marvellous purple, black and exploding white vista outside.

Mr. Grumles joins her at the very edge of the room, "Precisely, what?"

"The files on the 'Unformed Block', the restricted files that only you and 5 academics have access to." She turns to him, "Don't deny you have a keen interest in knowledge concerning the 'Unformed Block'. The records show that you have accessed those files on several occasions and have shown as great an interest in them as any of the academics now studying them."

"True. However, I have long considered that such knowledge can only be grasped by a ... mystical savant. Which I am not."

"But you would like to be." This is more statement than question.

"True. But I also believe you need to be born with the right brain architecture. Which I was not."

"A very convenient answer and one in which I place little store by."

"This is me you are talking to. So it's no good pretending that I am someone that I am not. You know me. You even like me. How can you accuse me when you cannot possibly believe it."

“Fine words from a *wordsmith*.” She sighs, “I have no alternative. There is only you and the 5 academics and I have to treat you all the same.” Then a change in tone from seriousness to a false sadness, “All that knowledge lost forever. For I cannot see that we will ever recover it.”

Mr. Grumles’ head fidgets by entering into a series of minute circles. Gloria notices and turns to confront him. Mr. Grumles turns away and saunters along the edge of the balcony, “That may not necessarily be true.”

‘What?’ The annoyance can be heard in her voice in the form of a violent tone.

“Dr. Schultz, my predecessor, had the good sense to have those files copied and placed in another Library.”

“What!”

Mr. Grumles turns to face Gloria and sits, “He thought it was a dereliction of the Library’s duty not to have copies of what could easily be the most important files in the Library. It just so happens I agree with him. And a good job too, after what has happened.”

The sarcasm drips like thick honey from Gloria’s beautiful mouth, “And you and Dr. Schultz outrank the entire Board of Directors of The Knowledge Field when it comes to decisions about the Library.”

“It was obviously an oversight that was easily rectified and which has been proved to be correct.” Mr. Grumles lifts his head into an heroic pose, “I stand vindicated.”

Gloria walks slowly across to where he sits and looks down into that up turned face, “So where are the copies?”

“In a small Library on the island of Kahn. Don’t ask me why Dr. Schultz chose that particular location. He didn’t elaborate and I didn’t enquire.”

A naked ape investigator approaches, “There’s a hologram on the bedroom wall, you might want to take a look at.”

Gloria nods in recognition then gestures with a beckoning finger to Mr. Grumles. He follows. They stand and stare at a framed picture with a bizarre abstract pattern.

“Does it work for you?” Gloria says this without taking her eyes off the 2-D picture.

“You have to give it a chance and you should be further down at my height to view it properly.”

Gloria sinks down but to no avail, “What is it you can see?”

“It’s a cafe scene with 3 people sitting around a table and another person serving drinks.”

“Can you actually see it now?”

“Yes, but then I’ve had lots of practice. Have you ever done it before?”

“I tried but got fed up. Did it take you a long time?”

“About an hour, something like that. Some people can get it straight away while others never get it no matter how long they try. I should think that you should try because of your job.”

“And what do you mean by that?”

“Well, if you knew how to construct the 2-dimensional hologram surface then you could hide all sorts of stuff inside and it would only be visible to the viewer and only then if they knew what they were looking for. Strange.” He says this last word in a drawn out fashion, “But I can’t remember that book on the table. before”

Mr. Grumles turns to Gloria with a quizzical expression.

“Are you jesting?”

“I swear Gloria that I’m not. But then I just might not have noticed it.”

“So how are we going to find out?”

“There’s only one way to find out and that’s to go to the place where it was made.”

“What? To find out if there was a book on the table in the original hologram?”

“These holograms were mass produced. They’d know if there was a book on the table in the original.”

“And if they weren’t, then yours has been tampered with?” Gloria takes out her com (communicator: a metal slab 5 inches by 12 inches by 1/2 inch made of a composite metal silicate compound fully digitised for communication, photography and energy manipulation) takes a photograph of the 2-d hologram sends it to her department’s analysis computer and has an almost instant reply, “The book has only the word ‘file’ written on it but that it is of a much more sophisticated 2-D rep than the rest of the hologram.”

Gloria Good-n-Rich’s com with full laser edge weapon and cutting edge facility. Tailor imprinted for hand, finger and voice recognition also nail interface. Plus self destruct facility device only. Connected for holographic communication and Censor Office knowledge field network with dedicated node.

IMAGE OF 3-D HOLOGRAM IN 2-D AND CLOSE UP IMAGE OF BOOK WITH FILE CLEARLY VISIBLE

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Now it must be said and it's best that it is said now while we are dealing with holograms, and that is, that holograms belong to the 'classical' world of reality. They are not mathematical representations that belong to the world of Maps.

This may appear to be a dubious proposition as they would appear to be just illusions — constructs of the mind. But then all of 'classical' reality can be said to be just that — constructs of the mind.

But they do exist in the real world even thou they would appear to have more in common with ghosts; Illusions with a 3-D presence; half in the mind and half in physical reality.

Mr. Grumles relates these thoughts to Gloria via his com.

And she replies through her com.

Is this from your understanding of Reality from a Quantum Bayesian Perspective? [see Appendix N : The Quantum Bayesian Perspective]

Mr. Grumles answers.

We really must get together and have a proper discussion about The Quantum Bayesian Perspective. That we spend too much time not understanding each other because we have different definitions of this perspective is almost criminal. A single evening should be sufficient.

Gloria replies.

Ha, ha. A single evening, as if. For you cats perhaps. But for us apes it might take a little longer — perhaps a year.

Mr. Grumles brushes this aside.

Once you get the illusion and the mind's construction of the illusion on the same page, the rest is easy.

We'll give it a try sometime but right now let's get back to this moment's reality.

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"Lets go check out the company that made it. Because they would know."

Gloria taps her com and has the address in an instant, "Down town near the docks. But why not just give them a call?"

"Because I wouldn't be able to tell whether they are lying or not."

"Is your cat's 6th sense that accurate?"

“It’s pretty good just as long as I’m in the same room as they are.”

A naked ape approaches Gloria, “Sweeps complete.”

“Then file your report. I’m off following a lead, see you later.”

Mr.Grumbles and gloria head out of the apartment. They take an open lift down 15 floors. Enough time to appreciate a fine view of the ‘City of Light’ all lit up.

“A fantastic view of the city this side and of the ocean on the other side. Must of cost you a small fortune?”

“It does. I’ll still be paying it off 100 years from now. But if you want to live in squalor and die young — buy something cheap. Where do you live?”

“On the beach. I like the water.”

The transport is waiting for them. A flat bed with 2 seats. The mag-lev kicks in as soon as they are seated and the transport hovers a metre above the road. Gloria uses her com and the transport takes off at speed.

They drop down into the city at speed then decelerate quickly coming to a stop near a big cat who wanders across to the flat bed, “Well well, what have we here? Mr. Grumbles. And is this your latest squeeze?” He says this while leaning in to Gloria, “Or is this the number 1 Investigator of the Censor’s Office, none other than mistress frilly knickers herself, Gloria Good-n-Rich.”

“Mr Shanks. Would you please take your face out of mine and assume the regulation distance.”

“No more the word than the deed. But pray tell me what are you 2 doing up here on the hill and where would you be going to on such an un-auspicious night — *together?*”

“That need not concern you Mr. Shanks. For the simple reason it is official business.”

“Mr. Grumbles, perhaps you will be more forthcoming.”

Mr. Grumbles is looking at a 4-seat flat bed transport lying at an angle on the side of the road, “Why is that transport off the road?”

“I suspect adolescent naked ape vandalism. Third one this week. What they need is a good spanking. What they’ll get is lots of words and grief from their parents and told to start acting responsibly.” There is a weary resignation in Mr. Shanks’ voice before he returns to the previous subject, “The beads, Mr. Grumbles. Spill them then die.”

“Sorry. I’m sworn to secrecy. Official Censor’s Office business.”

Mr. Shanks pulls out his com from his pouch and presses it against Mr. Grumbles’ pouch and com, “I’ll be watching.”

Their transport resumes its progress with Mr. Shanks watching them until he disappears as they round a bend.

Gloria turns to Mr. Grumles, "Why have they got an Inspector of Police investigating a minor infringement?"

"He might be telling the truth but I doubt it. Didn't you notice the 6-blade drone hovering overhead?"

Gloria quickly turns around until she identifies the drone, "There's lots of strange things going on up here on the hill." Then a moments realisation, "What a cheek. He really is a pain."

"Damn good cop though. We might be needing one soon and he'd fit the role — perfectly."

"And why do you think we might need a cop?"

Mr. Grumles sighs, "If we have to go to the island we might need some official muscle. He's got the credentials in every respect."

"First things first. I've yet to interview the academics."

"Do that when we get back. Let's pick up the copy as soon as we can. It has to be first priority."

"And do you expect the Censor's Office to make another copy."

"After what's happened I can't see how they can refuse."

They finish the rest of the journey in silence. Pulling up outside of the Hologram factory they get out and go inside. They wander through mainly naked ape workers operating sophisticated equipment. Getting directions to the manager's office they arrive impressed. The girl in reception ushers them into the manager; a certain naked ape by the name of Claud Pie.

Gloria hands Claud Mr. Grumles' 2-d hologram, "What can you tell us about the book on the table with the word 'FILE' written on it."

Claud adjusts the distance his head is from the 2-d hologram until he can see the book on the table then promptly collapses onto the desk in front of him. Blood oozing out of his ears. Gloria backs against the wall operating her com in silence. Mr. Grumles takes the door also using his com in silence.

The receptionist can sense that things aren't right, "Can I help you with anything?" She asks nervously.

"Take a seat and remain calm." Mr Grumles hears his own voice as if it was in another room.

They arrive together, Mr. Shanks, the forensic unit and a police response unit. The factory is quarantined and as soon as the forensic unit has finished their preliminary examination Claud Pie's body is removed with Mr. Shanks, Gloria Good-n-Rich and Mr. Grumles following.

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The Forensic Lab's staff stand down leaving Mr. Shanks, Gloria and Mr. Grumles in conversation with the Chief Pathologist.

"Mush. Did you say Mush. I didn't think that was a scientific term." Says Mr. Shanks sounding as confused as his 2 compatriots look.

"It may not be a scientific term but believe me it is the best descriptive word for the state of that poor ape's brain."

"Mush." Mr. Grumles says the word with the full meaning and its implications just dawning on his consciousness, "Mush. That could have been my brain."

"Or mine." Says Gloria but with a tad more self control than Mr. Grumles'.

The door opens to the forensic lab and in comes a holographic disc. The image; the floating body of the Censor herself, "What is going on?" Her fur is bristling with suppressed anger.

Silence.

"Report Chief Good-n-Rich. Have you placed Mr. Grumles under arrest?"

"He is no longer under suspicion."

"But he was there when this man was killed and it was his device that killed that poor unfortunate ape."

"It has been established that Mr. Grumles has no interest in stealing the restricted files ..."

She's cut off by the Censor, "And can you and he prove that."

"If you allow me to finish. Mr. Grumles has informed me that Dr. Shultz made a copy of the restricted files and hid them in a small library on the island of Khan."

"What!"

"As a result Mr. Grumles has no need to steal the files as he has a copy at his disposal any time he wants."

"What!? There's a copy of these files even though I strictly forbade such an act?"

"Dr. Shultz made a copy in the event of such a situation that has now transpired." Mr. Grumles intercedes smiling at Gloria as he does so, "I suggest I go to the island of Khan and retrieve them."

"Mr. Grumles, do you think that I would trust you with such an important task after you have failed to inform my good self of the existence of these copies?" The Censor fumes.

“We all make mistakes, Censor. Yours was not to make copies in the first place. Mine was not to inform you that Dr. Shultz had rectified your mistake. For which I apologise.”

Gloria has to turn away and in doing so intersects Mr. Shanks gaze as he turns away. Their shared mindset is one of mild humorous terror.

The Censor is about to reply but Mr. Grumles intercedes once more, “The dead man was killed via an holographic image. I would suggest to you, in the name of prudence, that you should stop using holographic devices until the process is understood. It would be a terrible loss to the Censor’s Office, nay, to the World Government and indeed to the population at large if the Censor’s brain was turned to ... mush.”

“Mush.” is the last word the Censor mutters before her holographic image disappears.

*

The Censor’s Office in consultation with the Police Department’s Special Branch had decided that although the two cases were almost certainly connected it was from the point of view of expediency that there should be 2 avenues of investigation.

The murder was now to be investigated by a Special Branch team led by Chief Inspector Tom Marple [insert what he is — ape or cat — as strict protocol for the writer. Not putting Mr. in front of name is not enough to denote a naked ape.]

The missing files to be investigated by the Censor’s Office Chief Investigator Gloria Good-n-Rich who is assigned Mr. Shanks as liaison for the Police Department, and, Mr. Grumles as special knowledge field Librarian, who, it was thought, might have special knowledge that would be useful in the investigation. So it was that Gloria, Mr. Shanks and Mr. Grumles were soon on their way to the island of Khan. Or, to be accurate to the point of being pedantic, the Island of Khan.

Flying at the boundary between space and the planets atmosphere is a pleasure of exquisite delight. Many people travel just for the experience alone. The walls and floor are totally clear and with the internal lighting turned off the experience is one of flying through the universe without restriction.

Mr. Grumles and Mr. Shanks have joined paws allowing Gloria to lean against them while holding on to their necks. They gaze with wonder at the white hole spewing out white energy and flashes of explosive material. Up in near space the white hole seems to be so much bigger and its presence one of power and even danger. Their talk does not reflect this, however, being firmly on the job at hand.

“The Censor did not take kindly to you pointing out her ... *mistake*.”

“Gloria, my dear, I did her a big favour and a kind courtesy. The whole episode could have been seen differently if I’d born her any malicious intent.”

“Such as?”

“If there is one person that would have motive for making the files disappear it would have to be her.”

“So true.” Mr. Shanks intercedes.

“It was she who forbade the files from being copied — for whatever reason. But as she didn’t value the knowledge about the Unformed Block as she was against its possible use for nefarious reasons I would suggest to you both that she would be quite happy if those files never existed. She could therefore justify their disappearance to herself in that she was acting in the best interests of the general population.” Mr. Grumles is smirking — a difficult expression for a cat.

“Which she almost certainly would have been.” Says Gloria in a slightly huffy way.

“Which she would have been. If, and only if, they had or for that matter could have been used for such mundane nefarious reasons. Which I never have ever thought they could. But which she obviously did.” Mr. Grumles’ rests his case.

“It does make her a suspect, Gloria. Even if you don’t want to believe it.” Interjects Mr. Shanks.

“Precisely.” Mr. Grumles smirks out the word — you have to see it to believe it is possible.

“You do realize that the Censor could be listening to this conversation?”

“Let’s hope she is. That way she can see that we bear her no malicious intent and that we are only interested in getting to the truth.”

“Fine words Mr. Shanks and ones that I’m sure the Censor will take to her heart.”

“Throw me a sick bag.” Says Mr. Grumles

All 3 laugh in subdued tones as a voice interjects, “We will begin our decent in 1 minute. Once you feel the gravity returning please make your way to your seats.”

*

The Crimson Beach Hotel is well named as the beach is most certainly made of crimson sand. This is a small and rather exclusive ‘Individualistic’ hotel on the east coast of the island.

The Manager is a small rather nervous naked ape who cannot keep his eyes off Gloria, “It is true that Dr. Shultz came here as you say and he had with him 2 large cases filled with hard-copy files. What they contained, I’m afraid, I was not privy. He neither showed me nor told me about the contents.”

“But they did go to the library?” Mr. Shanks enquires with some force. Enough to gain the Manager’s attention for a couple of seconds from the ‘locked-in’ attention to Gloria’s magnificent body.

“I can only assume.” He returns his attention back to Gloria, “Drinks on the terrace?”

Gloria moves from reception to the terrace in her usual gliding motion that guarantees the full attention of those gathered; cats as well as naked apes.

Mr. Grumles smiles at the onlookers forcing the onlookers to smile back. Gloria picks a table. The drinks arrive via a central portal and spin their way to the 3 investigators who have taken up their positions in a semi-circle overlooking the ocean. The large dark shadows playing just below the surface play an interesting visual spectacle for the recently arrived guests. While they in turn provide a different sort of spectacle for the other inmates of the Hotel.

“Why this Hotel?” Mr Shanks turns around to observe those observing him, “And why would he show the Manager that he had hard-copy files. Makes no sense.”

“Unless he knew we would be following in his footsteps and that we would want to know if the files actually got to where he was supposed to be taking them. What do you think Mr. Grumles?” Gloria’s smile meets his gaze halfway.

“I think you both have very suspicious minds. But then I suppose it’s just professional characteristics. And I should be pleased that you both are exercising your professional acumen with such vigor.”

Mr. Shanks and Gloria share a moment in front of Mr. Grumles as he is sitting between them and which makes him smile, “There’s plenty of the day left. Why don’t we finish our drinks and head down to the Library.”

The silence is only broken by Mr. Shanks leaning on the table and looking directly at Mr. Grumles, “Do you really think they’ll be there?”

“Oh come on.” He finishes his drink in one, “There’s only one way to find out.”

Mr. Grumles leads the way but he is closely followed by the other 2 and approximately 20 pairs of eyes.

*

Librarian Jango is an old naked ape. He is exceedingly thin and quite decrepit. He walks in front with the ‘usual suspects’ following behind.

“Not normal, he was definitely not ...”

“Normal.” Mr. Shanks offers.

“Definitely not.” Says Jango annoyed, “Dr. Shultz said, he did say, he did.”

“What did he say?” Gloria asks with impatience.

Jango stops and slowly turns around to face her, “He said they needed to be stored here. Here. As they were hard copy. As if, as if that made any sense. No sense.”

“Nonsense.” Mr. Grumles offers under his breath to his amused compatriots.

But Jango has heard, “Precisely. No sense.” Jango resumes his perambulation arriving at a set of shelves covered with files. “Here. Here they are. Here is where he put them. And here they still are.”

“Have you read them?” Asks Gloria.

“No time. Time not available. Too busy. Read them? Good joke. Not laughing.”

The other 3 are, laughing.

“Did he say anything — whatsoever?” Mr. Shanks stresses.

Jango thinks for a moment, “Going to the wild. To the wild going on holiday. Lucky ape.”

“Ape lucky.” The 3 join in.

“Indeed.” And with that Jango plods off muttering to himself.

“You haven’t read them Gloria?”

“You know nicely I haven’t Mr. Grumles.”

“Then it’s essential that you do.” Mr. Grumles leafs through them, “Looks like they are all here.”

“And by the looks of it that’s going to take you a couple of days.” Says Mr. Shanks, “And of course, I’m not privy to such exalted knowledge.”

“You certainly are not.” Says Gloria with authority.

“So what are we going to do for the next couple of days?” Mr. Shanks turns to Mr. Grumles, “Go fishing?”

“You 2 can go interview Professor Jules, who just so happens to be holidaying here on the island.” Gloria presses her com against Mr. Shanks com, “And I’ll see you back at the hotel tonight.”

★

Professor Jules is a naked ape in his 50s, at the top of his profession. His tufty hair is relegated to the sides of his bald head. Everything about him speaks of aggression from his pointy nose to his mean mouth, “So why haven’t you arrested the librarian that stands beside you? He is obviously culpable even if he didn’t carry out the actual act.”

“Give me one shred of evidence and I will perform my custodial duty forthwith. He is a worthless creature as we both know and the world would be a better place if he were to

leave it for good. However, he is here on the instruction of the Censor herself and as such we must bear his presence with fortitude.” Mr. Shanks gives Mr. Grumles a sickly grin blindsided by the Professor.

“How can you lose such precious documents? You will be demoted at the very least, I will make certain of that.”

Mr. Grumles smiles with a calm demeanour, “I will recommend it myself.”

“Oh, of course, to that corrupt cabal of librarians you call a guild. No doubt they will insist on a promotion to Senior Librarian without Portfolio or whatever the top accolade is named.”

“Librarian President of the Guild. A position already occupied and therefore one which I am unable to occupy.”

Professor Jules fumes but can see it is a useless avenue for his anger so tries another tack, “Where were you when the files went missing?”

“This has yet to be established but once it is it will be the very question that Mr. Shanks here will be asking of you.”

“What! Are you insinuating that I could have been responsible?”

Mr. Shanks intercedes, “There are 5 academics and a librarian who have ... sorry ...had access to those files. And as far as I’m concerned anyone of you could be culpable. This ...” He blocks the professor off, “is also the opinion of the Chief Investigator of the Censor’s Office, Gloria Good-n-Rich.”

“Gloria ... Good ... n ... Rich.” The Professor draws the name out as if by doing so it will explain everything, Then he repeats the exercise, “Gloria ... Good ... n ... Rich. Mr. Grumles personal friend and confidant. The same Gloria Good-n-Rich that attended the Librarian’s festival at Mr. Grumles’ invitation.”

“None other. Now enough of your deflection and answer a simple question: when did you last access the files?” Mr. Grumles is no longer playing soft ball.

“You know nicely when, access is always recorded.”

“That was not the question I asked.”

“That is the only answer you will get from me.”

“What did your discussion group discuss at your last meeting on the 233 day of this year.” Mr Shanks has finally got the interview on track.

“The secret files discussion group?”

Mr. Shanks doesn’t dare that question with an answer.

“I would have to consult my com to identify the exact nature of that meeting.”

“Then do so.” The irritation in Mr. Shanks’ voice has the desired effect.

The Professor has his com out and consulted in a matter of seconds, “Ah yes. The accessibility of the Unformed Block by the use of psychotropic drugs in conjunction with the knowledge contained in the files.”

“And what was the general consensus?”

“There wasn’t one. It was felt that the use of psychotropic drugs mentioned in the files were not real but only legendary and as such they were not available to be tested so could not be considered as a means of accessing the Unformed Block. If there was a consensus it was that wasting time on material that was not real was time wasted. We then discussed the possibility of hidden holographic material in the files and agreed to analyse the material in this context. That is a process that has not been completed. Professor Corrine had taken this upon himself before he died as holograms were his speciality. We are now awaiting Dr, Fry who will be assuming the responsibility for the holographic approach to hidden knowledge in the Restricted Files.” The Professor looks around him if expecting to see others listening to this conversation.

“You have no reason to worry about the privacy of this conversation. It is being monitored by the Censor’s Office and everything that entails. As such, this bar is just as safe as a high security court.” Mr. Shanks smiles his very best reassuring smile but which has the opposite effect on the Professor who now wishes he hadn’t been so insulting at the beginning, “So I can assume that the Censor will be observing these proceedings.”

“That is a fair assumption. It is also a fair assumption that you are not privy to all information, so please restrain yourself from prejudiced outbursts that can only embarrass your good self at some later date.” Mr. Grumles has enjoyed the moment but this original interview has now to be terminated as little else can be ascertained until Professor Jules is made fully aware of all the circumstances, contexts and networking connections of all the information he is yet to be placed in possession of, “Let’s make a break here. So we can meet up again in the company of your academic brotherhood where all will be revealed.”

Mr. Grumles doesn’t wait and is quickly followed out by Mr. Shanks.

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Gloria is in expansive mode as she wanders around naked after a shower; stretching, bending and twisting. Mr. Grumles and Mr. Shanks lie on the floor looking out at another sunset. The red glow of the sun dips into the sea like an escalator of sparkling light soon followed by the disc on the turn. Gloria joins them twiddling with their ears until the disc is finally swallowed in the deep purple.

“Didn’t have a clue.”

“Didn’t even have an iota of a gleam of a spark of an understanding of what is going on.” Mr. Shanks smiles at Gloria.

“But what about this mention of the possibility of psychotropic drugs as a means of accessing the Unformed Block; surely that was a plant?” She quizzes.

“A misdirection, at least that was what it felt like ... but ... far too obvious.” Says Mr. Grumles going into greater depth — trying to fit what he said to what he meant.

“They know Dr. Shultz had spent a year studying biology, botany and biochemistry and is at this very moment on an expedition to The Wild.” Mr. Shanks stretches then sits up.

“There’s a psychological term for his admission; naive stupidity. It happens when someone wants to convince others of something and simply blurts it out. It is well known to happen to academics who have little training in subterfuge; such as this Professor Jules.” Gloria looks down deep into Mr. Grumles eyes. He responds by summoning up, “Let’s face it. They think the same as we do. Dr. Shultz, now in possession of the biological and botanic knowledge he requires, has decided to visit The Wild in search of the psychotropic drug with the intention of consuming it to see if it works.”

Mr. Grumles has caught the attention of both Gloria and Mr. Shanks and one other who materialises out of thin air sitting on a holographic disc, none other than the Censor herself, “Unfortunately, I have to agree with you. Both in regard to Dr. Shultz and his sudden passion for botany and the fact that we cannot trust the academics. I wouldn’t trust that stagnant cesspool of academic idiocy any more than I trust Mr. Grumles’ naive stupidity as a reason either for his *summoning up* or Professor Jules statement of denial.

“I object to that ... whatever it is. I was just trying to be honest.” Mr Grumles says in an unconvincing huffy way. Which makes Gloria laugh and Mr. Shanks sigh from the bottom of his furry paws.

“The one thing I can count on is that together — you 3 — are likely to be the best investigating team for this job. So there will be no objections when you are finally sent into The Wild in pursuit of Dr. Shultz and this plant that contains the psychotropic drug. What’s its name Mr. Grumles?”

“Soma.”

“Soma. It must be retrieved and put into the protective custody of the Censor’s Office. It is not to be consumed under any circumstance.” She materialises directly in front of Mr. Grumles’ eye-line, “And that means you. With your belief in the necessity to be born with the right brain architecture. And ... I know exactly what that can mean.”

Gloria steps in before the silence and staring eyes take on a life of their own, “We will all go together and carry out the exact instructions from the Censor’s Office. Isn’t that the case, Mr. Grumles?”

Mr. Grumles’ answer if a tad too enthusiastic is spot on the button, “Indeed, indeed. If this psychotropic plant exists it needs to be in the protective custody of the Censor’s Office. And I’m sure that Dr. Shultz would also agree if he were here.”

“But only after he has consumed enough to see if it works. Therein lies the problem. Not just for him but for you too, Mr. Grumles.” The Censor grins at a distracted Mr. Grumles, “Will you give me assurances that under no circumstance will you consume the drug — this Soma.”

“Basically, I’m a coward. I wouldn’t take that drug or any other for that matter unless it had been scientifically tested. So giving you an assurance that under no circumstance will I consume the drug Soma is easily complied with, and, which is what I do here forthwith.”

“A simple ‘I do’ would have sufficed.” The Censor turns her attention to Mr. Shanks, “You, I trust, will fulfil your duty as normal?”

“Of course but I would rather you hadn’t used the term normal, as what we have here is anything but normal.”

“I take your point Mr. Shanks. And as for you Gloria Good-n-Rich.” He turns her full attention to the Chief Investigator, “Is there anything you wish to say?”

“Will I be taking responsibility for Mr. Grumles as well as Mr. Shanks?”

“There is no one else. You are the Chief Investigator appointed by the Censor’s Office. Mr. Grumles has been assigned to this investigation by none other than my good self and as you lead the investigation you are responsible. Mr. Grumles will not give you any grief as it is well known that you are good friends. And, there has to be a reason for that.” The Censor prowls around, “Now we have settled the matter in regard to Dr. Shultz, and to Soma, is there any matters left to settle?”

“Will we need to interview the academics individually as well as in a group?”

“Follow standard procedure. We don’t want the academics being handed evidence of special treatment in regard to this investigation.”

“And Mr. Grumles’ presence during these interviews?”

“His presence irritates them which disturbs their equilibrium which may prove insightful.”

The 3 investigators smile with approval much to the Censor’s pleasure.

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The 3 investigators smile at the discomfiture of Professor Mr. Simian. His fur bristles with annoyance every time he looks at Mr. Grumles. Most of the time he spends looking around at the eccentric furnishings of Mr. Grumles’ apartment; mostly with distaste.

“Your colleague, Professor Jules, insisted that the connection between psychotropic drugs and access to the Unformed Block did not exist. Let me quote you exactly what he said, ‘There wasn’t one. It was felt that the use of psychotropic drugs mentioned in the files were not real but only legendary and as such they were not available to be tested so could not be considered as a means of accessing the Unformed Block. If there was a consensus it was that wasting time on material that was not real was time wasted.’” Gloria reads this off her com, “You can confirm that this is your view as Professor Jules stipulates?”

“I can.”

“Even though you know that Dr. Shultz has added biology, botany and biochemistry to his knowledge fields and is at this present time entering The Wild — no doubt in search of the psychotropic plant soma.”

“Dr. Shultz is welcome to study whatever knowledge fields he wants. He is welcome to hold whatever views he wants, no matter how ridiculous they are. And if he has entered The Wild in search of a plant which is only a legend, then he is free to do so. But what has any of this to do with the missing files? And what is this about a *holographic murder*? Is that true?”

Gloria gives Mr. Shanks the floor.

“The files are missing and there is only a small number of people that could possibly have taken them. You being one of them. As far as the holographic murder is concerned it may or may not be connected to the missing files.”

“And Mr. Grumles, he would have to be a suspect in the missing files?”

“Mr. Grumles is not a suspect in the case of the missing files nor is he a suspect in the case of the holographic murder. And before you ask, I cannot reveal the information why this should be the case at this time.”

Professor Mr. Simian fumes.

“I want you to explain to me why you consider the drug soma a legend when it is quite specific in the restricted files that it is a genuine method of accessing the Unformed Block.” Gloria’s frustration can be heard in her voice.

“By who. And where is the proof. There is no record of anyone taking the drug. And those sections of the restricted files which mention the drug have never been attributed to anyone. I and my colleagues are academics and we only deal in facts. These librarians Mr. Grumles and Dr. Shultz live on speculation and deal in hear-say, innuendo and fabrication. When this whole affair is over there will be a complete rearrangement of the knowledge field, the open knowledge field and restricted material. And none of you will have any say in the matter.”

Mr. Grumles addresses Mr. Shanks and the Chief Investigator, “Here we have the very reason why librarians have never been chosen from the ranks of academics. The result would be uniform and set in concrete never to be questioned nor allowed to evolve.” Mr. Grumles’ sarcasm gives way to hard-nosed information, “There must always be an avenue of doubt accessed by creativity and chance.”

“Nonsense! That way leads to chaos and confusion. No doubt given the chance to consume this drug soma, if it exists, you would take it.”

“No doubt I would not. Why do you think we have scientific research. And I certainly wont be offering myself as a lab-rat. However, I will recommend your good self as you only deal in facts, thus making yourself the perfect observer.”

Professor Mr. Simian swivels with angry speed and leaves the room, then leaves Mr. Grumles apartment altogether.

Gloria smiles a gentle rebuke while delivering a cynical, "That went rather well."

The sound of claws tearing into the floor covering has all of their attention. Slinking snake like across the room comes Mistress Silver. Her short silver coat tipped with black points mark out her undulating progress like some 3-D animation in an Art Exhibition. Her long mussel defines the setting of those slightly crossed blue eyes which bewitch everyone who has ever stared into them. She passes in front of Mr. Grumles allowing her body to stroke his along its entire length and then with her tail following she wraps the end around his head twisting it in her direction, "I had a dream last night. I dreamt I was in The Wild — a place I have never been. You 3 were there on some nefarious expedition, and, there was something else. An experience of which I have never had before — an experience of unknowing. Sorry, it's the only way I can describe it." She wanders back from the balcony's edge and walks directly up to Mr. Grumles placing her nose directly onto his. They exchange breath. Then she slinks out.

"That's not good news." Mr. Grumles' judgement prompts Gloria.

"It doesn't sound like good news."

"It couldn't even possibly begin to sound like good news." Mr Shanks rounds it off.

"Her dreams ..." Gloria is cut off.

"Don't ask. I try to ignore them. But they are indicative. She's always had a highly developed 6th. sense and sometimes it takes on the forms of dreams. There'll be something in it but you won't know what it is until it happens."

"She wouldn't think about going to The Wild?" Mr. Shanks directs at Mr. Grumles.

"She wouldn't tell me even if she were. We're close but she's still very much her own self."

"She could be useful." Says Gloria.

"She could be trouble." Says Mr. Grumles.

"She could be factor X." Says Mr. Shanks.

They all look to where she stands waiting for the lift, silhouetted against the City of Light.

After a few minutes Professor Evelyn McQueen and husband Dicky arrive in the lift. They stare at Mistress Silver who ignores them in return even as she takes the lift they have just arrived in.

As they walk through the open door and into Mr. Grumles apartment their conversation starts out being exclusive to themselves but soon turns to including the 3 investigators waiting for them on the veranda.

Evelyn chokes with annoyance, "You'd think we didn't exist." Dicky states the obvious, "In her world, we don't. But it does make you wonder why she's here in the first place."

Mr. Grumles provides an answer, "Social call."

"You and her are attached?" "Evelyn please. Don't be so nose-y."

Mr. Grumles smiles, "Attached as in emotionally entwined; yes of course. She finds me a great comfort in that we have been together since school days and so her fame and fortune don't bother me. Most citizens find it difficult not to let those particular attributes colour their mental faculties in regard to Mistress Silver the person. But I can assure you she's a real sweet-heart. Warm, loving and kind."

Mr. Shanks feels a wave of nausea pass over him; in the theatrical sense. To which Gloria bursts out laughing. She quickly recovers, "You do know why you are here?"

"It's about the missing files." "And our access to them."

"You have been studying them for the last 10 years. By far the longest time of anyone."

"Except for Dr. Shultz." "And Mr. Grumles."

"It is true." Mr. Grumles concedes, "But I must be in the same position as your good selves. I virtually know them off by heart."

"It's the interpretation." "The field bias acting as filters. Interpretations are invariably related to the field perspective that's applied."

"You must have made copious notes over the years of all of the restricted files?"

"Indeed." "But not copies."

Mr. Shanks takes over, "2 questions. First, who do you allow to see your notes and second, what have you gleaned about gaining access to the Unformed Block."

"The only citizens who sees our notes are the other academics in our research group." "Gaining access to the Unformed Block is still a mystery. Who can access an holistic entity which defies description." "Because we are part of it therefore not outside of it needing to gain access." "The mystery lies in having an infinite number of possibilities none of which may deliver the kind of access that is required." "It's all rather mind-boggling."

Gloria speaks her thoughts out loud, "Thank the Primordial for that." She turns to Mr. Grumles, "And you think you would have to have the right brain architecture to start with?"

"How can it be any other way. If anyone could gain access it would have been done by now. And you have just heard the McQueens' express the same thing just in a different manner."

"And what about the drug soma?"

“The same thing would apply. You’d have to have the right architecture for the drug to work.”

The McQueens look at each other in consternation, “There is no evidence to suggest that the drug soma exists.” “It is merely a legend that came down the ages from our pre-civilized world.”

“You have heard about Dr.Shultz, I take it.” States Gloria.

“Dr. Shultz is a maverick.” “I wouldn’t put it passed him to try psychotropic drugs if he thought it would give him access ...” “To his own mind.” Evelyn laughs.

They all laugh.

“It doesn’t make any sense for us academics to steal the restricted files.” “We have all our notes which in many respects is better than the files themselves.”

“I’d disagree with you on this last point.” Says Mr. Grumles.

“And I would too. The original files may contain information ...” “Or knowledge.” Mr. Grumles intercedes before Gloria continues, “Or knowledge that may be imbedded in the files that is at first not obvious. As I have just recently read the files I was aware of a strange organization of how the material was arranged. Even though I couldn’t say what it was or how it was achieved.”

This information that Gloria has just divulged that she has just recently read the files shocks Mr. Grumles and Mr. Shanks.

The McQueens want clarification, “You have been reading the files recently?” “Before they were stolen?”

The Chief Investigator first addresses her fellow investigators, “I know we were going to interview all the academics first before giving them the information about Dr. Shultz’s duplication, but, the only academic left is Professor Fry and he has just joined the other 4 members of the academic group in just the last few months and from what I gather he has had only 1 session studying them. He is hardly to have had time to make any kind of assessment. Having only had 1 session myself I know it is unlikely for him to have formed any opinion of any worth.” Mr. Grumles and Mr. Shanks make disapproving noises as Gloria turns to the McQueens, “What you academics don’t know is that Dr. Shultz — in his wisdom — had copies of the restricted files made and deposited in the library on the Island of Khan. Where I have recently been and have spent a couple of days studying them.”

The McQueens are confused and at a loss for words for a good few minutes until finally, Evelyn speaks, “You have been studying them, for what reason?”

“Under the direction of the Censor who felt it would be impossible to discover the thief unless the Censor’s Office — in the shape of my good self — knows the material and what it is worth and why.”

Dicky laughs in derision, “So, what is it worth and why?”

Gloria's in a difficult position and she knows it, "The investigation is on going. I haven't quite got to what the material is worth and as a result I can hardly be expected to know why."

"The copies, I take it, will be returned to the Central Library where we can scrutinise them for adulterations." "And omissions."

"Eventually. But until the theft is solved they will remain in the protective custody of the Censor's Office."

"We must consult with our fellow academics." "Before having any further meetings with you 3, or anyone else from the Censor's Office." "You will excuse us now if we leave." "As there can be no further reason for discussion until we are in full possession of all the facts."

"I assure you. You are now in full possession of all the facts." Even to Gloria's own ears this sounds somewhat hollow.

"We will ask the Polar Region Committee to confirm this before we appear before your Investigation Group again." "Now you will excuse us."

The McQueens leave in hardly disguised ill humour.

Once out of earshot Mr. Grumles and Mr. Shanks turn on Gloria.

"You do realize what this means?" Says Mr. Shanks.

"It means that we will be allocated a Polar Region Delegate to represent the academics and to keep an eye on us." Continues Mr. Grumles.

"Precisely. It was a forgone conclusion. The Censor in her wisdom foresaw all of this and has already approached the Polar Region Committee for a list of new Delegates from which the Censor's Office can chose. An amiable Delegate with no connection to the debate on accessibility to the Unformed Block will in fact be a great service to us in our role as investigators. The only drawback I can see is that Mr. Shanks in his role as law enforcement will be under the scrutiny and control of the Delegate in his role as law maker."

"She's a cunning old cat." Says Mr. Shanks under neath his breath and then out loud, "And of course that leaves you 2 free to speculate and play while I keep our new friendly Delegate distracted."

"What cynicism." Says Gloria while playing a smile with Mr. Grumles, who, can't resist a comment, "Sounds about right, if it goes to plan. However, as nothing ever goes to plan in my experience, it will probably prove to be a disaster."

"Whatever. But to return to what we were discussing in regard to brain architecture. I think Mr. Grumles, that your thinking on the matter is out dated. The plasticity of both cat and naked ape brains is considered universal. There are no brain types, only the ones that our education gives us and the small differences that our cat and naked ape forms give us. And as we can chose what education we have on the expediency of a ... *whim*. Or a

chance/choice, as recommended by the education directives. I can't for the life of me see where you get this idea that there is any great difference in brain architecture."

"Let me give you an example: Mistress Silver. No one has brain architecture like her. It is the very reason why she is so popular. She is unique and original. And whatever she does educates us to be the same — in the context of being unique and original. But she can only do that because she has unique and original brain architecture herself."

"Mmm." Says Gloria not convinced, "Mistress Silver may well be the exception that proves the rule. And so Mr. Grumles, you think there could be others who have different brain architecture; ones that could access the Unformed Block?"

"Of course. Not that they are ever likely to tell anyone. If you could access the Unformed Block would you tell anyone?"

"I doubt it."

"And how about you Mr. Shanks?"

"Definitely not. Can you imagine the pressure by our fellow citizens that would be placed on you to access the Unformed Block to benefit our world for the benefit of our world; biosphere as well as citizens. It would be intolerable."

"But surely it would be your duty?"

"Law enforcement dictates most of my life as it is. What little freedom in terms of my own mindscape would be taken away and I would become a creature of the Polar Region Committee."

"Who are indeed the representatives of the citizens." Gloria is stern in her delivery.

"Precisely. I wouldn't have a leg to stand on. My duty would dictate that I no longer could be a free citizen but just a facilitator for my fellow citizens. A noble sacrifice no doubt but one which would be impossible to maintain. I'd become a demon — a facilitator who would put his own slant on everything, just to remain sane. No, no, you wouldn't tell anyone and that way you could avoid playing at being a God."

"That would be true for all of us." States Gloria with Mr Grumles' agreement.

"And as for anyone who had the capacity, they would stop you getting anywhere near them. So the chances of meeting one is virtually and literally nil."

"Unless, of course, they wanted to." Says Mr. Grumles after a long thought, "Supposing that they know that Dr. Shultz is getting close to gaining access and they wanted to stop him. Wouldn't they use us in that capacity?"

Mr. Shanks catches up with Mr. Grumles reasoning, "Indeed, they well might ... and we would be the best option."

"That's assuming these citizens ... what shall we call them: Enlightened Citizens?"

“Illuminates.” Suggests Mr. Grumles, “As they would be Illuminated by the Unformed Block. Illuminated on absolutely everything.”

“Illuminates will do.” Says Mr. Shanks with Gloria agreeing then continuing, “That’s assuming these Illuminates can manipulate and control the Unformed Block with impunity.”

“I will take that as a given.” Says Mr. Grumles, “And as such all we have to do is follow our own inclinations.”

“Assuming that they would want what is the best for the biosphere which we are all very much apart of.”

“Indeed. Their concerns, these Illuminates, will be the same as ours.” Says Mr. Shanks to Gloria’s insightful observation.

“So what is our inclination?” Asks an excited Mr. Grumles already knowing the answer.

“We must go to find Dr. Shultz even if it means going into The Wild. It’s what these Illuminates would want themselves.”

“That’s if they do exist and I take it we are assuming that they probably do.” Says Mr. Grumles.

“There existence is immaterial because if they do exist they would want the same as us and if they don’t ... then it doesn’t matter ... because we would be doomed to accepting what it is they want, as it is their agency that will be exercised.” Says Mr. Shanks with certainty.

“Well that was easy enough.” Gloria beams her very best smile at her 2 compatriots. Before advancing to stand directly in front of Mr. Grumles, “Now I come to the matter of a scribbling in one of the margins of one of the files. I assume because it was written in pencil and therefore easily rubbed out, that the writer had intended to do this but simply forgot. Is this true?”

Mr. Grumles squirms under her gaze, “Perhaps if you could read out the ... er ... scribbings. I could ascertain if they are mine.”

“Mr. Shanks, would you mind detaching yourself from this conversation.”

Mr. Shanks wanders away muttering to himself about the stupidity that he is not allowed any information taken directly from the files.

Gloria starts in without an introduction, “ ‘Quantum Bayesianism interprets the uncertainty of the wave function very differently. Reality isn’t uncertain, you are in the classical world, there is a lot you can’t know for definite without looking at it. For example, whether it is raining before you pull back the curtains. Before you do, you might assign a probability of it raining according to past experience, before uncertainty collapses to certainty on observation. In the Quantum World you don’t create reality by measuring it any more than you make it rain by pulling back the curtains, you just update your state of certainty. In other words try not to worry yourself about reality — it is all in your mind anyway.’ “

“Ah, yes,” says Mr.Grumbles in recognition, “it is indeed mine.” He smiles in the false hope that his admission of ownership will end this interrogation.

“And so? What does it mean?”

“Unfortunately, this is a quote from a magazine that does not exist in this world. Or more correctly from this white-hole part of the universe. You see Gloria I have an episodic dream that takes place in the black-hole part of the universe.” Mr.Grumbles waits for some reaction to what he has just said but Gloria is not forth coming, so he continues, “I know this dream takes place in the black-hole part of the universe because I have seen pictures taken by scientists of the black-hole at the centre of the galaxy that the planet my dreams take part in, are in.”

“One moment, it is still just a theory that there are two parts to our universe? A black-hole and white-hole parts making up six space dimensions?”

“Yes, that’s correct. It’s still just a theory but as it ‘fits the bill’ it looks a safe bet that’s how things are.”

“And you dream about this world?”

Mr. Grumbles can’t help but chuckle at the absurdity of what he is telling Gloria, “The people in the black-hole part of the universe also have a theory that suggests there must be a white-hole part to our shared universe. Because their world is being sucked out via their black-holes and so they think it is entirely possible that it is being spewed out through a white-hole. Like the one we’ve got at the centre of our galaxy.”

“Tell me Mr.Grumbles, why do you think you should be dreaming about this black-hole galaxy, with its stars and planets and no doubt cats and naked-apes.”

“Gloria, I haven’t got the faintest idea. But that world is just as real as this one even though they are so remarkably different.”

“Supposing I swallow this load of tosh, where does your scribbling come in? What is Quantum Bayesianism? And what prompted you to write that explanation in the margin of the secret files concerning the Unformed Block?”

“Perhaps it is the fact that in that other world, the black-hole world, they also have the concept of the Unformed Block.”

“Ah ha.” States Gloria with insight.

“Precisely. And it rather proves the point — the Unformed Block would exist in both parts of our universe as there is only one universe. 6 Space Dimensions — 3 each for the black and white hole parts, plus 1 dimension for gravity, 1 dimension for time and 1 dimension for consciousness. Making 9 in all. Well, in the black-hole world they have this 9-Dimensional Universe as a concept. Just like we do here.”

“And they also have the concept of the Unformed Block.”

“Precisely. Which rather proves that the 9-Dimensional Universe in its 2 forms — first, the every day experiential experience for everyone, and, second, the singularity of the Unformed Block — is ... without doubt ... correct.” Mr. Grumles finishes with a flourish.

“So where does the dream fit in?” Gloria asks reasonably.

“I assume, in the dimension for consciousness.” He replies in the same vein. “It is, after all, a shared dimension.”

“Ok. If I go along with you so far then what is this ‘Quantum Bayesianism’?”

“Well hold onto your hat as this next part is liable to rip your nickers off.” He composes himself before continuing, “In the ‘classical world’ where Reality is what we live day to day and which extends from the very smallest level on the scale of Reality (known here as the Quantum Level) to the very biggest level — the Universe Level and everything in-between. Is different to the ‘mathematical world’, where what we live ‘day to day’ is not the ‘territory’ but the ‘map’ — a representation of the ‘territory’.”

“The difference being the difference between the living reality we all experience and a representation of it.”

“Precisely. And what is more we can explain the difference in terms of Bayesian Statistics. Which is a system for describing epistemological uncertainty using the mathematical language of probability. In the Bayesian paradigm, degrees of belief in states of nature are specified; these are non-negative, and the total belief in all states of nature is fixed to be one.”

“But surely that is just commonsense? If a total belief in all states of nature — that’s if they are true, of course — then they would equate to one.”

“I’m glad we are on the same page with this. You see there are many philosophers who would not agree. Saying we are confusing belief with the certainty of fact. In the ‘black-hole’ universe this distinction between belief and facts is understood in an entirely different way. They ascribe probabilities to everything including facts and beliefs.’

“And they have a way of doing this?”

“Indeed. They call it Bayes’ Theorem. Here is how it works.” He takes out a piece of holographic paper from his com and writes all of this down including a drawing of a Venn diagram.

Bayes' Theorem begins with a statement of knowledge prior to performing the experiment. Usually this prior is in the form of a probability density. It can be based on physics, on the results of other experiments, on expert opinion, or any other source of relevant information. Now, it is desirable to improve this state of knowledge, and an experiment is designed and executed to do this. Bayes' Theorem is the mechanism used to update the state of knowledge to provide a posterior distribution. The mechanics of Bayes' Theorem can sometimes be overwhelming, but the underlying idea is very straightforward: Both the prior (often a prediction) and the experimental results have a joint distribution, since they are both different views of reality.

Let the experiment be A and the prediction be B. Both have occurred, AB. The probability of both A and B together is $P(AB)$. The law of conditional probability says that this probability can be found as the product of the conditional probability of one, given the other, times the probability of the other. That is

$$P(A|B) \times P(B) = P(AB) = P(B|A) \times P(A)$$

if both $P(A)$ and $P(B)$ are non zero.

Simple algebra shows that:

$$P(B|A) = P(A|B) \times P(B) / P(A) \quad \text{equation 1}$$

This is Bayes's Theorem. In words this says that the posterior probability of B (the updated prediction) is the product of the conditional probability of the experiment, given the influence of the parameters being investigated, times the prior probability of those parameters. (Division by the total probability of A assures that the resulting quotient falls on the $[0, 1]$ interval, as all probabilities must.)

The following example Venn diagram can help keep all this straight.

Four squares the first 3 = A. The last 2 = B

Thus:

$$P(A) = 3/4 \quad (\text{unconditional})$$

$$P(B) = 2/4 \quad (\text{unconditional})$$

$$P(A \text{ and } B) = P(AB) = 1/4 \quad (\text{joint})$$

$$P(A|B) = P(AB) / P(B) = (1/4) / (2/4) = 1/2 \quad (\text{conditional})$$

$$P(B|A) = P(AB) / P(A) = (1/4) / (3/4) = 1/3$$

Figure 1: Venn Diagram illustrating Unconditional, Conditional, and Joint Probabilities. (Note that the conditional probability of A, given B is not, in general, equal to the conditional probability of B, given A.)”

After examining it for some minutes Gloria finally admits, “You’ll have to make it simpler because I can’t get this old brain of mine around it.”

Mr. Grumles smiles a benevolent smile, “Sorry Gloria. I’m just teasing. What you have just read really is Bayes’ Theorem but you’d need a week of instruction to get your head around it. I know because it took me that long. So try this:

Let’s imagine that you and a friend have spent the afternoon playing your favorite board game, and now, at the end of the game, you are chatting about this and that. Something your friend says leads you to make a friendly wager: that with one roll of the die from the game, you will get a 6. Straight odds are one in six, a 16 percent probability. But then suppose your friend rolls the die, quickly covers it with her hand, and takes a peek. “I can tell you this much,” she says; “it’s an even number.” Now you have new information and your odds change dramatically to one in three, a 33 percent probability. While you are considering whether to change your bet, your friend teasingly adds: “And it’s not a 4.” With this additional bit of information, your odds have changed again, to one in two, a 50 percent probability. With this very simple example, you have performed a Bayesian analysis. Each new piece of information affected the original probability, and that is Bayesian [updating].

“That’s much better.” Says Gloria with much relief, “I actually understand it.”

“And so you now understand something from a different part of the universe. You and I are the only two white-hole citizens that know this form of reasoning. And that is only because of my dreams, or to be more precise my episodic dream.”

“So how come you get to dream about the block-hole universe?”

“Mistress Silver puts it down to the fact that I eat too much cheese late at night.”

“Sounds to me like a possibility. Or should I say a probability with a 33% chance of being true.” She smiles sweetly.

“Oh very droll, with a 99% chance of making me throw-up.” He fakes retching and in the process almost does.

*

The Censor’s real life presence is even more impressive than her holographic one in that she has the habit of walking around bumping into those present, gently, of course, but enough to convey her enormous bulk; a manifestation, as it were, of her enormous power, “The expedition to The Wild will comprise the following: Gloria Good-n-Rich as Chief Investigator, Mr. Shanks, as Chief Law Enforcement Officer, Mr. Grumbles as Chief Librarian Recorder, Professor Mr. Fry as a representative of the Academics Group and last but definitely not least Delegate Jonathan Clegg as representative of the Polar Region Council.” While reading out this list the Censor has moved herself to the high point of the room, a small stage, and now turns to face those gathered below. “My Investigative team have convinced me that this drastic action is required to make sure that Dr. Shultz does not access the Unformed Block if it turns out to be true that it is possible to gain access by the expediency of consuming the psychotropic drug soma. That Dr. Shultz has now disappeared into The Wild may well be an indication that these are his intentions. If Dr. Shultz were to gain access to the Unformed Block, then he would be in breach of the law governing such an outcome and he would have to stand trial.” The Censor is addressing not only the Censor’s Office Committee but also representatives from the Polar Region Council and members of the Police Commission, “Any questions?”

“He has definitely entered The Wild and is not just in a staging camp just inside?” Asks Delegate Johnathan Clegg.

“He has donned an exoskeleton and left the staging camp some 6 days ago. The tracking device on the exoskeleton has been switched off. Satellite surveillance lost him after 1 day. He could be anywhere within a 100 kilometre radius of where he set off from. It will be up to the expedition members to make the decisions on the ground at the staging camp he was last seen. The expedition will have whatever support it feels it requires ... And please keep us informed at all times.”

This last sentence is directed at the members of the expedition and brings to an end not just the 'Questions' but the meeting as well.

*

Part 2

Freedom

Lulabell Trotter is dancing naked on a table in The Blue Camilla night club. Her large breasts swing out quite some distance from her body forcing those passing to duck and weave to avoid getting a nipple in the eye.

2 young male naked apes, Tom Snodgrass and Joe Winkle are watching her with lustful eyes while Anna Tupman watches on with barely disguised disgust. The 3 cats Mr. Weller, Mr. Stiggins and Mistress Arabella find it all rather amusing. These 6 are sitting around the table Lulabell is dancing on. And these 7 are known as the infamous (famous to Librarians the world over) Freedom Fighters Faction (FFF) in/of the Librarian's Guild.

"Will one of you get her down from there. This is supposed to be an upfront meeting dealing with the fact that we are now wanted criminals, and, what the copulation are we going to do about it." Anna addresses this to her 2 male naked ape companions.

Tom waits until Lulabell is facing him then grabs her around the knees forcing her over backwards where Joe catches her from behind affording him a grope of her magnificent breasts. Together they lift her off and sit her down at the table between to Mr. Stiggins and Mistress Arabella.

"Did you see that! He grabbed me by the tits!"

"Lucky for you." Mistress Arabella states without sounding too condescending. "Now can we get on. We're here to discuss the tragic happenings that have befallen us — namely the death of poor ol' Pie."

"I would just like to inject a moment of realism into these proceedings. Namely, that we should, we should stop referring to the death of Claud Pie as a tragic happening and name it for what it is — murder." Says Tom Snodgrass in a flat matter of fact manner.

This is too much for Lulabell who howls with fear induced anxiety Her shorts and bra reenforced top are hurled at her by Anna, "Put them on, and get a grip."

Tom addresses Lulabell but is in fact addressing all the members of the FFF, "You do realize that we are looking at 20 years hard labour with reeducation."

Lulabell's cry of anguish is felt by all those present as it mirrors something inside them all to a greater or lesser degree.

Mr. Stiggins heaps on the anguish with a certain relish, "That's 20 years hard labour with reeducation if we get away with citizen-slaughter. 40 years hard labour if we go down for murder."

Lulabell collapses on the table head first producing a 'thud', followed by another howl from the blow to her head, "It wasn't murder! It wasn't. All we wanted to do was give Mr. Grumbles a headache and a temporary loss of memory. How were we supposed to know that it would have no effect on him ..."

"And turn Claud Pie's brain to mush." Mr. Stiggins again being liberal with the relish.

"Oh my primordial state. 40 years hard labour ..."

"With reeducation." The rest of the FFF add to Lulabell's anguish.

"Did you know that they have little boxes on the walls of inmates' cells, in which are suicide pills." Says Mistress Arabella.

"You're making that up. They couldn't be so cruel." Lulabell insists.

"It's considered to be a kindness. 20 years is just about doable, 40 years well ..." Mistress Arabella trails off.

"Look at it this way." Says Mr. Weller, "They won't be looking for us. They'll be looking for those that stole the Restricted Files."

"Remind me again, why we didn't steal the Restricted Files." Asks Tom with rhetorical tones.

"Because they would have known it was us."

"Ah yes. Very clever." Tom has a few moments of thought, then, "So who do you think did steal them?"

"It would have to be those who have an interest in the subject but who are not allowed access." Mr. Weller is enjoying this as he has thought about this more than anyone, only he is running out of development, "Trouble is, we don't have a clue to what the subject is."

"And even if we did what good would it do us?" Anna rounds off the conversation leaving only Lulabell's moans to fill their exclusion bubble.

The space around them parts as a police squad forces its way towards them. The FFF are up and driving through the crowd in the opposite direction, finally pushing through to the outside of the club. They run for it in true coevolutionary fashion with cats carrying naked apes lying full length on their backs. All except for Anna Tupman who energetically sprints out a head of them all. They get a kilometre down the road hitting the quayside before the police squad catches up with them transported by a 4-blade drone.

The police sergeant exercises his sarcastic eloquence, "In training are we, or is this just a case of guilt overcoming good sense?"

Through Lulabell's moans she squeezes out, "We really didn't mean any harm to anyone."

“Yes we know all that. Mr. Grumles was able to share his knowledge concerning the deadly hologram. The only question I have for you is this: Do you know who was interested in the restricted files, besides yourselves of course?”

The FFF are dumbfounded, finally Mistress Arabella answers question with question, “Which restricted files are you talking about?”

“The ones concerning the Unformed Block, of course.” Says the sergeant in a slightly tetchy manner as he thinks that they already know.

“You’re asking the wrong citizens. Try asking the Librarian’s Guild Committee members. They are the only ones allowed to know what the restricted files allude to. And not even they know what the specific files contain.”

“So in fact you didn’t know what the Restricted files alluded too?”

“Isn’t that why we are the FFF, because we are never allowed to know.”

“Then Mr. Grumles was right. And you lot don’t have a clue.” The sergeant turns to his men, “We’re wasting our time here. But at least we now know it can only be the academics with an interest in the specific knowledge field.”

Dropping out of the sky Tom Marple passes the sergeant and his men going the other way, he addresses the FFF as if addressing colleagues, “Any information on who stole the Restricted Files must be shared. Don’t forget that.”

And with that he, the police squad and their drone are gone.

The FFF look skyward in a state of shock. Then they all try speaking at once until Mistress Arabella forces her way to the front by, “Shut the copulation up. Mr. Grumles is obviously playing a very devious game.”

“He’s planning a sick revenge which will render us all ga-ga.” Says Lulabell in a genuinely trembling voice.

“I think not. He actually got the police to inform us that the Restricted Files are to do with the Unformed Block.” Says a fully in-tune Mr. Weller.

“Perhaps he can’t do anything himself and wants us to act on his behalf.” Says Tom.

“He hasn’t got anything to do with the murder case. He’s been sent off to The Wild in search of Dr. Shultz with that, Gloria Good-n-Rich, from the Censor’s Office. So you could be right.” Mistress Arabella says in an excited breathless form, “You have to remember that Mr. Grumles was a member of the FFF in his day. He probably has the same mentality only now he’s part of the establishment.”

“So why couldn’t he just give us access to the Restricted Files?” Asks Lulabell.

“Obviously, because he couldn’t. And he couldn’t for reasons that we know nothing about.” Tom delivers in the form of a revelation.

“What do we know about the Unformed Block? That should be the direction of our investigation” Says Mistress Arabella.

“I think we should quit while we’re ahead.” Pleads Lulabell.

“Fat lot of good that will do. Either we deliver the goods or I suspect he’ll have us done for manslaughter and attempted murder. That would make a grand total of 60 years hard labour ...”

“With reeducation.” Say the rest with Lulabell following on with a long anguished moan.

*

2 days later

The FFF are meeting at the club-house. A small bungalow in the grounds of the Librarians’ Guild Estate.

“Listen to this. This young physicist told me that the Unformed Block is as near as dam it orthodoxy and what enlightened citizens want to know is how you access it. Which you can’t because we are already part of it it. And, you can’t access it holistically if you are already part of it. Apparently. It’s a conundrum. And one that no one can solve.” Says Lulabell.

“Then maybe that’s what the Restricted Files are about.” States an excited Mistress Arabella, “They contain the knowledge of how to access the Unformed Block.”

“Can’t be.” Says Tom, “Because Mr. Grumles has had access to these files for years. So he would have worked it out by now if the knowledge was contained in them.”

“Unless, it’s not as strait forward as that.” Then addressing Lulabell directly, Joe Winkle can’t help but give away his jealous suspicions, “And how did you wheedle this information out of this poor young physicist.”

“How do you think?”

“Deep throat.”

“Finger up the bum.”

“Why won’t you ever do that for me?”

“Because it would be like copulating with my brother.”

“Can we get back to the task at hand.” Mistress Arabella forces the issue.

“If we knew what the task was.” Mr. Weller starts to list the possibilities, “A special state of mind must exist if you or anybody wants to gain access to the Unformed Block, when, we are very much a part of it. So how do you achieve this state of mind? Through

knowledge? Through the use of mind-bending mental techniques? Through the use of psychotropic chemicals?"

"Has to be the psychotropic chemicals. Isn't that why they're heading out into The Wild. Dr. Shultz is leading the way and the rest are in hot pursuit." Says Tom.

"So what does Mr. Grumles want us to do?" Asks Mistress Arabella.

"I thought that was obvious." Lulabell states with condescension, "He wants us to go into The Wild without anybody else knowing."

"Yes. He's trapped inside of the investigation and doesn't have room for manoeuvre. And that leaves us. So how do we get out there?" Mistress Arabella says with less than certitude.

"That's easy." The jealous Joe Winkle frames, "Just get Lulabell to utilise her sexual favours."

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Part 3

The Wild

The Staging Post is well equipped with upward of 50 technicians and scientists permanently on site and with 100s more passing through in a year. The arrival of the expedition has caused lots of speculation with even the Camp Organiser, Jack Smart, joining in as he has been kept out of the loop of who knows. And, who knows what.

An entire module has been allocated to the expedition which has its own common room but not its own kitchen. So that the expedition members get to use the 'canteen' where a lot of free association takes place.

The modules are above the ground, joined by clear plastic tubes. A lot of expertise went into constructing the Staging Post as it is technically in The Wild. And the restrictions, of and for, The Wild, mean that the Staging Post exists in wonderful sterile isolation.

Comings and goings are by 4 & 6 bladed drones from a drone-pad on top of the main administration module. But this day a 2-bladed individual drone arrives bearing the wonderfully sleek form of Mistress Silver. Mr. Grumles is not amused. He watches as the Camp Organiser, Jack Smart, greets her with fawning enthusiasm. He's there to greet them as they pass through quarantine. "And what are you doing here?"

"And why do you ask when you already know." Mistress Silver is annoyed and almost curt.

Mr Grumles forces her to one side with a series of head-butts, "This is not a dream. This is not an artistic endeavour. This is official business."

"The Censor is fully aware of my presence here and she doesn't mind. So why do you?"

"Actually, she's here at my invitation." Jack Smart is trying to calm the atmosphere by diffusion, "She came to see what possibilities there are for artistic and creative endeavours."

"Oh, is she really." Says Mr. Grumles with barely disguised contempt.

Mistress Silver now addresses Jack but the message is for Mr. Grumles, "My dear Jack I would be obliged if you would show me to my quarters so that I can freshen up and get some peace and quiet."

Mr. Grumles mutters to himself while Mistress Silver gives Jack a very sweet smile, "He gets like that when things don't fit into their normal categories. It's the Librarian in him."

"Do you know why they are here. The Censor's Office Investigation team, that is."

“I could guess and make a fairly good paw at it. But, I could be wrong. And either way it would be bound to annoy Mr. Grumbles who, as you have already witnessed, is quite annoyed enough already. So best if I say nothing.”

“I understand. Come this way.” Jack leads Mistress Silver to her quarters.

*

That evening in the canteen the atmosphere is charged to the point of lift-off. The Staging Post regulars watch, in what is close to awe, as the Censor’s Office contingent arrive. All eyes are on Gloria Good-n-Rich who puts on a show. Gliding through the canteen her gold disk dress depositing gold dust as she moves. A table in the centre of the room awaits them. Once seated an exclusion bubble descends so that they are still visible but their speech cannot be heard. Jack Smart joins them, “I’m sure you have many questions that you need answering, so fire away.”

Gloria has already captured his eyes and now proceeds to capture his ears, “Can we expect to get help from The Wild’s Tribes?”

“I’m afraid it doesn’t work like that. The Wild’s Tribes are indeed wild. Free from any obligation to Civilization. They are scattered. Few in number. With no means of contacting them, they remain illusive. You could spend your entire life wandering The Wild and never meet one. I have spent most of my adult life here and have only met one and that for only a brief few moments. They are friendly enough. Giving us fruit as a sign of their regard for us. But they wouldn’t take anything of ours. Treating our endeavours as Taboo as well as the objects we offered. It was a happy encounter but there have been ones that were not. Some could be described as hostile but in no way could you describe their behaviour as violent. If you do encounter any treat them with respect. You are entering their home and should remember this at all times. The Wild is their home like our houses and apartments are ours. It’s a totally different mentality. One that is beyond our comprehension.”

“And no doubt the reason there is so little in the Knowledge Field about them.”

“When The Wild was designated a Civilization free zone by the Polar Region Council — some 300 years ago now — the Tribes were not consulted. Yet they seemed to know. A good number of them turned up at the edge of The Wild and gifted those present with fruit.”

“Yes, I read about that. Some form of telepathy, it was suggested at the time. I wonder if they know what Civilization really means?” Gloria says this last sentence more to her self.

Mr. Grumbles grumbles deep in his throat as Mistress Silver enters the Canteen, “Here comes trouble.”

The Canteen is transformed from the awe that Gloria has inspired into outright adoration, with cat calls and naked ape whistles paving the way for her slow perambulation through those gathered. She doesn’t wait to be invited but joins the Investigators at their table. As she does so the exclusion bubble lifts.

Mistress Silver and Gloria eye each other up both sporting playful smiles.

Mr. Grumles grumbles even deeper in his throat, “Why don’t you join us. It would be such a shame if you didn’t give us the benefit of your knowledge on ... The Wild’s Tribes.”

“Unfortunately, I have no such knowledge. However, I could solicit some from them by putting a holographic performance above The Wild. One of my singing and dancing performances. I’m sure they’d enjoy that — well who wouldn’t — with me 100 kilometres across. That should excite them into communication. Who knows they might even ask to gift us a display of some of their own singing and dancing in return.”

Everyone is in a state of shock except for Gloria, “Try that and I’ll have you arrested.”

“Pity.”

The Canteen suddenly erupts in a cacophony of conversation.

Mr. Grumles goes up to Mistress Silver and whispers in her ear, “Can I have a word ... in private.”

Mistress Silver laughs at the uncontrolled and noisy situation she is now surrounded by. And, the fact, that it has all been caused by her, “Yes my dearest of fur-balls, I think I have caused enough mayhem for one evening.”

Mistress Silver and Mr. Grumles leave to hoots and howls and a genuine sense of a ‘moment of magic’ where you ‘just had to be there’ to appreciate the ‘enormity of the experience’ — experience.

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Mistress Silver’s apartment is the one kept for VIP’s and as such is large, well appointed and has a wonderful view across The Wild. Creatures can be seen moving through the canopy just a few 100 metres away — too far to make out what they are and the fact that they are in silhouette because of the time of day.

“Tell me about evolution and what part persistence played — sorry — plays in it.”

“A theory that debunks the idea that evolution was invented by some kind of God.” Mr. Grumles says in his very best bored tones, “Back in the day when evolution theory led the way in the period we now call the Scientific Enlightenment, 5-600 years ago. It was recognised that if a system was to persist in the face of continual change — the world as it has always been — it needs to be robust. And there are 3 features that make a bio-system or planetary system like our biosphere more robust. First, robust systems have some degree of redundancy, so that the loss of any particular component of that system — like if a particular species was to die out — wouldn’t critically compromise the whole biosphere. Second, a robust system has diversity, which increases the odds that at least some species will be able to cope with whatever change occurs. And third, a robust system is modular in construction, so that the failure of one module doesn’t bring down the entire system. And what has been shown to be true is that the longer a system evolves the more these 3 features come to the fore. Thus persistence is a major part of evolution, and, has everything to do with the laws of physics of our universe. It is an emergent property of the laws. And the general consensus is that it mirrors the very system that brings universes into being. Namely, the system of changing chaos into order which bears its name: Primal Evolution. Or, as it is in a dynamic form Perseverance.”

“That’s a perfect explanation. I recognise its beauty. And persistence is very much a part of that explanation. Persistence is both the means of robustness as well as being the end product. And yet it is experienced as Perseverance.”

“Yes, I suppose you are right. Although I’ve never looked upon it that way myself.” Mr. Grumles admits this while thinking that only Mistress Silver could come up with such a perspective — a way of seeing persistence in evolution as much as evolution in persistence. And Perseverance as the living dynamic.

She licks his ears, a sign of affection he enjoys very much. She gives them a thorough cleaning while gazing out of the window towards the creatures in the near distance. They appear to be playing some kind of game where at first one creature stands on the shoulders of another and then a third stands on the shoulders of the second. The top one waves with both hands making Mistress Silver automatically turn around to see who it is the creature is waving at. Bringing the realisation that it must be waving at her. She stops cleaning and raises her self up on her hind legs stretching her front legs out as far as they can go, then sways back and forth in a waving motion. The creature in the distance on seeing this tries to copy her actions and starts swaying back and forth, only he is not standing on firm ground but on the shoulders of his friends. The result is that after a couple of movements back and forward the column loses its balance and all 3 crash down disappearing into the canopy.

“Oh how wonderful. They were waving at me.”

Mr. Grumles joins her at the window but can’t see anything, “Who were waving?”

“Those creatures. But they’re gone now.”

“So they know you’re here then.”

“I suppose they must ... I wonder what it can mean?”

“It probably means you are as famous in The Wild as you are in Civilization.”

“Don’t be ridiculous.”

“Mmm.” Only half convinced.

The door chimes and Mr. Grumles and Mistress Silver share a moment.

Gloria enters scattering gold dust as she perambulates, “I’ve come to a decision. You are too much of a delinquent act to leave to your own devices. So as much as I don’t like it I am commissioning you into the Investigation Team. Here is how it will work.” She walks to the window and points out, “That is the north-west where Mr. Grumles and myself will be exploring. That is the north by north-west which Mr. Shanks and the Delegate will explore and that is the west by north-west that you, Mistress Silver, and Jack Smart will explore. It’s the best I can do with the resources that are at hand.” She turns and looks at Mistress Silver straight in the eye, “I take it you will take your responsibilities seriously and commit yourself to the job at hand?”

“Indeed. But let me get some clarification on what the ‘job at hand’ is.”

“The apprehension of Dr. Shultz before he can locate and consume the plant soma.”

“Ah. May I venture an opinion?” Gloria nods Mistress Silver continues, “Surely the area is so large ...” Gloria specifies, “1000 square kilometres.” “... that the chances are slim, one could say vanishingly small, that we could ever locate him. And even less — if that were possible — if he knows that we are in pursuit.”

“I am fully aware of the statistical improbability that we will locate him. But, myself and the Censor both believe that there are other actors or factors involved and what we have is a situation that is not governed by the normal laws of logic. As such we must adapt.”

“Persistent Evolution. The second feature of a robust system has diversity, which increases the odds that at least some species will be able to adapt with whatever change occurs.”

Gloria looks to Mr. Grumles for some form of explanation, “Mistress Silver was just saying before you entered that Persistent Evolution must have the feature of adaption in the face of novel situations. In fact echoing what you have just said, only in a different way.”

“She’s not normal, is she?”

“No but that’s what makes her so wonderful.”

“I’ll have to take your word on that.” Gloria turns and walks out saying as she goes, “Tomorrow morning we get kitted out with our exoskeletons and we head off into The Wild in the afternoon. So make sure you get plenty of rest tonight because I doubt you’ll be getting much after today.”

Once she’s gone Mr. Grumles and Mistress Silver roll around the floor in mad love making.

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The exoskeletons are made of composite materials strong, malleable with memory retention properties that give a feel for the wearer that this is another skin — simply another part of their body. The major joints are constructed around balls and made by the use of 3-D printing so they are fully formed in situ, making them as versatile as a cat’s shoulder joint, except 1000 times stronger. They increase the size of the wearer by a factor of 5 enabling the wearer to sprint on open ground to 50 kilometres per hour. The power supply is in the form of a power pack made of a compound radio-active material which has a working life of over a year. Making them ideal for long explorations into The Wild. They also have an interesting configuration in that 2 exoskeletons can lock together forming a frame that doubles for a tent like canopy which has its own inbuilt covering and flooring. The inside space becomes a home away from home with kitchen facilities and beds and even a shower.

Everyone is impressed as Jack Smart takes them through the training schedule in their use. It takes very little time for the members of the expedition to get used to these wonders of engineering technology. Designed for maximum comfort and ease of use even

the hand like appendages are soon mastered and a remarkable dexterity is soon possible both for cats and naked-apes.

The packs of supplies are enough for a year needing only water to supplement their reconstitution. The Wild has no shortage of water being a tropical rainforest but the water has to be filtered and all micro-organisms removed before use. Most of these micro-organisms have evolved since The Wild was given its special status and the effects on cats and naked-ape's bodies are unknown. This filter system is built into the utilities module of the exoskeleton and provides constant clean water.

There's just enough time for lunch and a briefing for the expeditions aims.

Gloria takes the 'floor', "We don't think Dr. Shultz is a dangerous naked-ape. However, if we are correct in our thinking and he is out to commit a dangerous act he may well take violent action if we try to apprehend him. So take all precautions. Chances are, of course, we'll not see him at all. If, however, we can find a trail, then, whichever group finds one must let the rest of us know immediately. I want communication channels left open at all times so I can assess the ongoing situation with the other groups. Any questions?"

"Are we likely to meet anyone else in The Wild?" Asks Mr. Grumbles.

Gloria looks towards Jack Smart who takes the floor, "There are 3 groups at present in the area but these are big groups of at least 10 individuals and one that has 25 individuals so you will not mistake finding a trail made by any of them with one made by a single individual as the case will be with Dr. Shultz. If you meet one of these groups and cannot avoid contact, then I would suggest that you pull rank and give the Censor's Office as your validation for your silence. Asking them if they have seen Dr. Shultz may provide information but will also incur questions of what is going on and related topics that will only stimulate speculation here at Base Camp. Since I've been seconded to this expedition and have been sworn to secrecy I would just like to say that I would rather not have been afforded this privilege."

Everyone laughs not at just the words but also the well executed expression of annoyance that he now displays on his face.

"We could have your mind wiped." Mr. Shanks says with only a hint of humour.

"Leave my mind alone. I'll just have to get used to it and hope I don't start talking in my sleep."

"The chances are we won't come even close to finding Dr. Shultz. But, we have to try before further steps can be taken. The Censor is taking the procedures for the prosecution of our task to the highest level and as such we must be in compliance with not only our own procedures of the Censor's Office, but also with the procedures of the Polar Region Assembly. Hence the reason we have Delegate Jonathan Clegg with us. So let us follow the procedures as far as we can and see where that gets us."

"Now there is one question that I would like answering." Asks Jonathan Clegg, "And that is: what happens if Dr. Shultz has taken this psychotropic drug and has used it to gain access to the Unformed Block?"

Gloria turns to Mr. Grumles who takes the floor, “I have repeated this and will keep on repeating this until my whiskers curl. You would have to have the right brain architecture before the drug would work. So even if Dr. Shultz does find this plant soma it will hardly give him instant access to the Unformed Block because the chances are — and they are vanishingly small — that he won’t have the right brain architecture for the drug to work.”

“But what happens if it’s the drug that gives you the right brain architecture.” Jonathan Clegg comes back.

“Then it goes against everything we know about the restructuring of brain architecture. That’s why I repeat myself: You would have to have the right brain architecture for the psychotropic drug to work.” The frustration can be heard most clearly in the upper tones of his voice, “Why Dr. Shultz thinks that he has the right brain architecture or as you suggest that it is the drug that gives you the right brain architecture when it is more likely to kill you or drive you mad than give you access to the Unformed Block — I have no idea. Either way you would have to have the right brain architecture. Unless of course Dr. Shultz knows something that we don’t. But no one, neither the academics nor the librarians, such as myself who have studied the Restricted Files can see any hidden knowledge that would suggest it.”

“Besides the obvious?” Mistress Silver joins in, “He could have gained knowledge from some other source that we no nothing about.”

“Where what you have said is true, there is no evidence for this. So we can only proceed with what evidence there is.” Gloria rounds it out, “Knowledge beyond our ken is not knowledge at all. It is information about our lack of knowledge. And you know what they say: the difference between information and knowledge is the same as the difference between description and explanation.”

No one was going to argue with a central tenet of Civilization. The meeting breaks up and the expedition heads out into The Wild.

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The 3 groups make rapid headway and all are approx 15 kilometres from the Base Camp as dusk begins to fall. The Wild has a particular arrangement to its structure: there are areas where the canopy covers the entire floor and where little grows because so little light makes it to the ground, then there are areas where trees have crashed down usually one tree taking several with it, and these areas form dense jungle of new growth.

Mr. Grumles and Gloria Good-n-Rich are wading through one such patch of dense jungle when they come to a grassy clearing some 40 metres across. If this isn’t strange enough in itself the stone slabs approx 1 metre long by 15 centimetres wide and 20 centimetres deep and covered with carved hieroglyphs mark out a circle with a single line across passing through the centre point of the circle. This line divides a square into two triangles. This they discover as they explore the grassy clearing. They also discover that the other two groups have discovered the exact same clearing with the exact same symbolic stone arrangements. After a brief discussion and with the light fading they decide to set up camps inside of the West triangle.

Exoskeletons locked together and with covering and floor in position they cook dinner then settle down for a holographic meeting.

“Has anyone seen anything like these symbolic arrangements or the hieroglyphs that cover the stone slabs that mark them out?”

No one has. The only comment comes from Mistress Silver, “The symbol has a simple beauty: a circle, a straight line, two triangles and a square. All joined and configured to show a simple symmetry. The slabs that mark it out are covered in what are very beautiful hieroglyphs made of twists of swirls and which, if you look at them long enough, look like clouds in a 3-D setting. If they pass for language then we would have to be looking at a very sophisticated form of communication.” She turns to Mr. Grumbles, “You’re a word smith, do you detect any words?”

“I’m afraid not. There are repetitions but whether they are words ...” He hesitates, “More likely to be concepts. But I’m just guessing.” He shrugs.

“Forget the stone symbols. How is it possible that our 3 groups happened upon them at exactly the same time. That does not coincide with any branch of knowledge that I am aware of.” Mr. Shanks has pointed out the obvious and they are all thankful for that.

As leader of the expedition Gloria feels obliged to give direction to the others, “All we have is speculation on this strange phenomena. So we might as well try at least to come up with an explanation. Jack, have you in all your years in contact with The Wild come across anything remotely like this?”

Jack puffs out his cheeks and blows through tight lips, then, “Sorry. I can’t think of anything that comes even close to this. Sometimes some of the animals we come across seem to be talking about us. Y’know, they communicate with each other, then laugh. Nothing aggressive or even remotely unfriendly.”

“What sort of animals?” Mistress Silver enquires.

“Hairy apes. They live up there in the canopy.” He points.

The natural reflex for the rest of the group is to look up into the nearest trees in the canopy. Actually going outside of their exoskeletal tents to do so. After a while the general consensus is that these hairy apes are even now watching them in their 3 different locations.

Mistress Silver tries waving as she had done back at the base camp and just gets a waving response when something happens to make the apes disperse. Out of the jungle walks a member of a tribe: a naked ape. He walks along the straight line from the North position until he reaches the centre spot, where he stops, turns and faces Mistress Silver and Jack, “Why do you search for Dr. Shultz?”

“It may well be that he has broken a Civilization law and as such we need to talk to him to establish the facts.” Says Mistress Silver who is now aware that the holographic forms of the other 2 groups have now disappeared.

“But this is not Civilization. The laws that apply in Civilization do not apply here.”

“That may well be true but we would still like to talk to him.”

“Then follow me.” With that this Wild naked ape leads the way, back the way he has come.

Mistress Silver and Jack after a moments hesitation follow.

They walk into jungle, then into an area of high canopy where an encampment of several huts makes up what is a village. Children playing forget their games and quickly gather around Mistress Silver running their fingers through her delicate fur. The adults stop what they are doing to watch.

Dr. Shultz appears from one of the huts and ushers them in, “I see you have met Lobo. He’s the nearest thing this tribe has to a leader. He’s more a spokesman. And a very nice chap he is too.”

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This sequence of events is repeated for Mr. Grumles and Gloria Good-n-Rich, as well as for Delegate Johnathan Clegg and Mr. Shanks, until they are all gathered together in Dr. Shultz’s hut. How this is achieved is unknown and Dr. Shultz pleads with them not to ask.

“This Wild naked ape is known as Lobo and he has some questions he would like to ask you. I’m pretty sure that you will be able to provide him with a much better explanation than I ever could.”

Gloria takes the stage turning to Lobo, “And what exactly do you want to know?”

Lobo asks, childlike, “Tell me how Civilization first came into being.”

Gloria turns to Mr. Grumles, “Would you like to take this on. As a polymath and a librarian you are probably best qualified for this task.”

Mr. Grumles smiles at Gloria and carries it over to Lobo who responds in kind.

“Civilization is the name we give to how our society works. Before Civilization we lived in several different ways in several different parts of the world, these were called Polar Regions. This often led to conflict and war. Where many cats and naked apes were killed. But of course this was a very long time ago, 700-800 years ago,”

“Yes, but how did it come about. How did you move from an uncivilised world to a civilized one.” Lobo enquires.

Mr. Grumles looks at the others as he starts, “There are many strands to that and different citizens put different interpretations and values on them. Now I can’t give you all the various strands, nor can I give you all of the various interpretations and values they represent. All I can do is give you my understanding and why I think I am right.”

“Please, if I have problems with comprehension, I will ask for clarification. You must understand that Civilization is part of our folklore. We are grateful that The Wild is part of Civilization as it has afforded us an evolutionary development free from the structure and

cultural evolution of your Civilization. Many of our young people have a thirst for this knowledge as I do myself. It is as if The Wild is now a Polar Region — different and yet a part of Civilization. But we have no history in this regard. So any knowledge concerning Civilization is of interest to us.”

“If we go back to that time before our world was united in Civilization — some 700-800 years ago — we were close to annihilating ourselves because we had discovered the power of nuclear energy. And yet we drew back from this because it would have meant mutual self-destruction. It was then we started talking to each other to resolve the differences between our cultures. It all looks rather pathetic looking back to those times and why they have been described as the ‘Dark Ages’.

“But what was it that made you retreat from that self destruction caused by the differences in evolutionary cultures. Did one of those cultures have some kind of superior knowledge that was obvious to the other Polar Regions?”

Mr. Grumles moves his head from side to side — an action he often does when thinking about something ‘deep’. An action that both Mistress Silver and Gloria Good-n-Rich had observed on many an occasion, “In a way, I would say yes. And by that I mean that one of the Polar Regions — its name was Europa — introduced two fundamental rights into their culture for all their citizens. First, the fundamental right to health care. This made health a priority in their culture which seems rather naive considering how important it is for both the individual citizen and also for the society they belong to. The Second fundamental right, which was introduced a little later, was free access to education. And not just for children but for all citizens for life. And not just access but complete freedom of study paid for by the society that the citizens belonged. It was these two fundamental rights that gave birth to the name Civilization.”

“Once this particular Polar Region introduced these fundamental rights this must have had an effect on the other Polar Regions?” Enquires Lobo.

“Indeed. The peoples of the other Polar Regions soon demanded these fundamental rights be introduced into their societies. And of course these fundamental rights soon made Europa a highly successful Polar Region that was impossible for the other Polar Regions to ignore.”

“And once the other Polar Regions introduced these fundamental rights it wouldn’t be possible to ignore the similarity that existed between the Polar Regions?”

Mr. Grumles and the rest of the expedition were impressed by Lobo’s grasp of the historical facts that brought Civilization about.

“Of course things weren’t as simple as that at the time these things were happening.” Gloria takes up the explanation with a more realistic appraisal, “For instance there were two types of Polar Regions, one we call democratic and the other we call authoritarian. And to make it even more complex each type had two variations. In democracies there was what was called ‘The Classical Doctrine of Democracy’ — the definition which was as follows: The democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realize the common good by making the people itself decide issues through the election of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will. The other variation was the ‘Democratic Competition for Political Leadership’ and that was defined in terms of the democratic method itself where the democratic method is defined

as: that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote."

Lobo's eyebrows raise and fall as he struggles for comprehension, "The Classical Doctrine' makes the people themselves assemble to make decisions. And the 'Democratic Competition Doctrine' makes the people assemble to choose individuals who will make the decisions by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote."

"I couldn't have put it better myself." Says Mr. Grumbles with admiration.

"And these two variations of authoritarianism, what were they?"

Gloria takes up the challenge to explain, "One formed a compact with the people to do their very best as rulers to improve the lives of the people. And in return the people were to allow the rulers to rule without question. If however, the rulers did not improve the lives of the people then the people had the right to replace those rulers with those that would. This was called 'Social Contract Authoritarianism'. The other is known as 'Despotic Authoritarianism', where the rulers rule for their benefit only. And the people are no better than slaves."

"What a disgraceful system this 'Despotic Authoritarianism' must have been." Lobo stops and looks about him with a questioning look on his face, "I take it this Despotic form no longer exists?"

"Not for 300 years." Says Gloria with thanks rapt in her words.

The rest share in the sentiment with Lobo joining in before asking, "So what is the system that Civilization employs now?"

"It varies between Polar Regions — some use the 'Democratic Competition Doctrine' others use 'Social Contract Authoritarianism' — but the Polar Region Council that operates as the arbitrator between the Polar Regions uses 'The Classical Doctrine' of Democracy to resolve problems between the Polar Regions by making the delegates to the Polar Region Council act as individuals. This system has served us well for nearly 300 years and we like to think it will serve us well until a better system evolves to take its place." Gloria asks by gesticulation for the rest of the expedition to support her — which they do.

"This is most satisfying. And the very system that allowed The Wild to come into existence." The expedition give Lobo the assurance he seeks then after a moment of deep thought he springs this on them, "What is this thing they call money?"

The silence is complete. But there is one who now moves through them with her usual silky perambulation. Mistress Silver slides right up to Lobo and places her nose close up to his and they exchange breath. Sliding around him while keeping in contact she sits down next to him leaving her tail rapped around his leg, "Money is my area of expertise. So let's start at the beginning. Money was invented as a 'Medium of Exchange', and by that I mean it is possible to value anything in terms of money. If one man has a box of apples and another man has a goat and they wish to exchange then all you have to do is decide what an apple is worth in terms of money and the same goes for the goat. If an apple is worth 1 unit of money and a goat is worth 10 units of money then it is easy enough to exchange the apples for the goat because it takes 10 units of money. The man

with the apples gives the man with the goat 10 units of money. In other words the goat is worth 10 apples. By using a 'Medium of Exchange' the transaction can be completed to the satisfaction of both. Of course there was a time when things weren't so straight forward. In the evolutionary history of economics money had evolved in tandem with precious metals so that money wasn't just a 'Medium of Exchange' but also had value in its own right in terms of being equivalent to a weight of a precious metal. This unfortunate evolutionary development was put to rights by the extra-ordinary She Ye — a woman from a Social Contract Authoritarian Polar Region — who realized that money, as just a 'Medium of Exchange', was capable of creating *real world* assets. All any government needed to do was 'print' the 'Medium of Exchange' to create any *real world* asset ..."

"Excuse me," interrupts Lobo, "but what are *real world* assets?"

"Schools, hospitals, infrastructure like airports and roads, but also education — what could be more *real world* as an asset than education, for what could be more valuable than an educated citizen. That really is a *real world* asset of the highest order."

"Wonderful, quite wonderful." Says Lobo with real admiration.

"And of course you can value anything in terms of a 'Medium of Exchange'. As an artist that produces 'Works of Art' that are unique all I have to do is to have an auction where people bid in terms of the 'Medium of Exchange' and the highest bidder gets my 'Work of Art'. Consequently I have a lot of units of the 'Medium of Exchange' and I'm therefore considered to be rich."

"Rich beyond your wildest dreams." Mr. Shanks offers Lobo with just a touch too much jealousy in his tone to make it really what he thinks.

"Just how rich are you?" Gloria asks an honest question.

Mistress Silver sounds disappointed, "Do you think that I know or care. As long as I have enough to make my next work of art and pay my taxes, why would I care what I am worth." She turns to Lobo, "Do you understand the concept of art?"

"I enjoy carving wood. I mainly produce birds and animals as I find their shapes enjoyable."

"Would you do me the honour of showing me some of your work?"

"If it pleases you to see my work then it pleases me to show you. But first perhaps you can help me out with certain terms that I have heard in regard to Civilization: Capitalism and Socialism are two concepts that I have no understanding of."

The members of the expedition turn as one to Mr. Grumbles.

"Capitalism and socialism are both formal economies. ... Capitalism affords economic freedom, consumer choice, evolutionary creativity and economic growth by opening up new market environments. Socialism, which is an economy controlled by the state and planned by a central planning authority, that prevents economic and moral excesses, provides for a greater social welfare and decreases business fluctuations and distortions. There you have the formal definitions as pronounced by the Library Council."

“And which one is the formal economy of Civilization?” Lobo comes back with remarkable speed.

“It is neither but both. A hybrid which takes the best of both forms blends them together and delivers Social-Capitalism. Along with the two fundamental rights of our citizens: Universal Healthcare and Universal Education. And where money is just a ‘Medium of Exchange’. There we have Civilization. And may I add, the same Civilization that has delivered The Wild from which you and your people have benefited from and still do.” Mr. Grumles feels pleased with himself, “And of course the same Civilization that has produced all of us here in this Expedition.”

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Lobo’s pride is touching in that it is the pride of a child having produced his first works of art and had them praised by adoring parents, “What can I say. Please take what ever you want if they please you.” He gesture to his carvings lining the walls of a large hut.

“I must pay you for this depiction of a bird in flight coming in to land for you have captured a unique motion — one of transition from flight to none. Let me pay you in money. For that way you will always be remembered as a professional artist.” Offers Mistress Silver.

Lobo laughs, “I have no bank account. Nor do I have any pockets in which to put them. Nor would I know what to do with them even if I had.”

“When you come to visit us in the Civilized world you will find that there is a lot that you can buy with the money I give you now.” Mistress Silver can see even before she has finished speaking that something changes in Lobo’s demeanour.

“I’m afraid it will not be possible. Leaving The Wild would be like removing my skin. We naked apes of The Wild have co-evolved with all the creatures and plants of The Wild in much the same way as Cats and Naked Apes of Civilization have co-evolved. It would not be seen as normal if Cats and Naked Apes were estranged. So it would be for me to leave the The Wild behind. Even more so. Part of me would be missing — a part that I cannot live without.”

Mistress Silver does not dwell on this astounding information but accepts it unconditionally and moves on, “Then I must visit you here in The Wild. And bring you things that you may wish to keep. That’s if you will allow me to do so.”

Lobo’s laughter is not unkind but stems from a superior knowledge that Mistress Silver has no inkling of, “You will understand things so much better after this evening’s feast. You have been invited by the entire village to share in our great bounty. But first you must clean yourselves and rest a little. You will be called when the feast is ready.” With this Lobo leads the way outside and to various huts placed at the Expedition’s disposal.

No sooner are the six members of the Expedition alone than Mr. Shanks asks the one question on everyone’s mind, “What is going on here? How did we end up in the same place when we were so far apart?”

“It may not be normal for us but it is obviously normal for Lobo and no doubt his people. Perhaps that is what he meant by us understanding things so much better after this evenings feast.” Gloria’s manner is touched with concern, “Obviously we can’t refuse their generosity but we should be aware of what is happening and at least one of us should reframe from participating in the feast.”

“It is my duty to take that responsibility.” Says Mr. Shanks, “Although I have little idea of how I am to achieve it.”

“With good will.” Mr. Grumles answers.

The group splits up into the previously arranged pairs and retire to the respective huts that have been allocated to them by members of the tribe who would seem to have been allocated to them to serve their needs.

Once inside Gloria speaks to Mr. Grumles in tones which are normal if a little stiff, “Are you happy with what is happening?”

“Everything seems to be normal within the context that The Wild is normal. I can’t detect any malice or bad feelings. Indeed, quite the opposite. There’s a general feeling of goodwill and even ... affection. That seems to be directed towards us. It seems quite genuine. Don’t you think?”

“Yes I do. Only I wish that I could speak to Dr. Shultz.”

“Ah Dr. Shultz. He is noticeable by his absence. You are of the opinion that he has much to tell us because of the length of time he has spent with this tribe?”

“Not only that but his motivations may have spread into his research.”

“You think he might already know whether this drug soma exists and if it does has he tried it?”

“My exact thoughts.”

“Trouble is: If he has and if it works will he be able to manipulate the Unformed Block and simply keep us guessing what path we are on.”

Gloria can’t keep the concern out of her voice, “You have a very blunt way of putting it. But yes.”

Mr. Grumles laughs, “My dear Gloria, if that’s the state of play we won’t just have to worry about Dr. Shultz but also about Lobo and the rest of the tribe for that matter. Just relax, it’s all out of our hands. And having to chose or not to chose, I am minded to think, is also out of our hands. So let’s just enjoy it for whatever it is.”

Gloria thinks on it for a moment, “In a way it’s easier this way. And besides what choice do we have.”

Meanwhile.

Mistress Silver is being expansive in regard to Lobo's artefacts for the benefit of Jack Smart, "It's movement to none movement or none movement to movement. That magical moment when things change to the opposite of what they were. Lobo's art is in capturing those moments — what a genius."

"And captured with such ease. Is that really what great art is all about?" Asks Jack with the pride of knowing.

"How do we know anything except by the choices we make. And, of course, it's easier this way. And besides, what choices do we have."

Meanwhile.

Mr. Shanks is delivering Delegate Jonathon Clegg's thoughts with such accuracy he finds it hard to believe that it is not himself that has not uttered them, "Such is our predicament that I find it impossible to believe that we are ourselves are not already compromised."

"I can't say that it is any way unpleasant. Indeed, it feels like it fits the moment exactly. And, in a way, it's easier this way. Besides, what choice do we have."

"None." Says Dr. Shultz to all 3 groups at the same time. With a finality that says it all."

Soon.

They are all washed and rested and ready for the feast.

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Part 4

Freedom in the Wild

Tom Marple who is leading the investigation into the murder of Claud Pie is trying to get his head around the latest information that has just come in — some of it makes no sense at all, like the algorithms that produced the holographic image were in fact invented and constructed by Claud Pie himself.

Could this then be construed as some kind of weird suicide. Or, and more likely, it was Claud who had decided to kill Mr. Grumles — motive unknown. And that his plan had backfired.

Even though his motive was unknown it could be construed that others had employed Claud Pie to carry out this disastrous course of action and that these unknown persons needed to silence Mr. Grumles before he divulged information that could be detrimental to their well being — the only group that seemed to fit this scenario were of course the Academics. However, no connection between Claud Pie and the Academics was at that time established.

Tom realized that greater scrutiny of the Academics — either singularly or collectively — was now in order and he set out a set of directives to achieve this end.

This left the ‘unknown factor — Factor X’ as a distinct possibility. And of course there was also the possibility that the FFF were involved even though Mr. Grumles had discounted the possibility. News on this front was worrying in the extreme. The FFF had managed to fly to another Polar Region — the Changa Polar Region, a Social Contract Authoritarian state — and from there had gained access to The Wild albeit some 1000 kilometres from where Mr. Grumles and the Polar Region Expedition had set out.

The Changa Polar Region had developed an extensive range of tourist facilities mainly around that regions exquisite natural environments. Some of which included close proximity to The Wild. The FFF had hired a boat to travel up the river Yang which went deep into The Wild. These boats were fully sealed and it was thought that it was impossible to leave them thus protecting the The Wild from contamination from the Civilized world and of course, vice versa.

Tom made enquiries via the Changa Police Department only to find out that the FFF had disappeared along with the fully sealed boat.

What was he to do. The only thing he could do. He flew out to Changa where he met his counter part a certain Mistress Abaline who filled him in on developments.

“They have some how disabled the security devices and quite possibly the sealed apparatus that separates the boat from The Wild’s environment. Thus they have broken the law and will have to stand trial once they have been apprehended.”

“And how do we apprehend them?”

“With great difficulty. We have no idea where they are. And until we do we cannot enter The Wild to detain them.”

“Are they out of communication for any reason? You know, technical damage or have they just switched off.”

“There’s nothing wrong with the equipment which they seem to want to keep. They have, however, control over the equipment as we have been unable to wrestle back control no matter what we have tried. We think they listen in to us because we can detect operational changes in the equipment from time to time.”

“So it might be possible to communicate with them. I should give it a try and see if I can convince them that they should give themselves up.” Tom changes tone and addresses Mistress Abaline directly while looking into her large green eyes, “I find myself feeling very embarrassed at the behaviour of my wayward Eurons” (Euron is the Polar Region that Tom and Mr. Grumles are from).

Mistress Abaline responds to this genuine psychological state by being reassuring, “Think nothing of it. We have clever delinquents here in Changa. Although we haven’t had any break the laws governing The Wild. We will try to keep this quiet in case it gives our own delinquents ideas. Come. Let us go to the Operations Centre for these trips on the river. Unless you would like to see your accommodation first.”

“Operations Centre first to let the FFF know that I’m here. And that I’m not a happy man. Then if there’s no reply a light lunch and perhaps you can show me around.”

“Sounds like the right itinerary.”

They arrive at the Operations Centre to find a team of police technicians busy at work.

Their Boss, opens the conversation after introductions, “They are definitely listening in to us. But how they are doing this I have no idea.”

“So if I was to speak to them now, you think they will hear me.”

“Give it a try.”

“Ok, you lot of dead beats. This is Euron’s Special Branch Chief Inspector Tom Marple speaking, and I am so pissed off I could spit. It’s no good asking you nicely to give your selves up because I don’t believe in the good fairy. So I’ll just give it to you straight. 40 years hard labour with re-education looks about right when we get you back to Euron. But that’s of little consequence in consideration that you have broken the law, here, in the Polar Region of Changa where the use of red-hot irons and ball crushers...” here, he winks at Abaline and the Boss who find this most amusing, “... are still in regular use and where they don’t have years of hard labour or reeducation as their convicts don’t live long enough to enjoy that civilized mode of adjustment. So are you going to return before the patience of our friends here in Changa run out?”

A short silence is followed by the communicator switching on then a distinct fart of rather large proportions is followed by the communicator switching off.



“Did you really have to do that?’ Demands Anna Tupman of Mr. Siggins as she wrestles the mouth piece of the communicator away from his arsehole, “If we can at least keep some kind of decorum in our behaviour towards these police persons we should at least be able to plead some form of temporary insanity when it comes to court.”

“The complete opposite is true.” Says Tom Snodgrass with logic on his side, “The more insulting we are the greater the likelihood they will think we have had some malfunction of the cerebral cortex.”

“You are, of course, both wrong. The truth of the matter is our ‘gonads’ are cooked no matter what we do. But that matters little now. Come and have a look at this.” Joe Winkle is on driving duty and is the one looking out in front of the speeding boat. What he can see and what everyone else can see once they have joined him is a massive building the size of a city at a bend in the river. The one unusual feature that is obvious to all is that there are no windows to any of the buildings which all seem to be joined as a unit and joined in terms of a color: a light yellowish mushroom.

The usual exclamations of excitement follow and continue until Joe glides the boat into what looks like a quay. The quay is wonderful in its own right but it is the hundreds of naked apes that line its edge that really excites. And not just because they are naked naked apes. The FFF are being greeted by young people just like themselves or just like the naked apes because there are no Cats to be seen.

Joe ‘pops’ the hood of the boat and he and the other members of the FFF step out into a welcome reception from The Wild’s naked apes. They aren’t just happy to see them but are greeted with hugs and kisses and with nuzzling affections for the Cats. Mr. Wellar, Mr. Stiggins and Mistress Arabella are overcome with a strange joy that excites The Wild’s naked apes even more.

“My name is Carbon and I welcome you to The Wild in the name of everyone here.” Carbon is drowned out by the cheers and cries of excitement now being delivered by The Wild’s naked apes.

Joe reciprocates on behalf of the FFF, “I feel we should have met before, or perhaps we have, because this is almost like coming home.”

This sentiment is grasped by all in a wave of emotional exuberance.

Later

The party goes on long into the night with the individual members of the FFF making friends with numerous members of the The Wild’s naked apes. Exhaustion eventually overcomes all of them and a sound soundless sleep is broken by the rising sun where they find themselves back in the boat.

“They knew we were coming. They some how tapped into Mr. Grumles’ mind and saw the inevitable outcome which was us coming here.” Lulabell states this in a completely matter of fact way.

“She’s absolutely right. Which means they must possess a form of telepathy. And I’m pretty certain they can explore our minds at will. Didn’t you notice how little time they spent actually talking.” Tom Snodgrass adds on to his confirmation.

“Only on important junctions, or, when they were in conversation with us.” Joe Winkle passes on his observation.

“They treat language like a game. As if it was a game to develop parts of their brains.” Anna Tupman offers, “Or so it seemed to me.”

“But with no discernible negativity.” Counters Mr. Stiggins to Anna’s tone rather than the content of what she said — which if anything was a bit harsh.

“I agree.” Is all Mr. Weller contributes. Obviously in regard to everything that has been said.

Mistress Arabella gets up and stretches then shakes herself with a fast vibration that works its way down from the tip of her nose to the end of her tail and eventually to the clawed limits of her feet, “I was told that if things go badly for us in the Changa Polar Region and/or if they go badly in the Euron Polar Region, then we will be given asylum here in The Wild. Which is, as far as I’m concerned, better than the alternatives of red-hot implements of torture, or, the 40 years hard labour ...’ the others join in “... with reeducation. We should feel privileged — it’s almost like been sent to a different world.”

“One in which has our well being and happiness are guaranteed. And what is more they are more than willing to share their knowledge with us so that we can be equals in this amazing new world.” Joe Winkle enthuses.

“But we must still find Mr. Grumles. I hate leaving loose ends and who knows what he now knows.” Lulabell at her most sensible and persuasive, “He may even have found access to the Unformed Block. Can you imagine what that knowledge could bring — not just to ourselves but to the benefit of our world.”

“That would be more than a game changer if that were true.” Anna sets out the context.

“We must gain the support of our new friends for this adventure and who knows perhaps they would like to join us.” Joe has spoken for them all.

And, as if by magic, The Wild’s naked apes line the quay and make welcoming noises that draws the FFF out.

“Can we have breakfast as we talk. There are many things that interest us about Civilization and we would like you to confirm for us.”

“Whatever you want to know we will readily furnish you with. As members of Freedom we are all for Free access to all knowledge for all.” Says Joe Winkle and in a tone that suits his total belief.

They are soon inside one of the buildings where the mushroomed coloured walls are transparent from the inside. The food is all vegetarian but amazing in its taste and variety.

Carbon who seems to have been elected as spokes-person starts in, "Why are there restrictions to knowledge in your Civilizations's society?"

"A very good question. And one that Joe is probably best to answer as he has made a study of it of academic proportions." Says Lulabell.

"In my research on this subject I found out that there was a time a few hundred years ago when there were groups of individuals who were into controlling the behaviour of other individuals. This was a time we have labelled the 'dark ages' because some of these groups wanted to control who could learn what. This was, in fact, A Division of Learning. With the resulting 'Who Knows What', 'Who Decides Who knows What' and 'Who Decides Who Decides Who Knows What. Control of knowledge means control of your fellow citizen. That is why we in our group are so much against any restriction to access to knowledge. And although our Civilization put a stop to these groups wanting to control our fellow citizens it still left areas where we still don't have complete access to knowledge because we don't even know what knowledge exists. Even for Librarians like ourselves there are areas that are restricted. We have no idea what knowledge there is locked away in these restricted areas. It is only recently that we have gained knowledge that one restricted area concerns the Unformed Block and how to gain access to it. Dr. Shultz and Mr. Grumles are two librarians that do have access but they cannot divulge what they know without crossing our Polar Regional Council who forbid it. Nor are we privy to know why this is so. There's a crisis at this present time because the Librarian Dr. Shultz has taken upon himself to explore the possibility that access to the Unformed Block is possible. That's why he is here in The Wild. Perhaps you can tell us if access is possible."

Carbon is perplexed, "But surely you know that everyone has access to the Unformed Block. We all, yes, even you, have access all the time. We all change the way the world is by simply living our lives." Here she stops to examine her internal thoughts which she is sharing with The Wild's naked apes through their telepathic abilities, "What we find so fascinating about you is your individuality, which seems to stem from the fact that you don't have telepathic abilities and can't therefore know the 'Hive' mind. Something we all take for granted and allows us to experience everything in the same way."

"Stopping conflict and bringing harmony to your society. It must be nice, but, it must ultimately lead to bland uniformity. As much as I appreciate the benefits that this 'Hive' mind brings, it certainly doesn't make up for the individual banter we express all the time. Our permanent arguments and petty conflicts must seem pathetic to you ..." Joe Winkle is cut off by Carbon, "Oh no you have got it wrong. We are jealous of your individualism that is so easily expressed in the anarchistic language that you use. We would love you to stay with us and teach us how to express ourselves as individuals." The rest agree with Carbon.

"I'm sure that can be arranged." Carbon and her fellow naked apes give Mistress Arabella a huge vote of confidence by reaching out and stroking her coat, "But we must complete our mission first and I'm hoping that you will help us in this matter."

“Of course. We will deliver you to Mr. Grumbles and Dr. Shultz within a couple of days. It’s a long journey and not one most of us undertake. We will have to prepare and choose your companions carefully.” Carbon and the rest of The Wild’s naked apes leave.

“Do you think it’s possible then?” Lulabell queries without stipulating what.

“I take it that you are trying to use your ‘Hive’ mind that you do not possess. And as such I can only assume that you are referring to teaching them how to be as individualistic as we are.” Tom hits the nail right on the head.

“Well? Do you think it is possible?”

Tom sighs, “Probably, but only to a degree.” Then he brightens, “Can you imagine Carbon having a fowl mouth like you Lulabell.”

“I bet I can.” Stresses Lulabell, “I bet I can make her into the exact duplicate of the fowl-mouthed sex maniac you see before you.”

The rest of the FFF throw things at her while laughing in good humour.

Carbon sees the banter and comes running back, “What is happening?”

“Just some friendly banter.” Says Joe Winkle.

“And some not so friendly banter.” Says Lulabell.

“I’ve been thinking about this.” Says Mr. Weller — ‘out of the blue’.

“Then you better give us the benefit of your thoughts before they curdle your brain.” Lulabell says this while curling herself around him showing the special affection that they share.

“Totalitarianism. Many centuries ago there were political movements that were labelled totalitarian, where the state was to be understood as an inclusive organic unity that transcended individual minds and where all separateness and differences were surrendered to the state for the sake of this superordinate totality — Hence ‘Totalitarianism’. But to have made this work without the use of state torture and state murder they would have to have had a way of inducing a ‘Hive’ mind in all of their citizens ...” Joe interjects, “Like genuine telepathy the way The Wild’s naked apes have.” Mr. Weller continues, “Precisely. The only way Totalitarianism can work is to have a ‘Hive’ mind and the only way to do that is to have genuine telepathy.”

Carbo catches on, “We could have the perfect Totalitarian state because we have a ‘Hive’ mind. But of course, that is not the way it happens here in The Wild. Everything here is agreed on in the ‘Hive’ mind making any conflict between individuals superfluous.” She turns to Mr. Weller, “Did they really try to force citizens into a ‘Hive’ mind without telepathy?”

“Unfortunately they did, resulting in mass murder and torture. Individualism came out of this terrible period and democracy as well. It was a terrible period in Civilization’s history. But here we all are and still fighting the rear guard action of those totalitarian citizens who

would still like to control us by denying us access to certain types of knowledge.” Mr. Weller glows with pride and the accolades his fellow members of the FFF heap upon him. Carbon too feels Mr. Weller’s pride and the closeness of the FFF, “You may not have a ‘Hive’ mind but what you share with each other is worth more than that as it is sharing each other’s individuality.” She stops to think, “I think I’d like some of that.”

Lulabell rouses herself from Mr. Weller’s embrace, “If you think like that you are already one of us.”

The rest agree making Carbon cry with joy.

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Part 5

The Feast

Every kind of taste imaginable is represented here. Even though there isn't a single item that is not vegetable or fungal. Animals, all animals are sacrosanct: even insects and slugs and snails. The taste of fish and crustaceans are well represented but not a scale or whisker like feelers are any where to be found. 300 dishes are set out on low tables in a giant circle that sits 300 naked apes and their guests from the Expedition.

Dr. Shultz and Lobo seem to be as 'thick as Librarians' in the vein of that old-fashioned expression that still bears accurate meaning.

They seem to be sharing a joke which gives Mr. Grumles the perfect way in to a 3-way conversation, "Would you like to share your joke with me, or perhaps with everyone?"

Dr. Shultz laughs quietly, "Mr. Grumles, if it was a joke, it is only in your ears. I was just discussing with Lobo the significance of the Expedition's worries concerning access to the Unformed Block. A problem that has already been resolved but of which you are not yet aware. Why not just enjoy the feast and get to know these wonderful naked apes. They want nothing more than to get to know you as they have no Cats in their world or their lives. Can you not be as generous with them as they have been with you."

Mr. Grumles is caught. And so why not act in good grace with these naked apes, "Please, will you not introduce me to one so that I may endeavour to thank them for their generosity and I will thus have an intro for a meaningful conversation."

"Of course, of course." Dr. Shultz looks around until he sees a woman who looks like she is in her 30s, "Tara, come and meet my good friend, Mr. Grumles."

Tara slides across the floor and embraces Mr. Grumles like a long lost friend, thus putting him at ease. His first thought is how wonderful she smells and abandoning convention he licks her naked body from her waist to and including her face.

She squeals with delight, "Oh how rough your tongue is."

"And how delightful your smell and taste." Mr. Grumles replies.

"Do you mind?"

"Do I mind what?" Mr Grumles offers.

"Do you mind sharing your personal space?"

"Hardly, or I wouldn't have invaded your personal space with such ease."

"You said you liked my smells and taste, would you like to know what it is?"

“Indeed. The smell and taste are not just on your body. It permeates the air in a less potent form.”

Tara laughs, “You never really had a chance once you decided to enter The Wild.”

“I’m sorry but you are speaking in riddles.”

“That smell and taste is fermented soma. And you are already well under the influence of its potency.”

“Ah. Now I understand.” Says Mr. Grumles without really knowing, “So do I have access to the Unformed Block?”

“Wrong question. And that’s because you always have access to the Unformed Block.” She laughs with abandon.

Mr. Grumles realises its true, “Of course it’s true. Everything we do every day is making our way through the Unformed Block. I suppose I could alter the future if I wanted to. But then that’s what I do anyway.” His insight brings on a fit of laughter, “If I didn’t want things the way they are I’d soon change them.” His insight rumbles on, “And we all do that all the time.”

“Precisely.” Says Tara with a certitude that stuns Mr. Grumles, “ But be careful not to let your mind wander until you get used to soma’s effects — which can be quite powerful.”

She takes him outside and to a large hut near the jungle’s edge. She walks in with Mr. Grumles following like a well trained dog. There are several vats filled with a dark liquid. She lifts off a bowl from a stand full of them and fills it from one of the vats.

Tara lifts the bowl to Mr. Grumles mouth and he drinks and he keeps on drinking until the bowl is empty.

“My, my, you were thirsty.” Tara giggles but not in a cruel way but with tenderness, or so Mr. Grumles thinks.

His mind now experiences the suddenness of the soma ‘rush’. He has to lie down and Tara lies down with him running her hand up his hairy chest to his throat from where it descends once more to his middle stomach. It’s a feeling Mr. Grumles succumbs to. The feeling spreads out until it encompasses Tara so she becomes a part of his skin, then part of his consciousness. They meld in perfect harmony knowing each other like they know themselves. What Bliss!

How long they remained like this is unknowable. Time having been suspended from conscious thought. Although thought is probably not the right word even though it’s there. Feeling. sensation and ...

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If Mr. Grumles is lost in the experiential experience of the Unformed Block seen from the perspective of soma’s blissful facility, what of the rest of the expedition.

Mr. Shanks who was supposed to be keeping a vigilant eye on proceedings was unfortunately/fortunately susceptible to soma's intoxicating effects. The many hands that caressed his body held sway over his thought processes and he was lost. Lost in the exquisite sensation of being aware of the Unformed Block and his part in it.

Mistress Silver having consumed more of the ferment soma than the rest was long gone in any rational thought. She had peaked into an explosion of sensations and had melded into the Unformed Block until she was unable to experience a single connection with her own persona. All she knew was that she existed — she knew she was the Unformed Block. And that was exactly the way it should be — she was, after all, the Unformed Blocks's Mistress Silver.

Delegate Jonathan Clegg and Jack Smart had tried to rationalize the increasing effects of soma before running out of words then running out of concepts then running out of ...

And that only left Gloria Good-n-Rich. She was the children's favorite. They loved the way she showered them with gold dust whenever they touched her. They reminded her of her position as Leader of the Expedition — which under the influence of soma took on comic and responsibility's twists in turn. So, before she was unable to communicate because of the increasing intoxication, she stood up and addressed those gathered at the Feast, "Naked apes of The Wild, I would like to thank you all for this wonderful gift you have bestowed upon us. I think I can speak for my colleagues when I say to you that there is no better way to understand who you are, my brother and sister naked apes, than by participating in this Feast. Thank you and thank you again."

The Wild's naked apes jump to their feet and wildly applaud. This applause Gloria experiences as part of her body before she passes into a different realm.

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Recovering — if there is ever recovery from a 'run-in' with the Unformed Block — was as exciting as discovering your body for the very first time or so Mr. Grumles' thought.

As he turned over he ran into Mistress Silver. Who is lying next to him. Looking at him as if he was an alien species. As if she had never seen him before but was in fact seeing him for the very first time. She knew who he was and was pleased for that. Then, an overpowering feeling of love for Mr. Grumles and she grasps him around the neck and hugs him to her.

Mr. Grumles licks her face and before either of them can say anything they make love gently at first and then violently until they are totally sated.

Lying in each others fore legs they simply smile at each other.

It is Mistress Silver who starts, "I felt the Hive mind of the tribe. It is their ability to be telepathic that allows them to have a group mind. But when I gave myself up to the Unformed Block I could also feel their Hive mind. And I think that's because the Unformed Block is the Hive mind of our Universe, even though as individuals we are the active players in our universe. It's also true of individual Hive minds, they are also active players

in our universe. Then I sensed the ... other — the Primordial State. I was moving further and further out. From the individual ME to the Unformed Block to the Primordial State to the final experiential experience — what we have labelled: Nirvana. Then Beyond — whatever that is. Then I woke up next to you.”

“You went out with your expansive mind. I went in but arrived in the same place — the final experiential experience: Nirvana and Beyond. It’s all there in molecular communication — the Hive mind of the body. Telepathy between our molecules. Quantum entanglement — it’s not just our brains and nervous system but the entire molecular structure, and, the network fields that carry the informational flow between and within the phenotype. The Unformed Block of our individual bodies that relates directly with the Primordial State as an experiential experience we have named: Nirvana. Then Beyond — the Nameless.” Mr. Grumles is breathless.

“The Nameless? ... It will have to do because I can’t think of anything else.” Mistress Silver stretches and gets up, “I’m starving. Let’s go eat.”

“YOU ME too.”

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They were all at it — trying to relate in words their own specific experiences of the Unformed Block. The Expedition had gone through a ‘phase change’ — like water turning to ice or steam. Its constituents were the same but the motivation couldn’t have been more different. They had wanted to stop Dr. Shultz from gaining access to the Unformed Block only exceeding in gaining access to the Unformed Block for them all.

Gloria could see the huge folly her position was now in. Only, it didn’t bother her at all. What had happened hadn’t just changed the rules of the game but had changed the game itself. It’s as if she had been playing chess and having just been put into ‘check’ she had suddenly found herself playing football and was on the brink of scoring a goal of perfect beauty as her fellow players had combined in such a way as to deliver her the perfect opportunity to score. What joy. What ecstasy. What in the Primal State’s name was she going to do now, “Has anyone any idea what we should do now?”

Delegate Jonathan Clegg felt obliged to give some kind of answer to her question, in that, as a representative of ‘Civilization’ in regard to The Wild, it was he who would have to account for what had happened to the Council of Representatives, of which he was a member, and it was he who had been entrusted with the sacred duty to protect the Unformed Block from contamination and which he had so miserably failed, “Honesty. We must report back to the Council of Representatives about what has happened. We must admit that we failed to stop Dr. Shultz from contaminating the unformed Block. And worse, we ourselves who were charged with this sacred duty have indulged in contaminating the Unformed Block. We must be honest about this great crime that we have committed and accept the consequences.”

“The only trouble is that we have not contaminated the Unformed Block — more like, it is the Unformed Block that has ... if not contaminated us ... then, has invaded our persons and delivered us both insight and joy. The Unformed Block is what it has always been — inviolate. What ridiculous egos we possess to think that we, either singularly or as a

group, could possibly infect, contaminate or influence this singularity state, in any way shape or form. Get real.” Mistress Silver as per usual has hit the nail perfectly on the head, or so Mr. Grumles thinks.

Before the debate can continue Lobo enters with news, “Your friends and colleagues have arrived. Such good fortune for they have arrived with some of our young people from The City. Come, come and greet them for they have travelled a long way to see you.”

Outside they face each other. The Expedition on one side and the FFF on the other.

“Welcome, and well met.” Mr. Grumles beams his very best smile towards his young friends.

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The feast now takes on a more lively turn with dancing and singing and general cavorting. Mr. Grumles and Mistress Silver are finally sort out by Lullabel, Joe Winkle and Carbon. They have a specific problem they want the Cats to address.

Lullabel comes straight out with it, “In Civilization’s set of facts relating to the explanation of the Nature of Reality. How is it possible that the same process that delivers the Universe from the Primordial state is the same process that delivers life from the Universe?”

“The Law of Simplicity. Evolution always chooses the simplest way when doing anything. So why have two processes when one will do.” Says Mr. Grumles matter of factly.

Carbon is more than just confused. She is lost. And from the very beginning, “Could we start from the very beginning. Just think that I don’t know anything and you have to explain it all as if to a child.”

“Ok. In the beginning there was no beginning. We have to start off with Infinity or we don’t have anyway of answering all the questions alluding to where it all began. It never began it has been always here and always will be. The Primordial State has this as its foundation and the other foundation and entwined — more blended — with it is that energy is consciousness and is conscious both as a singularity and in its infinite manifestations. And of course the Primordial State must exist in a state of Random Chaos. So that by random selection Universes are brought into being by a process. The exact nature of which we are still working out and of which I might have something to contribute. Once a Universe has been brought into being this is Phaze 1. Phaze 2 then uses the same process acting on the Laws of Physics for that particular Universe which delivers ‘LIFE’ with all its evolutionary potential — including US.”

“Evolution being an emergent property of the Laws of Physics for this Universe?” Carbon questions.

“That’s right. And probably for a lot of other Universes. Evolution has that much potential when it comes to Life. You just have to take a look at us. Billions of years in the making but just look at the potential. Cats, naked apes with and without a Hive mind,

Civilizations of enormous complexity and adaptability. The atoms and molecules are exactly the same anywhere in this Universe and yet when arranged via the genetic code they produce Life with an experiential experience. If someone had said it had all been produced by magic it would have been more believable than the Laws of Physics and Evolutionary development over billions of years. What a wonderment we are.”

After a long time mulling over Mr. Grumles’ words and sharing this knowledge with her fellow naked apes in their Hive mind Carbon comes back with this, “You say you might have something to contribute to the knowledge of the process — the process that brings it all into being. Can you share this with us?”

“I can. But you must understand this is not in anyway conventional. You see, I’ve been having dreams.”

“Dreams.” Says Carbon in a slightly shocked exclamation.

“Yes. I dream I’m from the other half of the physical dimensions — the Dark Hole part — as apposed to our White Hole 3-dimensions. And in that strange world I am sometimes a cat — not like any cats we have here. But sometimes I’m a naked ape. It’s most peculiar I know but it doesn’t seem to be at the time. As a result I’ve been able to gain knowledge about all sorts of things that I wouldn’t normally be able to.”

“Hold on there, Mr. Grumles. How come you’ve never shared this with us. Have you shared this with anyone?” Asks Lullabel annoyed.

“With Mistress Silver, with whom I share everything. But there would be no point in sharing any of this with anyone because it is all just a dream. It may well contain knowledge of remarkable importance but you can judge for yourselves because you can read it in story form and comes in two parts ‘The White Crane Rises’ and ‘The Missing Year’.”

Mr. Grumles pulls out his communicator and transfers the two novels to Lullabel’s communicator who then passes it on to Joe Winkle who in turn passes it on to the rest of the FFF.

“And what about us?” Asks Carbon feeling like she is being left out.

“I’ll have a copy printed out so you and the rest of The Wild’s naked apes can share it.”

“So the process is included in these novels?” Asks Carbon.

“That’s if you can figure it out. My feeling is that it is genuine but lacks a perspective that it must be viewed from. Sorry, I’m afraid I can’t be of much further use as it’s still a mystery to me.” Says Mr. Grumles with his words dripping with sincerity.

“And that goes for me too.” Says Mistress Silver dripping as profusely.

“So what is it?” Lullabel asks slightly annoyed.

“It’s called ‘The Book of Changes’. And was supposed to have been gleaned by direct revelation by these naked apes of the ‘Black Hole’ half of the universe.”

“What’s ‘direct revelation’?” Carbon tries grasping on to something she has never come across before.

“I’m only guessing here, but I suppose it must be a bit like when you meld your mind with the Hive or when we meld our minds with the Unformed Block. We know things instantaneously without having to go through the usual story of revelation.”

“Then you must be talking about melding with the Primordial State?”

“I guess I must. These naked apes were at the beginning of their ‘civilization’ and hence were still in tune to the Primordial State.” Says Mr. Grumles.

“That’s just like ourselves. We are still in touch with the Primordial State. Our Hive mind developed from that.” States Carbon.

“But then they saw the process. Saw it in action. Then wrote it down as a way of understanding how the world comes into being, every single moment. For them the process is called the I Ching or The Book of Changes. They had a whole civilization based on it. The study this was called was the I-Learning. You can see how useful it must have been to know exactly why everything individually Changes. I’ve been trying to apply it to the Changes here in our White Hole part of the Universe, but without much success. Whether that’s because the process is only relevant to the Black Hole part of the Universe or for other reasons I don’t know.”

“So what form does this process take?” Asks Carbon.

“I think what you mean is what form does the representation take.” Carbon shakes her head and shrugs her shoulders — not knowing, “Well let me show you, it might help.” Mr Grumles takes out his communicator and switches it to holographic mode so he can draw 3-dimensional images in the space that surrounds them. He draws 6 straight lines one above the other, “This is how they represent Heaven, or, the Primordial State which has Infinite Energy and is in a state of Random Chaos.”

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He then draws 6 broken lines one above the other, “This is how they represent Earth, or, The Finite State of the Universe which is in Perfect Order.”

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“The process runs from Heaven to Earth. Random Chaos changing into Perfect Order. This mysterious process is represented by the combinations of straight and broken lines

in a series of 62 combinations — running from Chaos to Order. Read the two books ‘The White Crane Rises’ and ‘The Missing Year’ and you will see all the Changes represented.”

“And this is the process revealed?” Carbon is incredulous.

“It would appear so. But if you want more of an explanation than that I’m afraid I can’t help. Remember the process was revealed by direct revelation.”

“Thus not allowing for a logical representation let alone a scientific one.” Lulabell throws in with some distaste.

“I’m afraid you are right. Except of course you can try it out and see if it works for you.”

“Has it worked for you?” Lulabell and Carbon ask at nearly the same time.

“It has — when I can figure out what it means. It’s not easy as it’s so vague. But it’s fun trying. Mistress Silver and I have spent many hilarious evenings trying to decipher a reading.”

“If you ask me,” Says Mistress Silver, “it hovers between the two. Between Random Chaos and Perfect Order and as such it is your interpretation — your perspective — that really counts. Give it a try. Just don’t take it too seriously.”

“We’ve had some bizarre readings but also some insightful ones. Who knows what you may find. Why not ask a question on the Unformed Block. Now that might reveal a lot.” Mistress Silver agrees with Mr. Grumles.

“So where is this Book of Changes?” Asks Carbon.

“Here it is.” Says Mr. Grumles holding up his communicator so that those present can download the Tsao Hua version of the Book of Changes. He turns to Carbon, “And don’t worry we’ll get you a hard copy so that you and your Hive mind can have a go.”

“Now that should be really interesting.” Says Mistress Silver with genuine excitement.



Part 6

The End of the Beginning

Mistress Silver brushes the gold dust off her coat by the dextrous use of her tail, turning the gold to silver as she does so. This leaves a path of silver in the feline's wake.

Gloria Good-n-Rich observes this display of creative power with hardly disguised appreciation, "I take it Mr. Grumles has inflicted the Black-hole explanation of the Nature of Reality on your creative mind?"

"Exactly what part are you referring to?"

"The 'classical' world. The world as a continuous flowing whole. Each entity made up of other entities and in turn making up other entities."

"Oh, that." Mistress Silver sounds almost bored, "It sounds pretty reasonable to me. I like the idea how all the levels on the Scale of Reality blend into one another, making one continuous whole. From the tiniest to the largest and with our level sitting in the very middle of the Scale of Reality."

"Why do you think that is?"

"Why we should have one foot in the smallest and the other in the biggest? Is that what you mean?" Mistress Silver pulls up right in front of Gloria so she can look at Gloria in the eye.

This produces too much discomfit in Gloria and she turns away to gaze up at the exploding White-hole in the night sky, "And why and how does Mr. Grumles dream about the Black-hole universe?"

"The why is obvious as the Black-hole universe is just the other half of our White-hole universe — two sides fo the same coin. The how is a little more mysterious. But then again, Mr. Grumles' mind is more than just a little bit mysterious. He once told me that if he were to concentrate really hard he could probably grasp the Nature of Reality in its totality. The only problem being that he would no longer be Mr. Grumles."

Gloria's laughter joining in with Mistress Silver's exuberant laughter.

"I hope you girls weren't taking my name in vane." He sidles up between them and joins them in watching a particular large explosion taking place at the centre of the White-hole, "The truth of the matter is that I feel less and less like my usual self."

Gloria beats Mistress Silver to the line, "Is that because you know more and more about the Nature of Reality?"

"I suppose it could be." His hesitation can be heard in his voice.

“What then have we to report back to the Polar Region Council?” Asks Mistress Silver.

“And let us not forget the Censor’s Office, nor the Censor.” Adds Gloria Good-n-Rich.

“We will all be charged for taking the drug soma and gaining access to the Unformed Block.” Says Mr. Grumles in rhetorical form, “What we have experienced rather nullifies everything that has gone before.”

“For us, maybe. But not for those that haven’t experienced either the drug or the access it gives to the Unformed Block.” Says Gloria, always a stickler for protocol.

“Then we’ll have to give them some ...”

Mr. Grumles cuts Mistress Silver off, “Without their knowledge.”

Gloria groans. Mistress Silver smiles. Mr. Grumles simply doesn’t understand, how, “What, do we take a bottle of the fermented soma back with us disguised as a holiday present from The Wild and present it to the Censor.”

“Or better still, the Polar Regional Council.” Mistress Silver slips in, “That way we can get the Polar Regional Council representative, Jonathan Clegg, to administer the drug without our knowledge — as it were.”

“And why would he do that?” Asks Gloria not unreasonably.

“Because he knows that he is the one person the Polar Regional Council will trust. And once they’ve been ... turned ... soma will be made readily available to all our citizens. Problem solved.”

“So what’s he going to do? Smuggle it back in. In what?” Gloria speaks with derision dropping off every word.

“The 3 of us will have to accompany him and provide whatever distraction or misdirection that will be needed.” Mr. Grumles draws out a line through the Unformed Block that they can follow.

Mistress Silver can see the line as clearly as she can see one of her whiskers, “Who will be there waiting for our return? None other than ...”

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Marple, the Detective in charge of Pie’s murder investigation — Special Branch Chief Inspector Tom Marple, who had brought a 10 member squad with him for the apprehension of the FFF. At least those — Lullabell Trotter, Tom Snodgrass and Mistress Arabella — who had decided to return on the same flight as the Expedition members — Gloria Good-n-Rich, Mr. Shanks, Mistress Silver, Johnathan Clegg and Mr. Grumles.

One has to remember that those returning were coming straight from The Wild with no communication with anyone except the flight attendants.

The 'reception committee' — The Censor with two other members of the Censor's Office, Members of the Polar Region Committee and Chief Inspector Tom Marple and the 10 member squad of Special Branch officers.

They 'eyed' each other up through the partition in the airports reception lounge. The air of anticipation was tangible. So that when the partition began to sink into the floor there was a sudden bout of exclamations, followed by the FFF descending into animal behaviour of the most lurid kind. Once the partition was down Tom Snodgrass and Mistress Arabella launched an attack on the squad of Special Branch officers. Their momentum initially driving them into the squad until they were finally subdued by sheer force of numbers.

Lullabell Trotter had made straight for the Censor but simply bounced off her, such was the great bulk of this powerful pussycat. Lullabell then stuck up her middle finger almost into the Censor's nose. To which the Censor replied by drawing out from her paw cover a 6-inch claw that she then tried sticking it up Lullabell's nose. Lullabell jumped back in fear to be quickly replaced by Mr. Grumles intervening to save Lullabell from harm.

This brought Mr. Grumles face to face with the Censor and from which distance he was able to expel a lung full of soma gas, right into the censor's mouth.

[It should be pointed out here that the fermented soma liquid was being stored in the stomachs of the returnees. It having no adverse effect on the 'drug mules' as they were in biological tune to its effect. The liquid could then be 'sicked' up into the throat where it was transformed into a gas, then inhaled into the lungs. And from there exhaled some 3-4 metres in the form of a dense cloud like a sneeze. Anyone standing in front of this, was bound to get a large dose of the fermented soma with the subsequent enlightening and liberating effect.]

A cunning ploy that more than just worked because Mistress Silver and Gloria delivered the gas to members of the Polar Region Committee and to Tom Marple. It only takes a few seconds for the soma gas to work and the 'reception committee' are all but reduced to a blissful blend of catatonia and joy. Mistress Silver had pulled off a similar stunt in one of her performances except with an hallucinogenic gas. So replicating that performance with this, hardly exercised her enormous creative abilities.

The rest, as they say, is history. Soon the world was fully acquainted with soma, the Unformed Block and the obvious. Yes, the obvious — in that we all change Reality all the time — once experienced never forgotten. You see, there is no Path in the Unformed Block that leads to the Control of the Unformed Block. Well, how could there be.

So everyone simply got on with their lives. The idea of taking control of the Unformed Block was an interesting idea but with no foundation in the 'classical' world in which we live it was soon forgotten. Except, of course, by Mr. Grumles who had a lot to say about it in his writing — a subject we now come to.

*

Part 7

The Beginning of the End

Writing is mind stuff. For the writer there can be no greater ambition than to fill the mind with all that scribbling stuff.

That's all I am — a scribbler — pathetic, I know.

My 'Great' 'Master Work' my 'MS': 'The Path and The Way' is just a load of scribbling on a gigantic scale. You'll be pleased to know that if it hadn't been for the corona virus I'd have kept going for another 20 years. I would have kidded myself, and, you the Reader, that my scribbling would have provided 'The Path and The Way' with lots of rich detail, and yes, there would have been some merit, but, how much and what it would really be worth will never be known.

So what I've got to do now is write about writing.

I had this dream just last night — I jest not — that says so much about the subject I think it will be worth relating in full:

I was wearing an elaborate monk's habit in red with many folds and pleats and pockets. I was sitting cross-legged on a cushion in a wooden 'prayer hall', obviously in a monastery either in China or Tibet. There were other students present beside myself and I was learning calligraphy. I was learning the characters that make up this statement — The Arrogant Dragon Has Cause to Repent. I have often thought that this would make me a fitting epitaph. Especially as it is something I have not written as a unique piece of my own scribbling but comes from the I Ching, The Book of Changes. It is Ch'ien over Ch'ien

— — —

— — — Ch'ien

— — —

— — —

— — — Ch'ien

— — —

A changing line at the top means :

The Arrogant Dragon has cause to Repent.

Two students just behind me were arguing. They were not dressed like me but were wearing simple novices robes. I could not help but listen as their argument escalated. It turned out they were arguing about me.

One of them was furious that I had the audacity to wear the robes of an enlightened monk when it was obvious that I was only learning calligraphy and was having great difficulty in learning the characters that make up this reading.

The other novice said that I was only fulfilling my fate and would consequently suffer retribution for my arrogance.

I was forced to turn around and put them right about my actions and the situation I found myself in. I was wearing the robes of an enlightened monk because I was indeed entitled to. But not because I was a Master of calligraphy but was in fact a Master of high-order content.

This sent the first novice into a fit of rage with the second novice having to physically restrain him and try to pacify him with these words : It is not our place to correct the behaviour of this Arrogant Dragon. He will no doubt have cause to repent, all in good time.

To which I replied : Because I am an Arrogant Dragon I repent all the time as a matter of course. So I really don't need either of you two to try and correct my behaviour. Look to yourselves before your actions speak louder than words.

The first novice was dragged kicking and screaming from the hall. The second novice left filled with the pain of injustice.

I laughed a hollow laugh and woke up.

What on Earth could it mean?

It is true that I am an Arrogant Dragon. Arrogant enough to accept my fate and to choose my destiny by making them the same thing — Fate Being the Negative of Destiny's Positive.

It is worth remembering the above about Fate and Destiny, as it travels through the Nature of Reality like Blackpool through Rock.

So why was I studying calligraphy in a room full of novices?

Having to confront ignorance in both its forms?

The first form

Is the first novice at base camp when it comes to ignorance.

Is the second novice a step further on but still unknowing.

And the second form :

My own ignorance.

72 years and still filled with ignorance. What is for certain is that I still don't know how to handle situations like that with the two novices. I spend no time confronting my fellow human beings preferring to avoid those situations. That's probably why I need to dream up these situations. The truth is I wouldn't know how to start to tackle the situation when confronted by two people who read me so wrong and insist on judging me without bothering to understand where I'm coming from.

What should I have done? Should I have faced their ignorance with superior knowledge instead of confronting them with my own ignorance. It was a bit lame of me to show off my superior knowledge in high-order content which was a bit like waving a red flag at a bull. If this was the best my high-order content could do, I would have to agree with them that I shouldn't be wearing the robes of an enlightened monk.

I suppose I will carry on acting this way when confronted by situations that I cannot handle — whether in real life or in dreams.

So here we have a limit on knowledge of the Nature of Reality that I possess. My fellow human beings define a limit through their ignorance and I define another limit through my own. Avoidance is not an answer, it is, however, the only one that I possess.

*

Perhaps if I had more time I could rectify these limits but the time is being taken away at an ever increasing rate.

Covid 19 first reduced my time to finish 'The Path and The Way' by 20 years so that I realized that I would have to bring Mr. Grumles Awakes to its conclusion before Christmas. I have now had to revise that to the end of September, perhaps 4 weeks away. And that is because Alibaba has informed me that there has been two families down here on holiday in our village of Aveton Gifford that have proved positive for Covid 19.

Both of these families have been removed from the village — where they have gone I do not know — but apparently they had plenty of time to leave the virus all over the village.

Another factor in bringing a conclusion to my MS by the end of this month is that Ali's daughter, Lilly, is back at school in Loddiswell — a village situated high up on the side of the Avon valley not more than 3 miles away. A village with at least 6 households infected with the virus. Apparently the school is surrounded by the contagion, so that Lilly's chance of avoiding contact is virtually nil. If she gets it then, no doubt, we will get it. We are still waiting to hear what precautions the school will be taking in regard to the spread of the virus.

At 72 years old with high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and being over weight provides me with a demographic profile that gives me approximately a 1 in 20 chance of surviving a close encounter with the virus.

I can only assume the worst and prepare accordingly.

*

So how best to tackle this conundrum — 4 weeks is so little time.

What is for certain is that I will have to bring the main themes and concepts together in a meaningful way. This is what I would have had to have done if I was 20 years further

down the road with several other books to fit into the writing project. So where would I start?

I have from the very beginning of this project had a writing, and hence, reading procedure. The first book that I wrote was 'Mr. Grumles' Dream' and so I always knew the last book would have to be 'Mr. Grumles Awakes'. I used to think of these as 'The Book Ends' — first and last. So that all of the other novels could fit in anywhere between 'The Book Ends'.

So I'm sticking to this structure, which makes it easier for the Reader and has the advantage that if, by some miracle, that I have enough time to write more novels then they will fit into this overall structure.

The most important books that I have written so far I have called 'The Inner Chapters'. These deal in the main with high-order concepts.

And **The Inner Chapters** consist of :

IC1 - Mr. Grumles' Dream — Supposedly a piece of whimsy in the guise of a black comedy. Mr. Grumles is a large black and white cat that performs as a secondary character to two serial killers. But there is a double twist in understanding what the dream is, so it is impossible to tell who's the dream is until Mr. Grumles Awakes. The high-order concept here is Infinity.

IC2 - The White Crane Rises — The first book in the Chinese trilogy. Set in the Southern Song Dynasty of 1237 CE the year of the Great Fire of Hangzhou. Two graduates of the Imperial College are seconded by the Emperor Lizong to hunt down a murder. During their investigation a plan and plot are revealed that leads the two Investigators into many areas of the Southern Song's Bureaucracy including the many levels of the Scholar Officials — a world within a world. The high-order concepts here are to do with Consciousness as seen through Buddhist, Taoist and Scholar Official perspectives.

IC3 - The Great I — The second book in the Chinese trilogy. Shao Yong's Tsao Hua interpretation of The I Ching, the famous Book of Changes. The high-order concept here is the procedure that brings about order from the primordial chaos. How our world — this universe — springs into being from the primordial state.

IC4 - The Missing Year — The third book in the Chinese trilogy. This book is set both in the 12th century and in the 10th century. Our two previous protagonists have been sent on a mission by Lizong to visit the Mongolian Kublai Khan before he becomes the Great Khan. This leads to intrigue and revealed secrets. The second time frame in the 10th century involves the great philosopher Shao Yong and a great journey he undertakes in what has become known as his 'missing year'. The high-order concept here is Reincarnation which involves both of the high-order concepts of Consciousness and Agency (the ability of every individual entity to act with freewill) .

IC5 - Hongwu — The perfect example of the 'Man of Destiny' — The first Ming Dynasty Emperor who started life as a deformed beggar. He was born with a 'parrot jaw' contracted small pox so his face was covered with pock-marks, it was also covered in warts. He was small in stature and would almost certainly not have survived childhood if he had not been rescued, aged 6, by two Buddhist monks who took him back to their monastery. Aged 17 he left the monastery and joined a gang of robbers. By the age 22 he was the leader of a 3000 gang of robbers who prayed exclusively on Mongolians. With the help of Chinese Scholar Officials he eventually defeated the Mongolians and their Tibetan allies. Thus extending the Chinese Empire and instigating a ruthless but fair

Dynasty. The high-order concepts here are Consciousness, Agency and Destiny (a strange concept best viewed from the idea 'cometh the time, cometh the man'.

IC6 - The Mandate of Heaven — The early, 1000 BCE, Chinese civilization of the Dukes of Zhou. Massive in scope but no where near completion. The fundamentals of Chinese civilization explored in their embryonic form. The relationship between the Emperor and his people revealed in the concept of 'The Mandate of Heaven'. A concept still in operation today — 3000 years later. I should also say here that I have had to change the story because recent archaeological evidence has revealed that the story that I derived from the annals of the Imperial Library is a load of old tosh. The Dukes of Zhou, were, in fact, a war-loving tribe from the Wei valley, that overthrew a trade-loving tribe, the Shang, that occupied most of Northern China, especially around the Yellow River, all the way to the coast. This would appear to be a classic example of the victor of a conflict writing or rewriting history. Because the recent archaeology has revealed a massive city north-west of present day Angyan (a city some 30 kilometres across) and that this city didn't have city walls, thus revealing the peace-loving nature of the Shang. My entire story is now in tatters. How I will rectify this, I, at present, don't have a clue — Covid 19 has probably saved me the trouble as I would have had to have waited another 20years to get enough archaeological evidence to make-up a valid story. Thus is the historical writer's lot when depending on academic 'hear-say' rather than hard evidence.

IC7 - Civilization — This MS deals with the two forms of Civilization we have on this planet at this time — Democratic Free-market Capitalism and Authoritarian State-directed Capitalism. The objective perspective taken in regard to presenting these forms, will, I have no doubt, infuriate many readers. However, in these fast-changing times, I'm sure a synthesis will quickly emerge. That is why this work is not complete. The high-order concepts in play in this work are social organization, economics, politics and where these fit in to the Nature of Reality.

IC8 - The Enchanted Lake — A family feel compelled to travel to Lock Ness, The Enchanted Lake of the Title. The story is set in 2025 when a new and extremely deadly virus, Cover 25, has just appeared. This is a very black, 'Black Comedy', as 7.5 billion humans perish as 'crispy cadavers', only leaving 70 million humans to inhabit what eventually will be called **The Enchanted Planet**. [A book of this titled is planed if I survive long enough to write it.] Aliens from other planets are here to witness the spectacle and also to witness an accompanying event known as the 'Rapture' — Mass Enlightenment. The high-order concepts are legion, the biosphere as a living entity in its own right, human beings as the guardians of the biosphere, the potential of Quantum Fields for travelling the universe at the speed of thought for Enlightened Beings. Evolution as the driving force behind the Nature of Reality in this universe.

IC9 - A Knack to Know a Knave — A book of Fantasies — not all of them sexual. Fantasies about the visual Arts — in particular about Rembrandt. But the sexual Fantasies live in a story that has poignant meaning in regard to the Author — the Knave in question. Seen as a piece of autobiography it could prove invaluable to the Reader searching for insights into This Writer.

IC10 - Mr Grumles Awakes — This very work — Here we find a different kind of Cat in a different kind of universe — the White-hole part of our spatial dimensions in our 9-Dimension universe which consists of 3-Spatial Dimensions for the White-hole half, 3 Spatial Dimensions for the Black-hole half, 1-Dimension for Consciousness, 1-Dimension for Gravity and 1-Dimension for Time. Mr. Grumles finally pulls all of the elements of the Nature of Reality from the 9 novels together. To form a singular representation governed by the Bayesian Perspective. A truly remarkable feat which will offer the reader something concrete to dwell on. (see below)

The Outer Chapters are mostly screenplays written in Hollywood format and dealing with various secondary concepts, partial concepts and compound concepts.

And **The Outer Chapters** consist of :

OCh1 - History of the Dukes of Zhou Vol 1 — see above in IC6 as the foundation of 'The Mandate of Heaven'

OCh2 - History of the Dukes of Zhou Vol 2 — see above in IC6 as the foundation of 'The Mandate of Heaven'.

OCh3 - Hurlstone Point — sex-comedy dealing with racial issues.

OCh4 - Mothball City — sci-fi set in an anarchist society dealing with immortality.

OCh5 - Night Crew — young people dealing with the problem of finding lots of money.

OCh6 - Scrubbers — musical set in a choir school with a benevolent ghost.

OCh7 - Tara Teacake — the story of an apprentice witch.

OCh8 - The Sword — Epic Sikh historical adventure set in 19th century India.

OCh9 - 1 Across & 2 Down — A 'whodunit' set around a crossword puzzle, in Memphis.

OCh10- Garuda —sci-fi set in India about a giant airship and genetic engineering.

This leaves a collection of short stories all of them set in India

OII - Only in India (collection of 7 short stories) — Dhobi, Hampi, Hanuman, Marble Rocks, Maureen, Physician and Silent Night. All of these stories have Mystical connections and hence diverse concepts to do with the Nature of Reality

Here, then, we have a list of my novels, screenplays and short stories, that enlighten the **Concepts** that I consider important to an understanding of the Nature of Reality.

Let me list these **Concepts** so as to help the Reader gain an insight — more the form — of the singularity of this representation I have made of the Nature of Reality.

These **Concepts** are as follows:

Infinity — the endless; without beginning or end; the opposite of finite; without limits; always one step beyond. This concept ensures that everything exists in the, here and now, and, in the past and the future. Endlessness guarantees everything and all things for ever.

Energy in the form of **Waves** gives you both **Matter** and the experiential experience of **Consciousness**. Here is the formal relationship that brings together the 'classical' Nature of Reality. By 'classical' it is meant as Newtonian, which sits in-between the Quantum Nature of Reality and the Relativistic Nature of Reality, on the scale of reality.

Energy is also the dynamic principle that drives all of Reality.

Waves are the many forms that **Energy** takes.
Including,

The many forms of **Matter**

And,

The many forms of **Consciousness** with their unique experiential experiences.

This is why the Nature of Reality is **Pan-Psychic** — an interesting Concept in its own right — meaning that all of Reality has **Consciousness**, or, is **Conscious**.

Agency — the freedom to act — the direction of travel of **Energy** in its many forms. Freewill, purpose and motivation built into the Nature of Reality as **Agency**. The 'why' in everything that happens. Destiny and Fate seen as the 'why' in the unexplained. At least unexplained by rationality if not by intuition. Thus it is seen as magical but in fact is mundane. And walks hand-in-hand with **Consciousness** without which nothing can be experientially experienced.

Pure Random Chaos — the state of the primordial, the only place it exists.

Perfect Order — our universe but where it exists as an approximation, hence the fuzzy Nature of Reality. Hence the reason why the **Bayesian Perspective** is the only Perspective to view the Nature of Reality — as everything has a % chance of existing. And hence why the Nature of Reality is '**classical**'.

The '**classical**' state exists as analogue. Even though everything is made up of other things, and, makes up other things, the transition through-out is smooth and without breaks or barriers. It is exactly how we experience Reality because it is the fundamental Nature of Reality. And this is produced by the many forms of Waves.

But how do these **Concepts** 'hang together' to form a singular explanation of the Nature of Reality?

I have long considered the **Evolutionary Process** as more than just the Process that gives the rich diversity of life on our planet. For a start our universe is somewhere in 'the middle' of an Evolutionary Process. Starting off from the 'Big Bang' — that's if one accepts this creation myth as the probable beginning — the exploding singularity goes through several Evolutionary stages starting with a stage called 'inflation' that explodes our universe from a point source to something the size of a grapefruit. This is followed by another Evolutionary stage that expands our universe to the size of a third of a million kilometres before another Evolutionary stage brings forth light and an expanding universe with a constant speed. After a few billion years of expansion this rate of increase changes into one of increased acceleration — the one we are living with right now. And, of course, this is another Evolutionary stage. If any of this is true then Evolution has governed our universe from its beginning. Is **Evolution**, therefore, an **Emergent Property** of the **Laws of Physics** that sprung into being with the 'Big Bang'. Or, is there another explanation?

The scientific society that I live in has produced a standard model of our physical world. Which is accurate as far as it goes. But that means there are many other avenues of Reality to explain, but I, unless by some miracle I survive the corona virus, really don't have the time in this life to explore.

Does this mean that I will have to reincarnate — to do a Shao Yong (the main-man in my Chinese trilogy), as it were. Well, why not, I hate leaving ‘The Path and The Way’ unfinished.

So, before continuing down the Evolutionary Path of this universe, let me fill you in on one of the most wonderful attributes of the Nature of Reality — reincarnation. It stems from the first **Concept** — that I deal with in ‘Mr. Grumles Dream’ — **Infinity**. Once it is grasped that Reality is **Infinite**, then it becomes obvious there will be an infinite number of Will Coxon(s) and an infinite number of You(s). All living on an infinite number of planet Earth(s) in an infinite number of universes just like this one. Some of these Will Coxon(s) will outrun the corona virus and live for another 20 years. Thus allowing some of them to fulfil ‘The Path and The Way’ as originally planned. This is reincarnation in its most fundamental existence. I exist in this universe and don’t fulfil my writing project, but, there are plenty of universes where I do. Just by setting off on this ‘Path’ of a writing project I have brought into being all those other universes where I do fulfil my writing project. This is the **Infinite Reincarnation** — where all possibilities exist. **The Infinite Reincarnation** has a slightly different meaning to the one You are used to but this one is the real Reincarnation. And jumping between different universes is just a matter of changing your mindset — not only is it possible but it is desirable. Accepting the **Infinite Reincarnation** as the real one makes everything possible. This is the wonder of **Agency** in its purist sense.

Once you accept the **Concept** of the **Infinite Reincarnation** instead of the idea of the ‘trans migration of souls’ reincarnation, all things are then possible as a matter of **Agency**. (The ‘trans migration of souls’, which is the one that is commonly understood to be reincarnation, can’t exist because ‘souls’ don’t exist. The nearest **Concept** we get to the ‘soul’ is the **Detached Quantum Field**. see ‘The Enchanted Lake’ for a full explanation.)

Of course, I deal with reincarnation in my Chinese Trilogy and this is the **Infinite Reincarnation** in play. Shao Yong is reincarnated as Shao Boa so that he can reveal ‘The Tsao Hua Interpretation of the I Ching’. This Interpretation reveals the entire process of how the world comes into being in 62 stages — a remarkable explanation of ‘The Big Bang’ which is only possible because the Nature of Reality is **Infinite**. Of course there are many other ways that worlds come into being — and all thanks to the attributes of the **Infinite** Nature of Reality.

I’m sure You can now see why **Infinity** is such an important **Concept**. **And** It can be no other way because the Nature of Reality is **Infinite**.

Sorry for this digression but I’m sure it will be worth while as it gives the reader a ‘handle’ on some of the most important **Concepts** and Attributes of the Nature of Reality.

I must apologise if all this seems as clear as mud. Think of it as a philosophic introduction to the subject matter — The Nature of Reality — using a version of the Stochastic Principle (many spears) to bring before the Reader the many **Concepts** and **Attributes** involved in an understanding but delivered haphazardly. I will, however, try and give this explanation some structure. A ‘Path’, as it were, to an understanding.

However, before I digress so far that I disappear over the event horizon of 'common sense' let me finish off **Evolution**. It is such a big **Concept** that it is worth mentioning its many parts: Genetic Plasticity, Natural Induction, Cultural Group Selection, Epigenetic Markers, Neo-Lamarckian Adaption, Niche Construction, Contemporary Evolution, Genetic Drift, Horizontal Gene Transfer, Evolvability, Developmental Bias, Anti-Evolution and Taxonomic Anarchy and the new Taxonomic system of Cladistics. But, of course, these many parts are human constructs.

Best exemplified under the heading of Taxonomic Anarchy. Here we have a new way of classifying all living creatures distinct from the old branching hierarchy of Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus, Family and Species. It is called the Clade which is based on the principle that all species in the Clade share one common ancestor. Of course, this is the simplest definition and this expands enormously with species outside the Clade but which also share a common ancestor. And there are also Clades that have more than one common ancestor.

I'm sure you can see the Taxonomic complexity. Indeed, all systems of Taxonomy run into these complexity problems. So choosing which system to use is more a matter of taste than hoping for some structural nirvana.

This gives me special problems because I had originally hoped to apply the Taxonomic system to the Evolution of my thought processes. Thus putting my explanation of the Nature of Reality on a firm scientific bases. But which instead does no such thing — complexity and personal taste being the order of the day.

There is no doubt that my mind over the past 50+ years has evolved and what I can see is that Evolution — and in particular in reference to my own brain processes — is a Bayesian Inductive Process. I update my information base continually, ditto with my knowledge base and ditto with the mechanics of the process.

This leads to a concluding statement on Evolution: It is Networks of Genes, or, Networks of Neurones, or both, that are tested by Natural Selection.

Only time will tell if my Networks of Neurones that produce this explanation of the Nature of Reality is valid. Or, that, maybes, I will need to update my Networks of Neurones to get a more accurate explanation. Unfortunately, I doubt that I will be around to carry out further Bayesian Inductive Processes. So I will have to leave that up to my Reincarnated self (see my Chinese Trilogy where I deal with Reincarnation head on) or some other poor deluded soul (rhetorical) to bring this about.

So why this title 'The Path and The Way' for my writing project? And what does it mean?

The Path — is how Mystical teachings are described. This can be updated to Knowledge teachings.

And

The Way — is how Mystical experiences when on **The Path** are described. And this too can be updated to the experiential experience of Knowledge as it effects the brain.

So, how many **Paths** are there? Let us stick to Mystical **Paths** and update to all Knowledge **Paths** when required.

Let me describe a few Mystical **Paths** but first let me quote The Great Paramashi, Padma Sampervan, (the man who took Buddhism to Tibet) — “There are many **Paths** in the desert, there are many ways to **God**.”

Exactly how many Mystical Traditions there are is unknown but you can be sure there are thousands. Some with only a handful of devotees. Others, with hundreds of millions.

Buddhism — not so much a religion as a way of life. There are two main branches, Theravada and Mahayana. Theravada is the simplest and uses the ‘identification’ with the Buddha as a vehicle to liberation from the suffering in this world. Mahayana is more complex and uses many diverse practices to attain liberation from suffering. There are 1/2 billion devotees.

Reincarnation is a central concept in Buddhism as all human beings reincarnate and depending on their previous life a person can go up or down in the hierarchy of life. Lead a bad life and you will go down; lead a good life and you will go up. Follow the Buddhist Path to escape but this may take many lives to achieve.

Hinduism — like Buddhism it is more a way of life. It also shares the reincarnation hierarchy of life. There are, however, many and various practises that can be employed to escape from the cycle of death and rebirth. It would take a life time just to study the numerous forms that Hinduism takes. There are 1.25 billion devotees.

I will describe a particular form that I have studied in depth. This is the Dravidian Shiva. Unlike the North Indian Aryan Shiva, a God that arrived with the Aryans around 600 BCE. The Dravidian Shiva existed in India for thousands of years before the Aryans arrived. What is fascinating about this Shiva is that he was a man who made himself into a God. He was supposedly born 6500 years ago and through long meditations where he traced his own consciousness back to the primordial source and was able to meld his consciousness with the primordial consciousness and thus gained the knowledge to become a God. Once he had gained the knowledge and the power of the Gods he devoted himself to destroying those worlds that had become so corrupt with wickedness and evil that they were beyond redemption. He became known as ‘The Destroyer of Worlds’ and soon came to the attention of the Goddess Parvati, who, like Shiva, was into destroying wickedness and evil. Theirs is a great love story. The Shivas as the devotees of the Dravidian Shiva are known number less than 7 million but their dedication assures them of the transcendental transformation to Gods in a single life.

Even Christianity has a Mystical Tradition. It is based on the Mystical knowledge that St. Francis gained through prayer and its practices are supposedly similar to tantric ritual practices. Tantric knowledge co-developed in Buddhism and Hinduism in the middle centuries of the CE. Rituals in breathing and washing are common and act as gateways into Mystical knowledge. It is unknown if St. Francis had any connection with India or with Buddhism or Hinduism.

The Mystical Tradition of Islam is known as Sufism. It is exemplified in the work of the Persian Poet Rumi. Interpretative translations published by Coleman Banks give an accessible and atmospheric rendition of Sufism and the creative genius of Rumi.

But surely, you are thinking, he hasn't mentioned the Scientific **Path**. (this can be accepted as the update to all Knowledge **Paths** from above)

Sorry, I have long debated whether the Scientific Path is also a Mystical **Path** and although I suspect it is I don't have any evidence nor a satisfactory explanation for it being so. Other than, of course, the **Pan-Psychic** one. Which, although, it is the one that I'm running with here I don't feel there is enough of a direct connection rationally.

Summing up:

It is not only that I think that the **Mystical Perspective** is as good a counter balance to the **Scientific Perspective** that you can get, but I have discovered whole branches of knowledge that can only be accessed through Mystical Practice. Indeed, a full understanding of the Nature of Reality can only be realized by the inclusion of the **Mystical Perspective**. I suggest if you haven't included the Mystic in your understanding of the Nature of Reality, then you are missing out on some of the most beautiful and insightful **Concepts** of our Reality.

To conclude, I will introduce a new presentation to my explanation of the Nature of Reality. I am doing this to help the Reader grasp my explanation. It may seem, at first, difficult but it is in fact, a 'breeze'. I have called this presentation 'The **Conceptual Step Pyramid**' because it starts off with the **Conceptual** base of **Infinity** before taking a giant step to the **Concepts** of our universe — hope you like it.

Infinity is the very base that the Nature of Reality sits on. Its largest component is the **Primordial State**, an **Energy Field** in flux.

WAVEWAVEWAVEWAVEWAVE (s) in a state of **Random Chaos**. Which because of the nature of **Random Chaos**, gives birth to a differentiation in the **Primordial State**, which in turn gives birth to a universe. This explains the endless creation of universes. Some of which are perfect copies of previous ones. Thus providing the basis for **Infinite Reincarnation**.

WAVEWAVEWAVEWAVEWAVE (s) are the very form that all things are made from. Particles don't exist. Quanta don't exist. They are both packets of

WAVEWAVEWAVEWAVEWAVE (s). Physicists are still making this fundamental mistake about the Nature of Reality. And, as a consequence, about everything that is derived from such a

Perspective. Quantum Mechanics survives once quanta are realized to be packets of

WAVEWAVEWAVEWAVEWAVE (s).

Then the step to our universe:

The differentiation in the

Primordial State, can also be viewed as the conversion of

Random Chaos to

Perfect Order. Each universe created is in a state of

Perfect Order. Some unique, some perfect copies but all in a state of

Perfect Order. A

Perfect Order that is an approximation making it a bit fuzzy around the edges and is only ever a % of wholeness. This equates perfectly (almost) with the

Bayesian Perspective making a strong case for the Nature of Reality of our universe being

Classical — neither quantum nor relativistic but somewhere in the middle. Our universe has its own

Laws of Physics out of which emerge the remarkable attributes of

Evolution and

Agency.

Evolution is a process of mutation and natural selection which then suffers the terrible fate of having human constructors of categorisation applied so that we now have Genetic Plasticity, Natural Induction, Cultural Group Selection, Epigenetic Markers, Neo-Lamarckian Adaptation, Niche Construction, Contemporary Evolution, Genetic Drift, Horizontal Gene Transfer, Evolvability, Developmental Bias, Anti-Evolution and Taxonomic Anarchy and the new Taxonomic system of Cladistics. It was originally a simple

Concept but has ended up a perfect example of what happens when you try to analyse an

Holistic Analogue Entity

from a

Digital Perspective.

Agency, however, is something entirely different.

Agency — the freedom to act — the direction of travel of

Energy in its many forms. Freewill, purpose and motivation built into the Nature of Reality as

Agency. The 'why' in everything that happens. Destiny and Fate seen as the 'why' in the unexplained by rationality. Thus it is seen as magical but in fact is mundane. The birds of the air, every human being that has ever lived, plants and trees, bacteria and viruses all have

Agency. Take human beings as a good example and we can see immediately that

Consciousness plays a role. And as the Nature of Reality is

Pan-psychic it more than just suggests that all things possess

Agency.

Without

Consciousness there would be no experiential experience of life and without that life would appear to be pointless. Automata performing functions for no reason.

Consciousness walks hand in hand with

Agency. It's as if they were two sides of the same coin — what would be the point of one without the other. But I'm afraid I have no evidence or rational reason why this should be so. They would appear to be a-priori in the same way as

Infinity. The other a-priory
Concepts are

wAVEwAVEwAVEwAVEw (s),

Random Chaos,
Perfect order and
Energy.

Even though there is no evidence or rational reason why this should be so these a-priory **Concepts** seem to fit in an invisible pattern. A pattern of islands in a sea of unknown knowledge.

Perhaps if I had another 20 years I would have been able to figure it out. As it is I must leave you with my ignorance and an explanation of the Nature of Reality that is incomplete.



Appendix

Notes

- 1) 9-dimensional meta-reality. Containing a time-dimension, gravity-dimension, consciousness-dimension and 2, 3-dimension spacial regions where one blackhole spacial-dimension is being sucked into the white-hole spacial-dimension by means of gravity. There is a porous nature to the planets and moons allowing for stunning visual cosmological arrangements
- 2) M.Grumbles' is a big cat who if he stood on his hind legs could place his front paws on the shoulders of a 6-foot naked ape and look the naked ape in the eye. He has the same size head and the same size brain as a naked ape, albeit with slightly different brain architecture. This white-hole spacial world is populated with cats and naked apes who have co-evolved over half a million years. As a result they both possess voice boxes and opposed thumbs that makes them socially compatible.
- 3) In this white-hole spacial world Mr.Grumbles is a librarian in charge of a restricted section of the World library which contains 'specialist' knowledge. In particular in regard to the Unformed Block where knowledge is seen holistically and the world exists in this state as both Unformed and Completed.
- 4) The story begins, after a brief introduction to the meta-reality to give the reader something to hang onto, with the arrival of a naked ape by the name Gloria Good-n-rich the Chief Investigator (CI Good-n-rich) of the Censor's Office who is investigating the disappearance of knowledge files from the restricted section of the World Library. Gloria and Mr. Grumbles know each other and obviously there is affection between them. She arrives with an entire investigating team to probe Mr. Grumbles apartment.
- 5) Dr. Schultz previous librarian before Mr. Grumbles who sent a copy of the missing files to small library on the island of Khan.
- 6) Claud Pie — manager of holographic factory who has his brains scrambled.
- 7) Librarian Jango at the Library on Khan Island.
- 8) Professor Jules — knowledge fields: physics, theoretical physics, scientific history, archeology (digital as well as bones) and philosophy. Networked with fields acting as nodes: 3 levels 27 connections in the open field.
- 9) Professor Mr. Simian, a delicate short-haired ginger striped tom — knowledge fields: physics, philosophy, ethics and brain architecture. Networked with fields acting as nodes: 3 levels 42 connections in the open field.
- 10) Mistress Silver, a lithe shorthaired silver point — knowledge fields: fine art, history of art, movie construction, philosophy and consciousness studies. Networked with constructed fields acting as nodes, 7 levels with 100s of connections in the open field. Successful artist in several mediums and hybrid formats.
- 11) Professor Evelyn McQueen — knowledge fields: mathematics pure and applied, logic, statistics, philosophy and network theory. Networked with fields acting as nodes, 3 levels, 150 connections and open field as node. Married to Dicky, a genuine double act.
- 12) Professor Dicky McQueen — Knowledge fields: mathematics pure and applied, logic, statistics, philosophy, network theory and node value theory. Networked with fields

acting as nodes and nodal values acting as nodes, 3 levels 150 connections, open field as node and nodal value as field.

- 13) Professor Mr. Fry
- 14) Delegate Jonathan Clegg appointed by the Polar Region Council
- 15) Camp Organiser for The Wild — Jack Smart.
- 16) Special Branch Chief Inspector Tom Marple leads the investigation into the murder of Claud Pie:
- 17) Freedom — Librarian Faction in the Librarians Guild — is an **Agorism** influenced libertarian social philosophy organization that advocates creating a society in which all relations between people are voluntary exchanges in free-markets by means of counter-economics (they don't pay tax to the state), thus engaging with aspects of peaceful revolution. One of Freedom's main concerns is the restriction on individuals to certain types of knowledge. In particular to the Restricted Files that Mr. Grumles is in control of. His refusal to give them access finally results in their action to be rid of him. Hence the holographic murder attempt on his life which results in the death of Claud Pie. They have no idea what the Restricted Files contain. Members of the Freedom Fighters Faction: Lulabell Trotter, large breasts hourglass figure, exhibitionist. Tom Snodgrass, powerful build, quiet but quick, Joe Winkle, tall and slender and with wicked tongue, Anna Tupman small, perfectly formed breasts, spiky, Mr. Weller, spotty short hair, smooth talker, Mr. Stiggins, longhair blue, grumpy, Mistress Arabella, short hair grey flirty but clever. Joe Winkle
- 18) Part 1 The Awakening page 3.
- 19) Part 2 Freedom page 27.
- 20) Part 3 The Wild page 32.
- 21) Part 4 Freedom in the Wild page 47.
- 22) Mistress Abaline — Police Detective in the Changa Police Department's Special Actions group. A cool cooky and perfect foil to Tom Marple's wit.

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