

The Enchanted Lake

by

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Chapter 1

The Narrow Road To The North

Zen can be said to be about the Relationship
Between The Self –
Our Inner Subjective World –
And, the Outer Objective World.

Zen can also be said to be about the Endless
Nowness of Being – living always in the moment.
Experientially Experiencing Every Moment of
The Endless Nowness of Being as a Mystical
Experience.

Zen Koans are tools for shaking up the mind to
Gain new Insights into the Nature of Reality.
They often place Concepts, Ideas and
Observations, in Juxtapositions,
To gain these new Insights,
And in turn,
To gain the Experiential Experience of The
Mystic!
Where The Mystic is the Experiential
Experience of Reality En Total, In Nowness.
And, as such, It Is:
A single moment that lasts forever.

– Wild-man Willy

From the Book: ‘The Enchanted Lake’



Noise can be heard coming from all over Alibaba’s house. Argumentative voices along with an assortment of crashes and bangs mingle in some sort of pained symphony of lulls and crescendos inside a hidden tune that defies comprehension.

Lilly, Alibaba's 12 year old daughter, springs forth an aria of anguish, "This is my bag and I will decide what goes in it."

Alibaba's frustration harmonises with Lilly's aria in a great clash of what can only be called pained expression, "But you are hardly likely to need any sort of bathing costume let alone two."

"Why not? I thought we were going to a lake."

"Yes, but it's probably a dirty stinky old lake that you wouldn't want to swim in, anyway."

"Alright then, I'll only take my new bikini and that way at least I'll be able to get a good tan all over."

"We're going to Scotland. I don't think they have sunshine up there. And just think of the midges. They'll eat you alive."

"What midges?"

"The ones that Scotland is famous for." Alibaba holds up Lilly's bikini, "Did you try this on?"

"Of course I tried it on. It covers my bits without revealing too much. It might be a bit skimpy around my bum but a bit of 'builder's bum' on a 12 year-old girl can be quite sexy — don't you think."

The shocked silence is quickly followed by a sergeant major's barked order, "That's it. You are definitely not taking the bikini. I won't have you flaunting your body in front of 'God knows who'."

"You're not referring to 'dirty old men', are you?" Lilly spits out a reply, "They can't help it if they like the more..." waits a beat for effect, "immature body."

Alibaba's mouth falls open and remains there as she can't think of what to say next.

"You know what your trouble is mum. You've forgotten what it was like when you were 12."

"I'm afraid Lilly's right, Ali. *You* have forgotten. And *you* should remember that proto-teens are even more precocious than their teen rivals. So you shouldn't let her wind you up." This voice of authority comes from a rugged 50 year old man now standing in the doorway. His frame is clothed in a 3/4 length handwoven jacket of different hues of grey. It hangs on him well, revealing through the unbuttoned gap a dark blue t-shirt with 'DIRTY OLD MAN' in large white letters embossed across the chest (a present from Lilly). Washed out jeans make-up the rest of his covering and these play well with his tan shoes.

"What do you want?" Ali's question is wreathed in anger. Squashing her late 30s attractive face into a 'bitter and twisted' resemblance of her usual self.

"I'm here to inform you that both camp-vans are parked outside and ready to be loaded." Wild-man Willy says this with the applied voice of a 1950s station master

announcing the arrival of the 4:50 from Paddington. The smile on his rugged face brings forth a beautiful smile from his dearest friend; the wonderful, if mega precocious, Lilly.

Squashing her way into the room past the Wild-man, Gran takes up an aggressive stance, then, without turning around, points to Willy by jerking her thumb over her shoulder, "Do we have to take him and his rat?"

"Gran, it was as much his idea as anyones" Pleads Ali.

"How many times must you be told. It's not a rat. It's a mouse!" Says Lilly, then more under her breath, "Dementia. I think it's time to send for those brochures for Mad House Mansions."

"I heard that, my girl. I'm neither deaf nor doo-ally. And I'd just like to let you know not to come to me and complain when the rat bites poor little Olly's face off."

Ali is reminded of something important at the mention of her new baby. And, eventually, through her 'baby brain' psychosis, she utters, "Where is Olly?"

"It's alright, Mum. He's with 'High-maintenance' Hannah. And she's in the garden with my sippy uncle."

"I'd rather you didn't call her 'High-maintenance' Hannah. She seems to be ever-so-much a nice girl." Ali corrects her daughter.

"I didn't say she wasn't a nice girl. I was pointing out the obvious. You know what they say: if it looks 'high-maintenance' then it almost certainly is."

"I have to agree with Lilly: if it looks 'high-maintenance' then it almost certainly is." Says Willy with authority, "When I was a young man I had 3 girl-friends who were fashion models. They all looked 'high-maintenance' and they most certainly were. But of course that doesn't mean they weren't nice girls. Only that you had to be ... well ... rich, to keep them in the manner they were accustomed to."

Gran snorts a laugh, "You had 'dolly birds' for girl friends. Don't make me laugh. You live in a fantasy world. Scrubbers and whores, more like."

"Thank you Gran for that insightful exposé of my early emotional life. Perhaps you would like to give us a rendition of your early emotional life." Willy plays his trump card.

Gran rounds on him in fury, "You know nicely there's never been anyone except Richard. Not since I was 13 and he was ..." She gets a bit emotional, "He was 15."

"But Gran, does that mean you were having sex when you were 13?" Says Lilly in mock surprise.

"Shut your fowl little mouth. We made love in those days. Something that people don't understand these days. Making love is romantic and precious."

"Even though it looks a lot like having sex." Lilly applies the coo-de-gras.

Gran sinks onto Lilly's bed and falls silent.

“Sorry Gran.” Says Lilly as she drops down beside her putting an arm around her shoulders, “You know I’m a loud mouthed idiot that says stuff without thinking and for no other reason than that I can. Most people would die for the kind of relationship that you and Grandad have. And no doubt I’ll be joining them soon. Just as soon as my love juices start to flow.”

Gran gives Lilly a kiss, “It’s like a tidal wave. Unstoppable and rich beyond words. And you never know when it’s going to bite.”

“Sounds better than all that messy sex.”

“It makes the sex ... wonderful. Having sex with the one you love is the best thing ever.” A tear runs all the way down Gran’s chin.

“And what are you two just sitting there for. Have you packed? Are you ready to go?” Alibaba’s voice is close to anger.

Gran and Lilly get up and hug each other before getting on with the tasks at hand.

“And where are those two with my Olly.” Ali shouts across the room.

Just in time for little Richard and his girlfriend ‘High-maintenance’ Hannah to enter the room with Olly held up at shoulder height. Everyone cheers as if at the arrival of a king.

Olly’s shocked expression is soon replaced by a laughing grin as he recognises so many of his loved ones.

*

Now it has to be said, at this juncture, about the change in Olly’s mental state, as it is soon expressed in his body, and although he can’t speak nor think in words I have attempted an interpretation of what he is thinking, “Oh Dear, I think I have pooped my pants.” This is a verifiable statement as the smell pervades the room like electrified ectoplasm.

*

“Give him to me. I’ll soon change his nappy.” Lilly sweeps Olly away from Hannah and rolls him on her bed in a bit of rough play. She quickly brings out the ‘baby things’ from under her bed and sets-to.

Gran sidles up to Willy and makes a suggestion, “Why don’t you let me hold your rat mouse for a while. I can hold his head in one hand and his body in the other.”

“Thanks Gran, but it’s time for his morning snooze. Mice need lots of sleep.”

“Well I’m sure I can arrange that on a permanent bases.” Says old ‘Rat-Killer’ through a sickly grin.

*

The reader should be aware that 'Rat Killer' is a term of endearment when applied to Gran. The incident from which the term derived happened several years previously. Gran had been in the attic having been disturbed by strange noises emanating from there. She was then confronted by the furry felon responsible for these strange noises and, without a moments thought, used the 24 ounce solid steel hammer, she just so happened to have in her hand, to dispatch the vicious vermin with several blows turning it into what looked like a furry Frisbee, albeit with ears and a tail. The name had stuck as much because it had a 'romantic' ring to it as the fact that it was, indeed, true.

*

"Heavens above is that the time. It's time we weren't here." But Willy finds his way to the door blocked as Hannah gives Little Richard a hard time, "And whose bright idea was it to call me 'High-maintenance' Hannah in the first place?" Hannah's cool tones hide the quiet fury that has built up in her since she heard the reference to her being 'high-maintenance' as they were climbing the stairs.

"I'm sure who ever it was, was only joking." Says Richard in full diplomatic mode with sickly undertones.

"No I wasn't." Comes Lilly's disembodied voice.

"Who said that?" An annoyed Hannah demands.

Silence.

Then she spots Lilly's heaving body bent over Olly.

"I might of guessed." She turns to Richard, "Your little sister is a malicious fowl-mouthed bitch. So. What are you going to do about it?"

"Golden Balls won't say anything ... in case he puts his Golden Foot ... in his Golden Mouth ... and ends up with my Golden Boot shoved right up his, not so Golden, backside." Lilly punctuates this line with lots of giggles.

"You little minx." Comes back Hannah.

Lilly relents, "Oh come on down here with me and watch Olly at play. I was only having a bit of fun. You shouldn't be so sensitive." Lilly looks around at Hannah hovering over her, "Come on down. Down here next to me, and I'll show you something wonderful."

It's Hannah's turn to relent and she awkwardly drops down beside Lilly.

"You see Hannah, all human beings are Quantum Entities and that's because we're all made of molecules, atoms and sub-atomic particles like electrons and ions and other tiny stuff. These move around the body in processes like metabolism and blood circulation and other Quantum Processes. But that's not all. All of these Quantum Movements and

Quantum Entities produce Quantum Fields.” Lilly stops and looks at Hannah to see if she is following her line of reasoning, which, remarkably, she would appear to be, “Now all Quantum Fields look a bit like a Magnetic Field which is, in fact, an Electromagnetic Quantum Field. And you know what a Magnetic Field looks like?”

“I think so. I remember from science class when the teacher sprinkled iron filings onto a bar magnet (see diagram A) and the iron filings followed the magnetic lines of force coming out of both ends and joining up in the middle. Is that what you mean?”

“See, you’re not just a pretty face, after all. That was a Magnetic Field you remembered so well. Different Quantum Fields are something similar except the lines of force come out of the human body all over the place depending where the Processes are taking place. It means that each human body is surrounded by a unique Quantum Field — unique to that individual — and made up of all the Quantum Fields that each of us produce. Even little Olly here has one. And if you concentrate you can actually feel it. And what’s more he can feel yours. When mine and Olly’s Fields meet they become entangled and we get glimpses into each other’s world. We can actually feel what each of us feels. Watch this.” Lilly straitens up Olly’s head and looks deep into his eyes before saying, “Who is Lilly’s lovely boy then. Who could eat him all up. Yum, Yum. Him and his big fat tum.”

Olly is overjoyed at this, kicking out his legs and swinging his arms around while producing the most wonderful smile.

“Oh wow.” Says a stunned Hannah.

“Now watch this. I’m going to sing him the famous ‘little baby’ song.” Lilly starts in a sing-song voice, “Little baby, Little Baby, Little Baby Little Baby ... etc.” The song consists of two words, Little and Baby. It has no set tune which is made up as you go along. Not that this matters a jot. As Olly is obviously entranced; shaking himself all over in time to a tune that only he can hear. But which Lilly can feel. And now which Hannah can feel. And Hannah, ‘high-maintenance’ or not, has just got to join in.

“Will you stop playing with the baby and finish packing.”

“Oh dear, Olly. Who was that? It was that big mum-skin type thing.” Lilly points over to where Ali is standing and to Hannah’s surprise Olly follows her direction, turning his head and searching with his eyes. Once he has spotted his mum, he starts sucking hard with his white toothless gums.

“Well, we’ve lost him for good. I’m afraid I’m no competition for his mobile feeding station.” Lilly quickly finishes putting Olly’s clothes on.

Then a huge voice rends the air, “Can you all move down to the camper vans. They’re blocking the road so that the buses can’t get past.” Then in a much quieter voice and more to himself, Big Richard says, “What’s the point. This lot aren’t anywhere near ready.” Big Richard spots Willy, “Will can you come with me and move one of the vans?”

“Yeah, of course.” Willy and Big Richard head down stairs. Wave to the drivers of the buses and set off down the street to the roundabout at the end of the village. Aveton Gifford is a village constructed long before cars and buses. The bypass became essential as this delightful village is full of old world charm and narrow sections where buses and cars are unable to pass.

Willy and Richard drive their camp vans up the bypass allowing the buses a free exit.

*

Wild-man Willy, what a character, can't help but reflect on the strange circumstances that have led to this holiday destination, namely: Loch Ness. That every single member of this merry band of travellers have professed to a desire to visit this famous lake in Scotland, had already been discussed and dissected a dozen times already. Leaving no doubt that it was indeed a strange occurrence. Even the Bowden's latest adult addition in the beautiful form of 'High-maintenance' Hannah had surprised everyone by admitting that she'd had this desire from when she was a child. She assumed it was because the Loch Ness Monster was such a pull for children; but this desire, she maintained, carried on well into adulthood and was still with her now she was in her late 20s.

It had taken very little to persuade the Bowdens and their close friend, Wild-man Willy, that such a holiday was not only a good idea but was almost a necessity to satisfy this deep seated desire to visit this Scottish Lake for all of them.

Lilly, it was, that had introduced the concept driven name for the Loch by simply calling it: The Enchanted Lake. And that, because she had always thought of it as such ever since she had seen a documentary when she was a 6-year old and had latched onto the name as introduced by a member of the documentary team, "Loch Ness can be best described as an Enchanted Lake because of its many mysteries."

The Enchanted Lake, is now, how I, in one of my 3 guises, and indeed, everyone else on this journey thinks of it. It is not Loch Ness. It is The Enchanted Lake. This is a strange phenomena in itself.

As Writer, Commentator and Character, I will, in any one of these guises, hold down the truth, comment on it, or make beautiful dialogue about it. But in all three 'The Enchanted Lake' will hold a singular meaning, and one that will live down the ages as a reminder to all human beings that we are all responsible for the Natural World — we are all responsible for the Biosphere of our Blue Planet.

Let me sweep this dust behind the door before I reveal too much.

*

Back at Alibaba's house nothing has changed; conversations and arguments are still going on while packing is somehow seen as a distraction. Where it is being carried out as an act of free will — Agency — it is being done in a half-hearted manner.

Lilly, at least, has recaptured Olly's attention and is giving Hannah a more expansive view of Quantum Fields and how this relates to babies and in particular to Olly, "You have to remember that babies have very little inside their heads. They tend to feel the world around them through their Quantum Field. And they quickly learn to identify other people through their Quantum Fields. So if you want to get on with Olly, then, you will just have to spend the time opening yourself up to him so he can feel your Quantum Field and only then will he allow you to feel his Quantum Field."

“Yes, but how do you do that?”

After a moments thought, “Now you love my uncle Richard. Though God knows why when he is arrogant, selfish and self-centered.”

“Oh, but he’s not like that at all.”

“Let’s agree to differ. You love him which means that you have opened yourself up to him and allowed him in. You have in fact allowed him into your Quantum Field. And we’ll just have to assume that he’s done the same thing as he seems to be bonkers in love with you too.” Then more under her breath, “Although he could easily be lying through his perfect teeth.” Before Hannah can interrupt Lilly carries on at pace, “That feeling you have of love is like an open door into your Quantum Field. So it is with Olly. If you feel that way with him — a feeling of great love. He can sense that and then he’s liable to open up his Quantum Field to you so you can become entangled. And when he does you’ll know. Here, rest your hand gently on his stomach like this.” Lilly shows Hannah, “And gently rub him like this. Then open yourself up to him with feelings of love.”

“Have you not finished packing. Well my girl, we might just have to leave you behind.” Says Alibaba with pseudo menace.

“Oh alright.” Lilly leaves Hannah trying to make contact with Olly through his Quantum Field and starts throwing things into her bag.

But no sooner has Lilly gone, when Little Richard takes her place, “Who’s a big boy then.” Richard intones in his very best ‘baby’ voice.

“Do you mind. It’s my turn.” Hannah pleads in a sickly sulky voice.

“Listen sweet heart, Olly is my nephew, I held him in my arms when he was just a few hours old. So he and I are already good friends. Watch this.” Richard gently replaces Hannah’s hand with his own and begins rubbing his full torso with long strokes. Which after a while brings a magnificent white toothless grin to Olly’s face, “Yes, it’s your Uncle, Pumpkin Thing. And how are we today. Oh I can see how happy you are. Have you met my girlfriend. This is hard-hearted Hannah, yes it is. Sometimes known as old misery guts. Because when she doesn’t get her own way she goes into a sulk. Just look at that face.”

Both Olly and Richard turn to look at Hannah in anticipation. But before Hannah can reply Ali swoops in and whisks him away, “Come on you two, it’s time to go.”

The chaos now moves from Lilly’s bedroom to the stairs, where Ali spots Lillys football boots which are still on her daughter’s feet, “You are not going with those on your feet.”

“But Mum.”

“And what did we say about you always ‘butting’ me!”

“But Mum. You don’t understand.”

“Ah, the joy of ignorance. Get them off and get your trainers on.”

“But Mum, I have to break them in. It’s best to keep them on for 48hrs to make sure they mold to your feet.”

“Why don’t you try wearing them on your head and perhaps they’ll mold your brain into something more sensible.”

“But Mum, I have to wear them in bed tonight.”

Ali stops to think but only for a moment, “Passion killers. Yes, I can see the possibilities. But not for a 12 year old girl!” She shouts this last sentence.

“Oh, I give up.” Lilly pushes her way down the stairs and outside.

Finally, everyone is onboard.

Big Richard is driving the lead campa van with his wife ‘Rat Killer’ Gran riding shotgun. Ali and Olly are sitting behind them and further back is Little Richard and ‘high-maintenance’ Hannah.

In the following campa, Wild-man Willy is driving with Lilly acting as navigator. She has an assortment of maps on her naked knees — naked because she’s wearing her football shorts with accompanying football shirt with the number 7 emblazoned on the back — and is busy trying to arrange them in order so she can follow the journey and correct any misdirections if required.

Willy takes Squeak-Squeak out of his pocket and places him on the dashboard. Squeak-Squeak is a great named for a mouse for obvious reasons. But Squeak-Squeak is special in that he has already appeared in another story about the Bowden family. This is a children’s story known as ‘Moondrops’. (see Appendix 1 — Moondrops)

No sooner he is there, then he’s not. Being a wood-mouse he has large ears and is remarkably agile and quite capable of leaps of a metre or more. He springs into the air landing on a pair of large ‘furry dice’ hanging from the internal mirror. He has already made inroads into one of the dice and now proceeds to continuing excavating the dice’s innards. Sending cotton wool stuffing flying and landing on Lilly’s map.

“Hoy you. Hasn’t Willy taught you to clean up after making a mess.” Lilly tells Squeak-Squeak off in a happy jokey voice. She picks up his ‘droppings’ and puts them into a rubbish bag behind her seat, “Well it looks like he’s making himself a proper nest.” Then after a moments thought, “What are our sleeping arrangements going to be tonight?”

“Richard and Hannah are sleeping in the double bed at the back and you and I are sleeping on the ‘pull outs’ behind these seats.”

“Oh God. I hope they don’t start having sex. We’ll hear everything.”

“I don’t see your Uncle as an exhibitionist. And I don’t know Hannah well enough ...”

“I could see her doing it for an audience if it showed off her painted face.”

“Now I think you’re revealing your bitchy side, once more. And, after we talked about it, and, you promised that you’d give it up.”

"I know, I know. But she's such an airhead. She has to wear all that make-up just to stop her head from blowing away."

"Lilly, why do you hate her so much?"

"I don't really hate her. It's just that she's so pretty and glamorous. And I'm disappointed with my dear uncle as he's fallen for a painted trollop. I thought he had better taste than that."

"But you haven't had time to get to know her."

Lilly sighs, then a change of direction, "Don't tell me that you fancy her."

"Well," Willy produces a rather dangerous smile, "I wouldn't say no ... to ... bending her over and giving her one right up her shitta."

"Oh, My, God!" Genuine shock, "You dirty old man. It's a good job my mother's not here to hear what you've just said."

Willy laughs and Lilly laughs along with him.

"I can just imagine the look on her face as I shove my rhythm stick right in up to the hilt." Willy gloats at the thought, "And don't give me all that innocent flannel. You'd love to see that expression on her face as much as I would."

Lilly leans across and punches Willy on the shoulder but without any real conviction as she's laughing too much, "It's a good job my mother has a soft spot for you."

"Why do you think that is?"

"She knows how much you love me and for all your dirty old man talk she knows that you'd never do anything to harm me. As a consequence she sees you as an excellent educational tool when it comes to sex ... and even ... emotions. She's said as much."

"And of course she's right." Willy has a long hard think before, "I'm very fond of your mother but there's never been any sexual connotations involved. I've come to the conclusion, at least in that part of my brain that thinks about these things, that she's my younger sister. The one I never had, in my family life as I was growing up."

"So you've said. But what makes it so important?"

"You. You are in my charge. Sanctioned by your mother. She's given me a terrible responsibility. And one that I only hope that I can fulfil."

"But you've never talked about this with her."

"We don't need to. We've had enough Quantum Entanglement to know each other's mind. Just like me and you."

After a while of deep reflection Lilly turns to Willy, "Was my mother really the local bike when she was a teenager?"

"I ... suppose .. so. Why don't you ask her."

"What! And get a thick ear for my trouble. You know she's not past a bit of mother on daughter violence if she thinks it's needed."

"She certainly knows how to press your 'fear button', that's for certain."

"But why?"

"It's all good preparation for when you're a teenager. A dangerous phase not far off in your case. If I'm not mistaken."

"But why does she have to know how to press my 'fear button'?"

"To give her a fighting chance when sparring with you in your teenage metamorphose. It's the hormones. They'll make you a pain. And at least she'll have a psychological key inside of your brain when it all kicks off. Obviously your mother was taught well by her mother and no doubt you'll teach your daughter all in good time."

"I haven't got the faintest idea of what you're talking about."

Willy chuckles, "And a good thing too."

Meanwhile.

In the other camp van Gran is just about to make an important discovery.

"So," She says swivelling around in her chair so that she can face Hannah, "what does an, Assistant Director of an Art Gallery, do, exactly?"

"Oh, I organize exhibitions. Take care of sales. Make sure the artists are happy and importantly for them making sure that they get paid. Pay bills. Pay craftsmen and generally make sure everything is functioning properly."

"So how did you get a responsible job like that?"

"As a starter, I had to prove that I knew a lot about art."

"And how did you do that?"

"Actually Gran ... you don't mind me calling you Gran ... everyone else does."

"No, I don't mind. Just don't call me Rat Killer, it's too personal."

"Ok. Now where was I?"

"You were just about to tell me how you had to prove that you know a lot about art."

"Oh yes, well that's simpler than you think. I simply showed the Director my qualifications."

“Which are?”

“I have First Class Honours Degree in Art History from Goldsmiths. And a Master’s Degree from the Courtauld Institute of Art in Contemporary Art.”

“Contemporary Art? Is that all the stuff that doesn’t look like anything?”

Hannah smiles a grin, “Well it can be. But it usually refers to the stuff from the Impressionists on. You see my Degree in Art History took me from the very beginnings of art in cave paintings all the way through to the end of the 19th century. And my Master’s Degree covers me from then up until now.”

“So what’s the latest thing now?”

“Well, I suppose it’s ... still ... Conceptual Art.’

“What, all that sliced and diced fish?” Here, Gran is thinking about something she’d seen on TV about Damian Hurst.

“Yes, that sort of thing.”

“Sushi for giants. But where is the beauty in that?”

“Good question Gran. The beauty is in the concept rather than in the aesthetics of what is represented. I suppose it’s as simple as that. The Impressionists gave way to the Post-modernists like Cezanne who gave way to the Cubists like Picasso and so on down to the American Conceptualists like Andy Warhol.”

“So what comes after these Conceptualists?”

‘Another good question; because nothing has come after Conceptual Art. And that’s because everything can be seen as a concept. So, you may well ask, is that the end of art. A question that gets revived every couple of years. The last attempt was post-post — conceptual art. But that flew like a bird with no wings. It’s as if we have come to the end of the line. No more stations beyond this point because the last station is on the cliff edge above the white cliffs of Dover. Why should art come to an end right now. Did art take a wrong turn? Or have we just come to ... well ... the end. And if so why?’

“Bloody hell.” Says Gran with insightful joy, “If I can come up with the next big thing in art, then, I will be famous and of course rich.”

Hannah laughs but not in a cruel way, “You come up with the next big thing in art and I’ll give you an abortion,” She laughs, “Sorry, Freudian slip. An exhibition.”

“Deal.”

They shake hands.

“Done.”

Stops are infrequent on their journey as there is a consensus that they want to get to where they are going as quickly as possible. And so it is that they don't make a proper stop until Tebray Services in the Lake District. A rather nice location where the buildings are partly surrounded by water in the form of a small lake. Ducks are just getting up as the dawn is breaking. And our merry band of travellers — 'Reservoir Dogs' style, in what looks like slow-mo — enter the single storied, shallow roofed building for an early breakfast.

*

Full English in the main except for Hannah who is on a permanent diet has muesli and skimmed milk.

After breakfast Lilly takes some cereal outside to feed the ducks and to give some to Squeak-Squeak who has been persuaded to run around on the grass by Wild-man. The ducks think that Squeak-Squeak is some kind of play thing and try running around trying to catch him. It is all jolly good fun until a Jack Russel decides he wants to join in and as a consequence, mayhem.

With Squeak-Squeak safely in Willy's pocked, Jack the Russel goes after the ducks. With various human beings trying to bring Jack the Russel under control and some, even trying to catch him, which only makes things worse. Until Jack finally goes too close to Big Richard who, not so much kicks the little terror but hoists him on his foot and delivers the vagabond into the lake. The ducks aren't amused at this arial attack and flee in their usual half flight, half walking on water, way. The owners of Jack the Russel aren't amused either giving Big Richard several pieces of their minds. To which Big Richard replies that if they don't get control of their dog he'd hoist them into the lake as well.

*

Now it has to be said that Big Richard is big and being very fit for his 60-something years can have a fearsome persona when he wants to exercise it. But generally he is a gentle giant and much loved by all his family and friends.

*

This, altogether amusing start to the day puts everyone amongst their merry band in good humour and they are soon on their way in good spirits.

Little Richard and Hannah join Lilly and Wild-man in their campa van; taking up residence in the double bed at the back. Lilly curls up on her seat and is soon fast asleep. Leaving Wild-man Willy a quiet drive all the way to the outskirts of Glasgow where he is eventually joined by Little Richard recently woken.

This marks a change of personnel at the front of the campa with Richard taking over the driving and Hannah playing navigator with Lilly and Wild-man leaving them to it. Wild-man crashes out in the double bed with Lilly, still half asleep, on the seat behind.

Glasgow is the end of the first part of their journey. It is the only city they go through since leaving the South Hams; a city none of them know. This obviously plays a part in this campa convoy becoming lost.

*

Is it a truth that one never knows at what point one becomes lost. Is it?

*

Ali is driving and in the lead vehicle. Perhaps not the best choice as she is still suffering from 'baby-brain'; a well recognized medical condition brought about by hormones released during birth, travelling around her brain constructing holes in the memory of this poor mother thus afflicted. Asked by Big Richard and Little Richard and Hannah why she hasn't followed the signs to the A82 and/or possibly to Dumbarton she simply replies that she doesn't know Dumb Barton, whom, she swears, she has never been introduced to.

Groans and moans are then the order of the day. So much so that it awakes the rest of the crew who then join the others on the forecourt of a small petrol station that Ali has pulled into once she realises that she is lost.

Lilly spots an opportunity and visits the small shop attached to the petrol station to sample the delights of Scottish cuisine such as, "Have you got a deep fried mars bar." She asks of a small wizened man behind the counter who's blank expression is interpreted by Lilly as a sign that he is unable to comprehend her use of language and which prompts her to try out the few Scottish phrases she knows, "Ock I the new my wee beasty, have ye gut a deep fried mars bari. For I'm fair ravenous."

The blank expression remains until Willy, who has joined Lilly physically and now joins her verbally, "Hey you Jimmy. J'search por Dumbarton."

To Lilly's amazement the man points down the road and says in perfectly understandable English with only the slightest Scottish accent, "Down the road about mile. Turn right for about a half a mile and take a left to join the main road. You'll find it sign posted after that." The little man is now grinning and leans into Lilly, "Did you know, lassie, that you're wearing football boots."

"Well of course I know I'm wearing football boots. Who do you think put them on."

"Ock I the noooo." The little man says while giving Lilly an extravagant wink.

As Lilly and Willy leave the shop she whispers, "What do you think of the natives?"

"Seem friendly enough. But I suspect that they are somewhat confused by our extravagant use of the Scottish brogue."

Lilly looks back to where the little wizened man is watching them. He immediately gives her another extravagant wink accompanied by a devilish grin, "I think we should get out of here while we still can. You obviously didn't see that movie where the locals, after luring these travellers in, ate them in a kind of Mary Berry bakeoff special; hot, headless and half-baked."

“Sounds excellent. But do you think it’s a suitable movie for Squeak-Squeak. You know how sensitive he is?”

“Well it should be alright as not a single mouse is consumed. Not even a chocolate one.”

Lilly and Wild-man join the others who are in a huddle.

“Do you know this Dumb Barton?” Ali enquires of Lilly.

“No, but I know a Dumb Bowden, who just so happens to be my mother.” Lilly bubbles. Much to her mother’s annoyance.

Finally, under Willy’s instruction they get back on the road. Avoiding the town of Dumbarton they eventually pull into a carpark on the banks of Lock Lomond near the village of Luss. They are all impressed by the wild beauty and the tranquillity, considering how close they still are to Glasgow.

It is decided to make this a long stop with a chance of cooking a proper meal and catching up on proper sleep but only after a short walk around the Millennium Forest Trail.

Big Richard and Gran lag behind everyone else holding hands and having a cuddle which usually brings derision from their family; to the degree they have long avoided showing off this affectionate side to their nature. Yes, they are still ‘in-love’ even after all these years together.

Richard bends down and picks his wife up so that he can look strait into her eyes. At 6 foot 3 he’s a good 14 inches taller than her diminutive form.

“Haven’t you told anyone about your dreams?” Gran starts in.

“About Nessie?”

“Who else.”

“Of course not. I’m supposed to be the sensible one in this family. And we need at least one member to be at least blemish free when it comes to sane sensible stability. Telling them about my dreams about the Lock Ness Monster would put me behind Ali and her daughter in those stakes.”

“And way behind me.” Gran grins.

“Of course my little vermin controller. Actually you are quite sensible except for a few uncharacteristic episodes.” He gives her a kiss.

“So, is it a dinosaur or not?”

“The nearest one it looks like — and every one agrees — is the Plesiosaur. And its true its about the same size 10-15 metres long and the same shape; long neck, fat body about the size of a small car and a longish tail. But, there’s something not right about the head.”

“Don’t you find that strange. That your dream of Nessie is different from the dinosaur one.”

"I know. But my dreams are quite detailed." Richard drops her down giving her a kiss on the way, "But please, not a word to anyone."

"Then you'd better be nice to me if you want to hold onto your reputation." Gran skips off down the track.

Later

Little Richard, an experienced amateur cook, takes on Hannah as a trainee and sets-to; spagbol with fresh salad and ciabatta while the rest have a look around the village.

With the meal finished in silence, it is time for an argument to make up for the time lost.

"So who's going to do the dishes?" Ventures Lilly. Working on the principle that having suggested this course of action she wouldn't be the one to have to carry it out. How wrong can you get.

"Well volunteered my little footballer." Says her mother Ali. Knowing all too well the working of her daughter's mind.

"I suggest Little Richard and Horrible Hannah, who obviously chose to cook so that they can avoid washing up." Lilly desperately states.

"Give the mouth a rest and put on your primrose pointers and get stuck in." Big Richard is taking control, "And I'll dry."

"Oh alright, but I want it noted that I've done my share of the washing-up for this trip."

It is a good try but as no one is taking any notice, it is a rather pointless effort. They aren't listening to 'Puss in Football Boots' because there is a proper argument going on between who wants to stay the night and those who want to carry on until they reach their destination. Wild-man Willy and Ali are all for continuing, Rat Killer and Hannah are for getting their beauty sleep. The rest can't make up their minds so it is all down to Olly, who, miraculously, puts his hand up when it comes to the count and so it is that the journey is to be continued. But only after everyone has a snooze.

They arrive at Spean Bridge and after having become confused by a small road that joins the main one, they pull up by a sign post that seems to be in the wrong place. It points across the main road they've just been travelling on and down another small road.

There is something unusual about the sign itself. It is a bit 'old-fashioned', in that, instead of having just an arrow type pointer, this one has one in the shape of a hand with a pointing finger.

Willy gets out of the campa to have a closer look. And there, written in artistic and delicate letters, are the words, 'The Narrow Road to the North'.

It takes just a few moments to compute this information and a few more to comprehend the connotations associated with them to have a physical reaction take place in Wild-man's body: the hairs on his arms all stand up and they stand up on 'goose-bumps' that now cover his entire body.

“So what does it say?” Comes Lilly’s cross sounding enquiry.

“Yeah, come on read it out.” Shouts Alibaba.

“What’s keeping you ... the rat got your tongue.” From who else.

“It simply states, ‘The Narrow Road to the North’.

“So what does that mean?” Asks a slightly disturbed Lilly in lowered tones. Slightly disturbed because she knows Willy better than anyone and she can see that he is somewhat disturbed.

After what feels like an age Willy starts, “It is an unusual sign post with unusual writing on it ... and the writing refers to a famous book, written by a Zen Master by the name of Nagoya.”

“So what’s the book about?” Lilly gets in before anyone else.

Willy turns to the faces looking out of the camp vans, “Would you like me to explain it?”

There was general agreement.

“Well, Zen is a form of Buddhism. A form that places our everyday experiential experiences of ‘now’ at the very centre of our individual reality. Thus bringing us closer to the rest of reality and, as a consequence, closer to the transcendental experience of the Mystic.”

“In other words, a load of old tosh!” Spits out Gran, “Can we get a move on.”

But Gran is shouted down and Willy is implored to carry on.

“This story by Nagoya, ‘The Narrow Road to the North’, is considered to be a master work in Zen story telling, revealing in many different ways, in the same book, how Zen can lead to enlightenment.”

“So what’s the story?” Asks Hannah.

“It’s one story that contains many stories. Each of the small stories is a different insight into how the Zen approach is used by Zen practitioners. The story that contains the other stories starts off in the city of Kyoto, in the main Island of Honshu. An old Buddhist monk is passing through a market when he recognises another Buddhist monk. They greet each other like long lost friends, which to all, incense and parchment, they are. Their talk soon takes them back to their youth when they were novices together. And from there to a third friend who made up their little ‘band of brothers’.”

“Can’t you get a move on.” An impatient Gran tries to ‘jolly him along’.

“I’m sorry Gran, but the more you interrupt the longer it’s going to take.” Says an annoyed Willy, “Now where was I, oh yes. It just so happened that, Tojo Baggins, the second monk, had recently found out where, Abe Gummie, the third monk was. A chance meeting that was filled with serendipity.”

“What does serendipity mean?” Asks Little Richard.

“It means a joyful chance meeting.”

“So shouldn’t that have been a serendipitous meeting?” Says Richard being a little pedantic.

“Well actually, it should have been a serendipitous moment. Thus expressing the Zen nature of such moments.”

“Can we get on.” Comes the forlorn voice of old Rat Killer.

“Anyway, the second monk had found out that their friend, the third monk, was at a monastery in Sapoto on the northern Island of Hokkaido. And guess what!?” Wild-man Willy asks his listeners.

“They all die of boredom.” Comes back Gran, quick as a wink.

“No, not quite. They decide, there and then, to go visit their old friend. And so the next day they set off on, ‘The Narrow Road to the North’. During this journey of several hundred miles they have many adventures each one relating an insight into Zen Buddhism. Finally they arrive at the monastery in Sapato and meet up with their old friend, Abe Gummie the third monk.”

“And they all lived happily ever after. Can we go now.” Rat Killer tries but she knows and you can hear it in her voice, that it won’t mark the point of departure.

“They make a fantastic night of it. Recounting old stories and new ones. Drinking lots of saki and singing old songs. Until they fall asleep. Next morning the first monk who’s name was ... can anyone guess?”

“Frodo Nagoya.” Lilly jokes.

“That will do, as everything about this story is made up. Frodo Nagoya and Abe Gummie, the third monk, woke to find a message from the second monk saying that he had headed back as he had many things to attend to in Kyoto. After breakfast Frodo Nagoya the first monk said goodbye to, Abe Gummie, the third monk and set off on his return journey; knowing that he would not see his old friend again in this life.”

A wishful moment passes, then, “A wonderful story don’t you think.”

“Beautiful but tinged with sadness.” Says Lilly.

“And with longing.” Says Hannah in a low cool voice.

“So can we get on then?”

As if answering Gran, Olly points in the same direction as the sign.

Wild-man Willy climbs onboard the campa van and drives across the main road onto a small road at the other side following the sign post's direction. They quickly come to another main road marked: A82.

This brings cheers and a settled feeling as they all now know they are, truly on:

'The Narrow Road to the North'.



Chapter 2

Borlum

$$e^{i \text{ Pi}} = -1$$

where:

– 1 means: I am absent.

e stands for: evolution.

i is: an imaginary number dreamed up by I.

Pi is: the ratio of the perfect to the imperfect.

and

= is: the answer.

– Wild-man Willy

From the Book: The Equations of Life

*

*

Before I continue with the story I must inform you on exactly how you are supposed to read the sections on Koans and other difficult passages of an explanatory nature. Yes, you can read them in the normal way, then ponder them in their entirety if you so wish. But, because there are so many of them — as you will come to find out — I have constructed them in such a manner that all you have to do is follow the logic of language of each sentence or sometimes paragraph without trying to decipher the exact meaning. Just following the logic of the language — of the language I've used — will be enough to alter the workings of your brain so that by the time you have finished reading 'The Enchanted Lake' you will have grasped a number of concepts important in understanding The Nature of Reality; such as: Quantum Mechanics, Quantum Fields, Agency (what makes us free agents in the world), Infinity, Consciousness and several other related subjects. And all without 'breaking-a-sweat' for the reader as this process is similar to osmosis — which is a reverse form of sweating, if you think about it.

But for the writer, I must say, it has all been 'jolly-hard-work'. And I definitely need congratulating for what is a new form of writing for the 21st. century. And what is more, as 'The Enchanted Lake' is to be considered a 'modern-day' classic, then there is the need for innovative additions of this kind to play an important role in this book.

Reading the Koans and difficult technical passages in this manner has also the advantage of not spoiling the flow of the storytelling; considered to be an important element of the story tellers art, by myself and many other writers of note.

Robert Musil is a master of not spoiling the flow and is one of the many reasons he is so highly thought of as a writer throughout Europe. Though not so much here in the UK, where, although his 'flowing qualities' are not in doubt, he is considered to be suspect in his motivations when it comes to politics, social organisation and personal relations, and also, for being a 'right-smart-arse' when it comes to writing — something the English can't stand even though we have produced more 'smart-arses' than the rest of Europe put together.

However, Robert Musil is interesting for another reason, in that, he reveals the differences between English and European writers, which accounts for the noted difference between the English and the rest of Europe in terms of psychologic make-up. The difference is there in the concept of 'Qualities' as used by Europeans to describe what human beings are made up of. While the English would say 'Attributes' or 'Morales' or 'Principles'. Now this would not seem to be such a big difference — and, indeed, it is not — but it just goes to show that there is a difference between the English and the rest of our European brothers. Something akin to the difference between children with the same mother but different fathers.

In his 'Master' work 'The Man Without Qualities' which is loved universally by all Europeans except the English, Robert Musil reveals the full extent of this powerful way of describing how the European mindset is made up of 'Qualities' by showing how all his characters are made up of 'Qualities' except his main character, Ulrich, who is 'The Man Without Qualities'.

Two things to remember:

- 1) The Scots are not English. Being more like our European brothers.
- 2) I will return to this fascinating difference as it eventually becomes part of the storyline.

Returning to this new mode of reading that I have decided to call 'logical through-put comprehension', I have constructed a bookmark to be found in the Appendix under the nomenclature Appendix 'n' to assist in reading in this manner.

So it is now time to practice this new form of reading by not worrying about what I have just written in the last 59 lines, and to carry on reading with or without comprehension as it will all make sense in the end. Remarkable but true!

*

The A 82 winds its way through pretty countryside, much appreciated by our expectant travellers. Then, a wonderful change, as the road bears to the right and runs alongside Lock Locky. It is on this stretch of road that our travellers come across a sight so pitiful as to bring tears to their eyes; a sheep wrapped up in barbed wire and standing exhausted in the middle of the road.

*

How the poor creature came to be in such a state will never be known. How it is released is now just a matter of the telling.

*

"Quickly, get the wire-cutters from my tool box." Big Richard orders his son.

The sheep is so exhausted that after an initial pitiful struggle of just a few seconds it stands perfectly still and allows Big Richard and Little Richard to cut out the barbed wire while Willy holds its head by its horns.

Finally free, the sheep is transported to the side of the road where it lies down on its side. Ali, Olly and Lilly administered iodine to its wounds with many comforting words which have the desired effect of sending it to sleep. Or is it dead?

The barbed wire is cut up into small sections and placed in a heavy duty plastic bag so that it can no longer be a danger to any animal. Altogether a satisfying outcome.

This calls for a cup of tea and a discussion on why man's agricultural objects can be so detrimental to animal life.

"But wasn't barbed wire first used in World War 1?" Asks a disgusted sounding Lilly.

"I don't think so. Wasn't it used in America in the mid-west to fence off land." Says Willy.

"That's right. And caused loads of trouble between the free-ranging ranchers who raised beef cattle and the sheep farmers." Says Little Richard with authority. An authority not truly deserved as this knowledge came Richard's way via an old movie he had seen on TV while avoiding the washing up.

“Didn’t they line their trenches with barbed wire to keep out the enemy. I saw this horrible photo of a man caught up in the barbed wire and shot full of holes. He was dead of course but they couldn’t bring him back into the trenches because they would have been shot by the enemy. So they had to leave him there; half standing and bent over. And rotting. Why is there so much cruelty in the world? And what’s more, it doesn’t make sense. If you go out of your way to be cruel to someone, surely it only asks for them to be cruel to you.” This is the sensible Lilly speaking.

“Things aren’t so bad these days.” Says Alibaba.

“Oh right.” Says Wild-man in cynical tones, “And what about in the middle-east. There are wars going on over there, just as bad as the ones we used to have here.”

“Does anyone know what they are fighting over?” Asks a genuinely interested Ali.

“They’re fighting over who’s side God’s on.” Laughs Gran, “I saw this news story on the BBC news. What a laugh. There was one side firing shells into a village and they were all shouting, Allah Akbar, which means God is Great or something like that. Then they showed the shells landing in the same village. And every time one exploded the villagers all cried out, Allah Akbar. What a bloody nonsense. How can God be on either of their sides when he is apparently on both of their sides. This lot don’t even have different Gods to fight over.”

“It was the same in the First World War, Gran. The Germans thought their Christian God was on their side, but guess what, the British and the French thought their Christian God was on their side.”

“These Gods have a lot to answer for in that case.” States Lilly.

“Actually, Lill, it’s even worse than that. These Gods don’t even exist.” Wild-man comes back with a wild truth dripping off every word.

As if prodded by an electric cattle prod the sheep leaps to its feet and dashes across the road. Unfortunately, straight into an oncoming car. It bounces off and sails through the air, all of this accompanied by the screeching of breaks.

“Wow, did you see that. The sheep did a 7 roll-over manoeuvre. My trainer says the more roll-overs you do when you’ve been knocked down in a tackle the less injury you sustain.” Says a much impressed Lilly.

As if to verify this the sheep leaps to its feet and runs full tilt into an open grass field on the other side of the road; bleating with vigour. And much to Lilly’s, Ali’s and yes, even Olly’s delight.

“Way to go!” Shouts Lilly

“Ba Ba!” Shouts back the sheep.

Then they all join in, “Ba Ba!” as the sheep heads over the hill and out of sight.

The people in the car are not in such good spirits as the woman passenger next to the driver has bumped her head on the dashboard, “You stupid man.” She shouts at the driver, “I’ve told you ... I don’t know how many times that this safety belt is defective. And now look what’s happened.”

The man looking as sheepish as any sheep, grovels, “I’m sorry dear. I forgot.”

“Would you like me to put some iodine on that cut?” Asks Ali.

“No I would not.” Comes her reply, then to her husband, “Take me to the hospital.” He just looks at her, “And I mean now!!”

They drive off at speed.

Lilly, Ali and Olly join the others next to the campa vans.

“Now what was that you were saying about there being no Gods.” Asks Lilly of Wild-man.

“Well think about it. These Gods that man has or worships are rather petty considering the enormity of the universe. One of these Gods even admitted to being jealous, can you imagine. And they all seem to be authoritarian minded. Saying things like: do this or I’ll turn you into a pillar of salt or some such thing. Even though they were all supposed to have given mankind free will or Agency as it is known to philosophers and physicists alike. Bob Dylan summed it up rather well in one of his earliest albums, Highway 61 Revisited. Now how does it go again.”

Willy thinks deep before giving this rendition in a sing-song sort of way:

“Now God said to Abraham: Kill me a son.

And Abe said: God you must be putting me on.

And God said: Nope, but Abe, you can do what you want but the next time you see me coming you’d better run.

So Abe said: Where do you want this killing done.

And God said: Take him out onto Highway 61.”

“Perhaps this is the British equivalent of Highway 61; except for sheep and not humans.” Joins in Lilly.

Wild-man ignores her, and sums up, “The God that Bob Dylan was on about was the same one for all of the ‘Old Testament’ religions; Christianity, Islam and the Jews. Yes, the very same God, with the very same attributes. So it’s hardly surprising that anyone with a modicum of education would reject this God and cast strong doubts on Gods generally.”

“You don’t have to have an education. Just a modicum of common sense.” States Gran, “It’s obvious from the fact that they always make God out to be a man when it is quite obvious that any God worth his salt would have to be a woman.”

“I think that should be ‘her’ salt.” Says Lilly helpfully.

“Don’t be such a wussy.” Says Gran unhelpfully.

“Well said anyway.” Says Willy in conciliatory mode, “At last, Rat Killer, we find ourselves on the same page.”

“Huh.” Says Gran as she wanders back to the campa.

Her movement acts as a catalyst and they all follow suit.

*

Back on the road, now variously called ‘The Narrow Road to the North’ or Highway 61 or as it is marked on the map, the A 82. This merry band of travellers are all overcome by a sense of destiny. They are, as it were, destined for what they didn’t know, but, they are heading straight for it. That signpost, even that sheep were clues to what lay ahead. So what happens next is no surprise.

*

At a lay-by on their side of the road a number of vehicles are pulled up around a mobile refreshment stop. A big commotion is taking place which is impossible to miss as people are arguing in loud voices.

They pull up and get out, not just because they are very ‘nosey’, which they are, but also because there is a rather remarkable vista; surrounded by blue sky a big black and blue cloud is hiding the sun as rays of sunlight penetrate the edges forming a halo. This lends a dramatic backdrop to what is happening both inside and outside the mobile refreshment stop.

High-maintenance Hannah questions some of the people on the periphery of the commotion outside the refreshment stop, “So, what’s going on?”

A woman volunteers, “This lot are all arguing about what to do about the man holding the child captive inside the catering van.”

“What, there’s a man holding a child inside the van? But why?” Hannah’s shocked but not so Gran, who has joined her, and looks more angry than anything.

“Apparently, he said he was hungry and when they wouldn’t give him a burger for free. He grabbed the child from a woman and forced his way into the van threatening the child with a knife. The people in the van ran for it out the other door.”

“What cowards.” Gran is disgusted.

“Have the police been sent for?” Asks Hannah.

“There’s no mobile connection around here. So some people have driven off to a hotel up the road, but it’s miles away. So god knows how long it’s going to be before the police get here.”

“Mmm.” Says Gran ominously, before heading back to the campa van.

Little Richard comes up behind Hannah and wraps his arms around her, having a sly grope of her athletic body.

Hannah is none too amused, "This is neither the time nor the place."

"Perhaps I could go and have a talk with this lunatic." Says Lovely Lilly in all innocence.

"No you will not!" Shouts Alibaba, who has, along with Wild-man and Big Richard, joined Hannah and Little Richard.

"But I could suggest that I trade places with the child ... and then ... I could kick him in the goolies when he least expects it." Lilly is warming to her theme.

"What an excellent idea." Says Willy, "And then when he drops to the ground you could use his head as a football. Ah, but no. The blood would ruin your beautiful new boots and that would never do."

"Why do you always have to be so practicable. So sensible." Lilly has been successfully misdirected.

There is now a new commotion near one of the doors to the refreshment van; with people shouting things like "don't do it" "you might hurt the child" "wait for the police" and the like.

But Gran is not for waiting — for it is none other than 'Rat Killer' herself — now brandishing a shot gun, "I'm only going to give you one chance and then you can have both barrels."

The kidnapper holds the child up in front of himself, "Just you try it and the kid gets it."

But he's not talking to anyone because Gran, as soon as she said her piece, has ran around the back of the van and now has the kidnapper's backside in full view, through the other door. She doesn't wait but lets him have both barrels up his arse, "Take that you villainous miscreant."

And take it he does but not with any great pleasure. His immediate reaction is to drop the child while leaping into the air. On landing he exits the van at speed; leaping into the air every few steps and howling with pain. He runs in this manner — leaping and howling — across the waste ground at the rear of the refreshment van.

No sooner he is out of van, then, the mother of the child is in and comforting the poor wee thing.

Big Richard quickly divests Gran of her shotgun, "Do you want us to get arrested?"

"Arrested for what? Saving the child's life."

Big Richard pulls Gran away and as she passes Lilly, "Way to go Gran. He won't be exercising his kidnapping life choice for many a long year."

Big Richard pulls Gran into the campa van with lots of the people clapping and cheering.

And all to the distant sound of a man in terrible pain punctuating the proceedings with howls and the gnashing of teeth.

Our merry band of travellers are quickly on their way — before the police arrive.

“You do realize you could have killed him.” Ali tries remonstrating with Rat Killer.

“Nonsense. They weren’t proper lead-shot cartridges. They’re my very own invention. I replace the lead-shot with rock salt which produces a coarse mist of salt when the gun goes off. The big bits of salt penetrate the clothes and imbed themselves in the flesh. So you can imagine the pain, that’s if you have ever got salt into an open wound. Listen! ... You can still hear his cries of pleasure.” Gran laughs with glee, “But of course, it won’t kill him. Only cause him a load of grief until he finally realises that he has to stay completely still to reduce the pain to bearable.”

“And I suppose he’ll soon give himself up.” States Ali hopefully.

“He’ll have to if he wants the salt washed out.” Gran concludes with satisfaction.

The camp vans press on with speed eventually passing police cars and an ambulance going in the opposite direction. The sense that they are fugitives increases their excitement, so that both vans are little oceans of illicit pleasure. The same kind experienced by children when playing ‘hide and seek’.

They arrive in Invergarry a small village on the way to Fort Augustus. Fort Augustus being notable as it is itself the southern most point on Lock Ness; which in turn is notable as it is our travellers destination. Thus making Invergarry of little importance in terms of notability for our merry band of travellers. Unless, of course, an event is taking place to change the status of this small village. Which, it just so happens to be doing.

They have arrived in Invegarry just in time for the beginning of the Invegarry Highland Dance Festival. The car park is packed and provides excellent cover for them to hide their camp vans, if the police are in ‘hot pursuit’.

Having chosen this particular direction — ie, The Narrow Road To The North — they feel it would be ridiculous not to participate in the local festivities of the region they are passing through.

It is to be a memorable and happy occasion. Highland Dancing to the sound of the bagpipes is a rare and beautiful thing. And not one of our intrepid travellers have ever seen, or heard, this unique Scottish cultural icon.

*

They are, however, soon lost in the moment. The experiential experience giving them a taste of the Nowness of the Zen and, in turn, a taste of the Mystic.

It is true, there is something Mystical about the sound that bagpipes make — beyond the similarity to strangled cats giving their last rendition before passing on over into the Mystic; it’s haunting and longing all at the same time and produces tingling sensations on the nerve ends.

But this is far from Lilly's thoughts at this precise moment.

*

As soon as she sees these young girls, in their tartan skirts and waist coats of heavy embroidery, leaping around with great skill and with flamboyant dexterity, in the foot steps of the dance, she is lost. Lost in admiration.

She can't keep her feet nor her legs still. And standing at the front of the audience she is soon spotted by the girls on stage. And what a sight she makes. Trying to mimic the girls on stage even to the little leaps into the air the girls make.

Football strip emblazoned with the Plymouth Argyle logo as a substitute for the tartan and embroidery, and, football boots for the delicate dance shoes are a wonderful contrast; a juxtaposed metaphor for a Zen Koan of some power.

The dancers take to Lilly as one of their own. And when their performance is over they mob her with affection.

She is overcome and even sheds a tear. She is then dragged off to the changing tent.

Alibaba and Wild-man Willy having witnessed this performance within a performance head off for some refreshment.

The refreshment tent is large with a long bar at least 20 metres in length. The central pole supporting the tent is a good 15 metres high and has a thick rope tied to the top. The use of this soon becomes apparent as a young man suddenly leaps up the rope then, going 'hand over fist', climbs the rope all the way to the top. Not stopping he descends a few 'hand overs' before dropping the rest of the way to the ground; some 10 metres; twisting his ankle in the process.

A man with a stop watch shouts out the time while another man writes it down on his clipboard. Behind these, Ali and Willy, can now see the walking wounded and the casualties of this rather dangerous game.

Achieving the safety of the bar they quickly order drinks. Where they are soon joined by Little Richard and Hannah who is carrying Olly. Olly has already spotted the men going up the rope and expresses a great desire to go there too. But on seeing one man fall expresses himself in baby talk that means something like this, "Oh dear, man falling on head. Bonkers!"

And bonkers it is.

Only Wild-man Willy is captivated by the spectacle, "I was pretty good at rope climbing when I was young. I wonder if I could still get to the top even now that I'm a geriatric compared to these fit young men."

"Oh, please don't, you'll kill your self." Pleads Ali.

But Wild-man is not to be deterred. He visits the men with the stopwatch and clipboard and gets their permission to kill himself if he so wishes.

Up he goes, 'hand over fist' until he reaches the top. But instead of coming back down 'hand over fist' he wraps the rope around his leg and glides down with grace and no hands. His coat flying out to the sides giving the impression that he is a cloaked vampire.

There is much applause. With even Olly joining in, "Way to go. Flying like bat." Or something like that.

Wild-man is pleased with himself even though his arms are aching a solid pain. This is then reflected in his brain as Rat Killer just has to spoil his moment, "Next time try wrapping the rope around your neck. Then you'll see just how much people really do appreciate you."

"Thanks Gran for that advice. May I include you in my next performance. We could do a double act with you clinging on to my legs and singing an old-time classic like 'We'll meet Again, Don't know Where, Don't know When, But I know We'll Meet Again some Cloudy Day."

"Sentiments all wrong. It should be more like 'Underneath the Arches, where I'll bury You, Underneath the Arches, in a Rotten Coffin for a Pew."

"Sorry, before my time. And besides I was never fond of those sentimental war songs."

The banter goes on in pathetic argument — each one even more stupid than the previous one.

For everyone else there is round after round of drinks, followed by crooked 'line' dancing in the Dancing Tent. Then out to the main stage to see more Highland Dancing.

The night draws in like a dark cloak of tragedy foreseen. Then this dark cloak switches to the tannoy where a man, obviously pissed, announces with great solemnity, "The border with 'The Land of the Sassenachs' has been closed due to the possibility of con ... con ... contamination with the latest coronavirus — Covid 25."

The cheer is ecstatic with even our travellers joining in. There really is no going back now even if they had wanted to.

*

An update on Coronaviruses for those that don't know: they are a group of viruses that cause diseases in mammals and birds. In humans, these particular viruses cause respiratory infections which are typically mild including the common cold but rarer forms like SARS and MERS can be lethal.

China is usually the source of these outbreaks as the Chinese will eat anything that moves. Including the viruses that live in wild and exotic animals. This jumping between species was always going to be a problem but this particular one was a major problem as it would appear to be able to transfer between Sassenachs and Scottish gentle folk.

Hence the closing of the border. Hence the joy of your typical Scottish person.

It's not that Scottish people hate all Sassenachs. It's that they hate this category of person; the category being different from the actual people, much like the difference between the map and the territory. A difference hard to object to in any rational conversation. But unfortunately 'rational conversations' are rare when it comes to this subject.

And so it is that our merry band of travelling brothers forget they are English and take on the full mantle of Scottish nationhood. Being even more fanatical about the border being closed than even the locals are. This is another well known psychological trait where immigrants are often more fanatically loyal to their adopted country than those that have actually been born there — born rather than borne, as it were.

There is also this feeling of being safe. Not a single case of this new coronavirus has been detected in Scotland, nor is there likely to be one as not only is the border now closed but all other routes into Scotland have been suspended until the pandemic is over.

The Scottish Government have been quick to point out that there is enough food to last indefinitely as long as one doesn't mind eating a diet of oats, fish and lamb. Potatoes and winter greens are also well placed on the siege menu but subject to seasonal availability.

Coffee, tea and even milk will have to be rationed, but thanks to an emergency supply of vitamin tablets — bought when the government had been assured by the academic community that Scotland had the worst diet in Europe — there is now a 5 year supply and enough to keep the entire population fit and healthy.

This feeling of security is amplified every time the latest news is broadcast. This particular coronavirus has been mutating at an unusually high viral rate and the latest strain is of real concern as the death rate is 1 in 3 of all those infected with the possibility of even higher rates with further mutations.

It is like a lottery for those that have contracted the virus. As it has now spread throughout the world and that, but for small communities like Scotland that are unaffected, people are talking in terms of a reduction of the human population by one third. Some where in the region of 2.7 billion people.

Although welcomed by many as the answer to over population this is still 2.7 billion human beings that is being decimated. The grief and torment this is causing worldwide is beyond measure on any scale.

*

Wild-man Willy is tormented by these figures — not yet fully realized — and is affecting him more than the rest of his party. He wanders off from the Highland Dance Festival where his mood seems at odds to everyone else. He wanders down to Lock Oich — a small but pretty Lock just a short walk away.

He strips off his shoes and socks and finding a boulder to sit on, he dangles his feet and part of his legs in the water as a means of relaxing himself. What a surprise then to find his feet and in particular his toes being gently nibbled by toothless mouths, lending his

demeanour first to mild shock but quickly turning into a joyful exercise of communicating with the inhabitants of the Lock. It is too dark to make out what these friendly fish are. Just a few skirmishes beneath the waves breaking the surface and a quick glance of a scaly back make identification difficult; he is thinking small trout or perch but can't be sure.

'What luck', he thinks 'to have found a cleaning station here in Lock Oich.' Especially as the only other ones he has ever seen are on the Great Barrier Reef; and then only seen via a TV documentary.

But of course this is the character, Wild-man Willy, and his mind rarely stands still long enough to catch the cold of Alzheimer's let alone the flu of dementia. His mind moves on to that initial thought — 'what luck'. What could he have possibly meant by that.

*

"What constitutes Luck?" He states out loud.

*

And I would like to point out here that this concept, namely: Luck. Is to be visited by another person at a different time. Thus revealing the importance and relevance of this subject to human beings at this time.

At this time, just being in Scotland constitutes 'Good Luck' in regard to the coronavirus.

For those in England it is considered to be a % chance. Not totally 'Bad Luck' but Luck partitioned into two thirds 'Good Luck', and one third 'Bad Luck'. Wild-man reflected on these broad terms that everyone seems to recognize. But on close scrutiny these terms reveals something else. For instance, take 'Bad Luck' in regard to the coronavirus. For every individual that contracts the virus, it then depends on 1) the individual's immune system and 2) their general health at the time they contracted the virus. But these two main factors are themselves comprised of other variables like the genetic make-up of both their immune system and their general wellbeing. And that's not counting the variation of these main factors due to historical life factors like smoking and drinking etc.

And so it will also be in regard to every individual that contracts the virus in the world. So that the general terms 'Good Luck' and 'Bad Luck' did in fact have very little meaning except in the flimsiest way.

Still, Wild-man thought and indeed expressed out loud, "I'm glad to be in Lucky old Scotland." But there is something niggling at him from the back of his mind. That part that is rarely conscious but never the less plays its part in the singular identity of his mind. Considering that the singular identity of any individual is achieved by some form of democratic consensus of all of the regions of the brain, here, at this precise moment, there is a part of Wild-man's mind that would seem to be out of kilter with the singular identity. Hence this barely conscious niggling sensation.

He knows that he is glad to be in Scotland but there is something more. Not something either good or bad but ... something more. It forms a strange shape in his mind's eye. Long and narrow with two protrusions on one side but clean and strait on the other. He definitely recognises that shape but can't put a name to it. It is no good, so he simply puts it out of his conscious mind, and instead thinks about the time and his present location: it is 3: 30 am and he is on the banks of Lock Oich, just a couple of miles from the Invergarry Dance Festive.

He knows he will have to return to the campa van and get some sleep; and this is what he does. But not before a 'final rational' about Luck:

Could it be that we say something is either Good Luck or Bad Luck when we can't explain the rational behind whatever it is. Hence, this 'final rational' would have to be considered Bad Luck as it doesn't resolve the problems we have with Luck. I'll leave it with you in case you can fathom it out.

*

He is wakened by the sound of what he thinks is an express train but which morphs into the sound of someone snoring when he focuses his attention. He looks across to where the sound is coming from and is amazed to see that it is coming from Lovely Lilly; not so lovely in the cold light of day.

"Wake up Lilly, you're snoring and it's enough to wake the dead."

Lilly doesn't wake up and Willy is forced to give her a shake. This does wake her, "Fec off. Can't you see I'm trying to get some sleep." She turns over facing away from Willy and thus reveals that she is wearing tartan knickers under her new Highland Dance Uniform.

This brings a smile to Willy's face and an even bigger one when he sees she is still wearing her football boots, "You'd better get up and go outside."

"Why do I want to go outside?"

"Because you're going to throw up."

"No I'm n ..."

She just has enough time to get outside when the first wave of nausea results in retching and extreme projectile vomiting, "Oh my God. Never again." Then, more of the same followed by the same or similar words.

Willy passes out to her a bottle of 'Irn-brew'. A few gulps followed by more of the same.

Eventually, drained of anything left in her stomach, she returns to her pit and falls fast asleep.

Willy wakes the rest and gets this not so merry band on their way.

In fact, it is only Willy and Big Richard who are fully awake. And it is they that are driving. The rest are still hung over and desperately trying to sleep off the effects of the previous night's excesses.

And that is why nobody sees the various places of interest on their journey to The Enchanted Lake. They miss the beautiful mixed woodland of beech, silver birch, rowan and oak. They miss the famous 'Well of the Seven Heads' — where seven members of the MacDonald Clan were slaughtered and had their heads washed in the well before being presented to the McDonnell chief in Invergarry. Nor did they see the ruins of Invergarry castle and several other tourist attractions.

They also miss out on the formation of the The Great Glen as it widens out as the A82 reaches Fort Augustus and the very southern tip of Lock Ness.

They miss out on the canal with its locks and diverse walks around Fort Augusta. Not to mention the small town itself which is more than just a tourist destination.

They miss all of this and a lot more because Wild-man Willy is so intent on getting to Lock Ness. He has studied the map and knows where he is going. He follows the signs and comes to the village of Borlum, and there, on a piece of waste ground he pulls up and gets out.

A line of trees, mostly pine, shields The Enchanted Lake from view. But it is there ... waiting.

The rest crawl out of various 'pits' and stand next to him; looking in the same direction.

"Mum, can you buy me a dirk. The girls couldn't give me one as they are all special and have to be a gift by either a family member or friend." Lilly tries this on but with little success.

"I will not be buying you a dagger or any other kind of dangerous weapon." Ali retorts.

"But mum ..."

"And what have we said about you calling out, 'but mum'. Are you deaf?"

"Willy, will you buy me a dirk?"

"Only if you promise me never to use it except on yourself in acts of self harm."

"Ok. I promise. Except of course in excep..." Lilly suddenly comes to a realisation. That through the trees is a lake. And not just any lake ... but ... The Lake — The Enchanted Lake. She can't stop herself and starts running which starts the rest running as if they are in a race. They run with increasing speed breaking through the line of trees and onto the shore line.

Where, they are greeted and subject to the most wonderful sight.

Lock Ness with the hills and mountains of the Great Glen coming down either side stretches off into the distance. There is no end to this vista. At 23 kilometres long the curvature of the Earth disguises its end.

Instead there is ball of diffused cloud and mist lit up by sunlight from a sun out of sight to awaken their senses.

The spectacle is brought to full realisation when Olly holds up both of his little arms in a greeting; a profound gesture.

They all raise their arms and allow The Endless Nowness of Being to sweep through them
as the Experiential Experience of the Mystic.



Chapter 3

The Disappeared

It is said that in 'The Clear Blue Sky'
All Earthly Things also Exist but in
Perfect Eternal Form.

And,
When They Die,
They Return There,
As Pure Essence Divorced from Material
Form.

– Wild-man Willy

From the Book: 'The Clear Blue Sky':
The Quantum Field of
The Biosphere.

*

A mile after the Whitebridge Hotel Big Richard turns left onto the B852 to Foyers then under instruction from his navigator, Rat Killer, he turns a sharp left to Lower Foyers and soon ends up at the campsite.

And what a campsite. 99 pitches for camp vans and caravans of which 2 are for our explorers. There are also various wooden huts with all mod cons for rent. And the views, if not as expansive as at Borlum, are truly magnificent.

Access to the shore line is uninhibited thus making canoeing a desired occupation and the campsite provides the campers with a choice of 1 man, 2 man and even 4 man canoes.

Lilly can see the possibilities immediately and shoots off to explore. Her hang-over already a distant memory. She first visits the campsite's shop a large well-stocked general store attached to the site office. She wanders down the aisles taking note of the goods and goodies for sale; but not a single 'deep-fried Mars bar' does she see. This icon of Scottish cuisine is still top of her list of Experiential Experiences that she hopes that Scotland can provide her with.

She spots a girl stacking shelves and immediately becomes intrigued. The girl could easily pass for a 'Goth' — that is, a person who adopts the musical sub-cultural groups identity, rather than the Goths who were a member of a Germanic people that invaded the Roman Empire during the 3rd and 5th centuries — the jet-black hair, the dark low lying dress exposing plenty of make-up applied white skin, and the large black leather boots. There was, however, an addition; the girl was sporting blue designs on her body and face; designs that looked Celtic in origin. The entire ensemble gave her an exotic aesthetically pleasing presence that Lilly was instantaneously attracted to.

She can't contain herself and goes straight up to her, "Are you a Scottish 'Goth'?"

"Feck off, yer pathetic wee shite." The girl looks Lilly up and down before, "What would yer say if I were to call yer a footballing groupie of the offside persuasion."

"I wouldn't know what to say as I don't know what a footballing groupie of the offside persuasion is."

"How old are you?"

"12."

"An innocent abroad." She says this more to herself, before sighing, "Oh alright then. I'm a Peckt, better known to you Sassenacks as a Pict. We are the original peoples of Scotland or as it should be known as, the Land of the Picts. And before yer ask it means family."

"Wow. You must be ever so pleased at having such a long history."

"Of course. And it was illustrious to say the least. We were the only people the Romans never conquered." Here the girl suddenly sticks up two fingers to the imaginary Romans,

“Feck of yer opera lovin nancy boys.” And does it with such force that it twists her entire body around almost sticking her fingers up Lilly’s nose.

“Way to go.” Lilly is impressed beyond measure, “And those fantastic symbols drawn on your body — did you do them yourself?”

“Hardly.” She says in disbelief. Then she bends over revealing her breasts and the symbols that circle them before the ends come together in a Celtic knot just below her collar-bones, “I had to get my boyfriend to do them and the ones on my neck and down my back.”

“Wow. I wish I could have them all over my body.”

“Well there’s nothing to stop yer.”

“Oh yes there is. She’s called my mother.” Lilly goes into acting mode, “Lilly, you are not going to have a tattoo of a mouse on your ankle or your arse or anywhere else for that matter. Severe financial penalties will be levied on your pocket money. Do you understand my girl. Just nod your head if you do.” Lilly rounds this piece of performance art with her nodding her head like one of those nodding dogs that people have in the back of cars.

This has our Pict openly laughing, “Well Lilly, my name is Caledonia. Cal for short. Yer here for long?”

“Don’t know. Lock Ness is our destination. So ...”

‘Don’t worry. I’ll hunt yer out. But right now, I must get on.’

They part as new friends.

Meanwhile

Little Richard and Hannah fool around in the big bed at the back of the Campa. While Big Richard and Gran sort out the campsite’s bureaucratic niceties. Alibaba, after feeding Olly, decides an afternoon snooze is in order and this leaves Wild-man Willy with a choice. A snooze or walk. He decides on both; a walk to explore the campsite followed by a snooze.

With a magnificent view of The Enchanted Lake seen through a gap in the trees he sits down at a picnic table leaning against the table top. Leaning his head back he looks straight up into The Clear Blue Sky; losing himself; losing his singular self; that part of consciousness that is only Wild-man Willy and merging with the Quantum Field of the Biosphere.

This reverie is interrupted by a face looking down at him. Shocked, he sits up with a start to find a woman in her mid 30s, with a mass of black and grey tangled frizzy hair pulled back into a short thick knot. Her face is attractive in a gypsy sort of way. Her smile, made up of strong white teeth and lusher lips, a delight. Her athletic body is mounted by high proud breasts and clothed in a woven grey pullover with black leggings that are tucked into a pair of stout walking boots. She is tall — at least 5’ 10”.

“Hi, I’m Anita Cassidy. And you are?”

“Will. Are you staying at the camp site?”

“I am, but not as a tourist.” Anita pulls out a police warrant card that reveals that she is a police Inspector. Detective Inspector Anita Cassidy to be precise.

“Oh my God.” Exclaims Wild-man thinking the worst and that she is looking for a particular old lady with a shot gun.

“Please don’t concern yourself, I’m not after you, no matter what you’ve done.” She laughs at Willy’s discomfit, “I was just wondering what you were staring at ... up there.”

“Oh I see ... well ... I was just staring at ... the ... clear blue sky.”

“You mean: ‘The Clear Blue Sky.’”

“Yes. If you understand that then you understand its importance.”

“Indeed I do. But I’ve found few humans that do. In fact you are the very first one.”

The silence that follows doesn’t feel uncomfortable but rather pleasant as they look each other over.

“So you like my breasts?” She says through a wicked smile.

“Sorry. Was I staring. I’m afraid I can’t help it. I’m a dirty old man long addicted to big breasts.”

She gently laughs, “Would you like to see them?”

As quick as a wink Willy comes back, “Oh yes please. And perhaps a grope — a gentle grope that is.”

“Perhaps later. But now I must get on.” She turns to go then thinks better of it, “Would you like to come.”

Willy gets up thinking he would go anywhere with her but saying, “So where are you going?”

She turns and he aligns himself with her, “I have to visit a farm over there” she points “near Lock Mhor.”

“And where are you sneaking off to?” Comes the familiar voice of his best friend.

“Lilly, meet Inspector Anita Cassidy. Anita meet Lovely Lilly, a now well known Highland Dancer and latter-day footballer, recently arrived in Scotland.”

Lilly ignores Willy and addresses Anita full on, “You do realize that he’s a dirty old man. And given the chance he’ll have you stripped naked and ‘whistling dixie’ before you can finish a cup of tea.”

“It’s alright Lilly, he’s already warned me. But you see, I have a bit of a thing about dirty old men.”

“Oh good. Because I do too.” Lilly takes Anita by the arm, “So where are you taking him to?”

“Police business. Sorry, but did you want Will for anything in particular?”

“Yes I did. I want him to come with me canoeing.”

“Tomorrow. Make all the arrangements and we’ll take a picnic with us and make a day of it.” Wild-man quickly intervenes.

“It’s alright, I can tell when I’m not wanted.” Lilly turns away flicking her tartan skirts up and revealing her tartan knickers in, and as, a very rude gesture by sticking her bum out. She then runs off at speed.

Anita gets into an Alfa Romeo and Willy gets in beside her.

“How old is she?”

“12.”

“It won’t be long now then.”

“I reckon a few more months, if that.” Willy sighs.

“How are you going to handle it?”

“Play it by ear. It’s the only thing you can do.”

“It will never be the same.”

“I know. I’ll miss her. We’ve been such good friends for so long. But you’ve got to let them go. It’s all part of the evolutionary process — a child today a woman tomorrow.”

“Do you use her as a sounding board?”

“Sometimes. But I’m a writer. So I usually use one of my characters for that.”

“Goodness, that must be useful ... actually ... that’s part of the reason I’ve invited you along. I usually have a sounding board with me but because of the boarder troubles I’ve had to give up my Detective Constable. So I’m promoting you to chief sounding board.”

“I’m honoured, but now I think you should fill me in on what’s to do.”

“The Commissioner of Police in Inverness asked the Police Board in Edinburgh for an Investigator of ‘cold cases’ to follow up on the disappearance of a farmer some 10 years ago. This has come about because a study of meta-data has come up with some disturbing facts into the disappearances of local people in the Lock Ness region. This particular region has traditionally been split up into 4 regions and this is why no one spotted the number of missing people there has been in the last 40 years. 35 people;

roughly 1 person a year. And these are local people. Not tourists or visitors. And, that all but one, have been men.”

“That sounds a lot.”

“It is. If it hadn’t been for the Commissioner having been involved in a number of the cases, including the one we are on our way to resurrect. I doubt if any of this would have come to light.”

“So what makes this one so special?”

“So special? So ordinary. The farmer set off in the morning to bring down a flock of sheep from up on the hillside. He took his dog and his crook. Around lunch time the farmer’s wife saw the sheep enter the farm yard and she went out to open the gates to pen them in. The dog helped her as usual but there was no sign of her husband. When he didn’t arrive back after a couple of hours she went looking for him. But neither her nor the dog could find him anywhere. She collected the kids from school and they all set off in search for the farmer. After he didn’t come back by the next day she called in the police. 5-days involving 100s of people never found any sign of him. The Commissioner who had been a Chief Inspector at the time could find no reason for his disappearance. The search was wound down and the Coroners verdict was left open.”

“Poor woman.”

“Poor kids.”

The silence was indicative of the fact that they had both retreated into their own thoughts.

Meanwhile.

Back at the campsite Ali is hanging out washing while Lilly swings Olly around as part of his toughening up regime Lilly insists is good for him. Then she stops and sings to him the famous ‘baby song’.

“Baby baby, baby baby” more tuneless singing with the same two words repeated endlessly “baby baby.”

“Is that your baby?” Comes the pleasant voice from the pleasant mouth from a pleasant face on a gangly 14 year old boy with a ‘shock’ of black curly hair.

Lilly is stumped for just a moment but then decides on attack mode once she has summed him up in her razor-sharp mind, “Oh yes” she lowers Olly down between her legs “he slipped out between my thighs as easily as a ripe mango from its skin.”

The boy laughs, “I just knew you’d be a player.”

“The only thing I’ll play with you is football, using your head as the ball.” She uses her wicked grin.

“Excellent, excellent. What’s your name? My name is Ambrose.”

“You mean your parents named you after ... ‘creamed rice’. No wonder you’re such a dick-head. You even look the part with all that curly hair surrounding an idiot’s face straight out of ‘Mad Magazine’.”

Ambrose addresses Ali, “Is she always as feisty as this?”

“Well, this is pretty much average. But she does have her moments.”

“I was only trying to get to know her. With a bit of flirting thrown in for good measure being as I find her ‘drop-dead gorgeous’.” He admits in all innocence.

Ali laughs, “You find my daughter ‘drop-dead gorgeous.’ She turns to Lilly who is quietly fuming, “Did you hear that Lilly, you’ve got an admirer.”

“Listen, you poor excuse for a sickly pudding, I’m only 12 years old and you are encroaching on pedophile territory.” She addresses her mother, “Phone the police and have this pervert arrested.”

Ali asks the obvious of the grinning fool, “And how old are you?”

“14 an a bit. And I don’t think I can be arrested without my parents consent.” He laughs with gusto.

“Smart arse.” Lilly comes back, “How would you like to address your lack of high end height by pole-vaulting into that big moronic curly-lipped mouth of yours.”

“I tell you what. Let me show you what my mouth is really good at — kissing.”

“Kissing!” Lilly is incensed.

“The girls at my school have been teaching me and they’re pretty good as they practice on each other all the time.”

“Your school must be full of dykes and weirdos.” Then a thought crosses her mind, “You’re not a ... dyke are you. I mean, you could easily pass for a girl with all those curls.”

“Come over here and have a feel of my one-eyed trouser snake.” He places the books he’s carrying on the ground and starts undoing his Levi’s.

This is too much for Lilly and she sweeps Olly over her shoulder and storms off to the campa van with Olly waving a fond farewell.

“Oh don’t go. If you come back I’ll read you something wonderful.” He says this while picking up his books, then flicking through a novel by the Austrian author Robert Musil, ‘The Forgotten Sister’. By the time he’s found a suitable passage to read, Lilly has disappeared.

Now I'm sure you will have remembered this author, Robert Musil, from the Commentary at the beginning of Chapter 2. And you will have remembered this primarily because it proves what was said in that Commentary about a new way of reading. How you will remember even what was said, even though you weren't taking much notice because all you were doing was following the logic of the language and making no attempt at comprehending what was written.

Good? Isn't it? But don't worry if you aren't sure about the veracity of this new form of reading. Let me give you another example by quoting from Ambrose who is summing up in his mind, Robert Musil so that later he can impress Lilly with his literary knowledge, "You see, 'Puss in Football Boots', some novelists excel at giving the reader the emotional feel of a character's mind such as Dickens at his best. Then there's the sensuous feel of a character's mind such as Flaubert delivers in such flowery prose.. Musil is wonderful at both. And what's more, Musil uses the third-person omniscient point of view. And is perfectly at ease entering the minds of all his characters to get especially close to them, as if what he were saying about them is so concise that it must be absolutely true."

Now I bet you can't remember what he has just said, but it doesn't matter as you will when we return to this subject later on.

*

Meanwhile

Willy and Anita have arrived at the farm and having introduced themselves are now sat around a large slate table in the farmhouse kitchen. The farmer's wife Jane having made coffee has joined them.

"I'm amazed that you are still bothering. It's quite obvious to me that he's never coming back; for whatever reason. The kids have all but forgotten him and who can blame them." Jane sounds quite bitter.

"I'm sorry if this has awoken bad feelings as all I'm doing at the moment is trying to get my head around it."

"Oh, don't worry about that. I've lived with it for 10 years and I still can't get my head around it."

"There's been nothing of the unusual kind happened since he disappeared." Anita is grasping ... grasping for anything.

Jane tries to help, "I never mentioned it at the time because farmer MacDonald was, well, still is, a right pain in the neck."

"And who is farmer MacDonald?"

"He has the farm over the hill that butts onto ours. He has always had a thing about me. Pestered me before I was married and ever since. Still does. Anyway, he said to me 2

years after Cyril disappeared this was, that Cyril had been seen talking to a woman with red hair and a green dress, a couple of days before he disappeared.”

“Red hair and a green dress.” Repeats Anita with a slight disturbance in her voice, “There’s no record in the notes.”

“No, there wouldn’t be. Because I didn’t pay it no mind. Thinking that MacDonald was just saying it to suggest that Cyril had run off with another woman — just to impress me. And besides, why didn’t the old fart say something at the time.”

“I see. Trouble is, in another disappearance case a few years before, there was mention of a red haired woman in a green dress.” Anita looks towards Willy.

Who responds, “Quite a coincidence. Red hair, green dress. Memorable artefacts.”

“I hate to throw cold water on this but I knew my husband. He didn’t have a romantic bone in his body. The idea of him running off with a woman with red hair and a green dress is fanciful to say the least. He would never have had the time. And besides, I would have noticed any change in his routine. Or, any lustful intentions. There were none.” Jane is adamant and it sounds reasonable — even convincing.

“But that’s not to say there wasn’t a woman with red hair and a green dress. What you’re saying is there was no romantic connection.”

After a while Jane agrees with Anita and this brings the interview to an end, as there literally isn’t, anything else to add.

Anita and Willy leave after getting instructions to MacDonald’s farm via an old farm track.

They stop at the top of the hill for a look at the view. Soon to be joined by MacDonald himself in an old Land-rover.

“What you doing on my property?” He brusquely asks.

“Are you farmer MacDonald?” Anita brusquely queries.

“And who is asking?” He replies brusquely.

Anita shoves her warrant card into his face, “Detective Inspector Cassidy. We just want you to confirm that you saw Cyril Chambers talking to a red haired woman in a green dress, a few days before he disappeared, is that correct.”

MacDonald looks to Willy then back to Anita, “I told them at the time but they didn’t take any notice. They’d been poisoned against me by that bitch of a wife of his.” He waits for some reply but not getting any, “I know what I saw and when. But that’s it. Now if you don’t mind, get off my land.”

He doesn’t wait for a reply but drives off at speed in the direction of his farm. They follow him down and join the tarmac road at the bottom of the hill.

On the road back to Foyers Willy has a momentary revelation, “That’s what it is. The red hair and green dress. That’s how Deirdre of the Sorrows is always depicted.”

“Deirdre of the Sorrows?”

“Part historical figure, part myth. She was an Irish princess that came to Scotland in the mists of time, looking for a husband. Had the bad luck to fall in love with a man from a different tribe and paid the price.”

“Let me guess. He was killed by her family and she killed herself by throwing herself in the Lock.”

“Yes, I think that was one version. But there were others. Most of them ended up with her searching endlessly for him.”

“Even as a ghost. Luring members of his tribe to their death with promises of ... sex.”
Anita gets into the role of temptress with remarkable ease as she caresses her breasts.

“Steady on there. I’m just a poor dirty old man and such provocations could result in you having to drive with a maniac trying to grope your bits.”

“Not so much a Deirdre of the Sorrows more a Wild-man Willy of the Gropies.”

“So you don’t put much hope in Deirdre as the disappear-er of the farmer?” Willy is joking in a serious voice.

“It’s as good as anything that I’ve come up with so far. But where would she take her lovers? To some mythological land where lovers, torn asunder, can live in bliss, happiness and age-proofed joy.” She answers in kind.

“Yes, it does sound a bit far fetched but at least it gives an outer limit to the problem.”

“I certainly can’t write it up in my report. Other than to suggest we might have to think outside of the box in regard to The Disappeared. A definite Factor X. (see Appendix 5 - Factor X)”

*

Anita could not have known just how far outside the box she would have had to think, if she was to capture what had happened to The Disappeared. (If the use of the word ‘capture’ is a pun I apologise.) Who could have foreseen a female serial killer operating in the Lock Ness Region for 40 years; a local woman by the name of Alexis ‘puppy-dog’ MacDougal. A woman who’s brain architecture had been irreversibly transformed by a chance meeting with the Lock Ness Monster when she was but a child. It wasn’t just the meeting that transformed the wiring of her brain but it was as much the reaction of her parents, of her friends, of the local community. They all thought she was seeking attention — which in a way she was — but not for self-grandiosity but to relate an observed fact.

It was at that moment in her 11 year-old brain that she realized that ‘The Truth’ was as malleable as play dough. Once realized, never forgotten. She quickly put the story aside as a work of fiction which pleased everyone. Only, to please everyone, she had to rearrange her brain architecture to accommodate the fact that people were and are stupid. This had

a two part effect on her personality and character. She lost all respect for her fellow human beings and now saw herself as superior — not so much a homo sapient more a homo superior.

To prove this were true she killed a stupid man who fell for her adolescent sexual charms, yes, he was a pedophile, and then disappeared him into one of the many bottomless bogs the region was so richly endowed. That she enjoyed the experience so much, she decided to make it an integral part of her life. And, after all, she was performing a service to the local community by getting rid of pedophiles and men who betrayed their wives.

Her skills and modus operandi developed over the years. She also enjoyed pulling the wool over everyone's eyes by playing the respected postwoman. A position that gave her plenty of scope to find new victims.

There was, however, a certain development in how she dispatched her victims — having tied their hands she would then 'sit on their face' which would eventually suffocate them but not before she derived great sexual pleasure from their struggles. This was, however to be her undoing. One vile betrayer of women's sensitivities had remarkably strong jaws and on realizing that he was being suffocated to death had sunk his teeth into her genital apparatus and removed a huge chunk of flesh. His jaws had then locked in position as he drowned in her blood. She also succumbed through loss of blood. Altogether an horrendous end to this serial killer and one of her victims. Her thrashing about trying to free herself from this lock-jawed pervert dislodged rocks and rubble from the disused tunnel this unfortunate incident had taken place in. The result was a massive collapse of the tunnel and the complete burial of killer and victim.

It can only be assumed, in years to come, when archeologists excavate the remains that a true version of events will be forthcoming — just don't hold your breath waiting for, 'The Truth', to emerge.

'puppy-dog', like most serial killers, had her little foibles and idiosyncrasies; the main ones being the wearing of a red wig and green dress. She had arrived at these 'fashion statements' by trial and error. Men, being pathetic, would all seem to favour this combination just as black and white 'French maids' uniforms satisfy the same primal urges (reasons unknown).

I am now sure the reader will not waste any further time on this line of enquiry as it must be obvious that it will be almost impossible to verify.

*

Later

The inside of Anita's wooden hut on the camp site has been constructed out of different types of wood that give it a 'backwoods' sort of feel. It is, however, not in the slightest primitive having a fitted kitchen down one side and a long sofa dividing the kitchen from the living area. The sofa doubles for a double bed at night and a place to view the large TV at other times.

At the other end from the glass end and door is the toilet and shower/bath. Altogether a well designed unit.

Anita busies herself cooking; taking on Willy as her assistant.

“You’ll just have to put up with my vegetarian diet, I’ve been one all of my life and have never found it wanting. The Indians are the past and present masters so I hope you like spicy food some of which is very hot.”

“Not a problem. I’m afraid I’m just lazy when it comes to food; meat and fish are easy to cook for quick tasty meals. So I sort of ignore the obvious knowing how bad they are for the environment especially the meat. It’s one of those situations that, like that philosopher pleaded — sorry forgot his name: ‘oh please God take away the desire, but not just yet’.”

“But he wasn’t talking about food — what ever his name was — he was talking about sex.”

“It’s funny, but you can often substitute those words in a sentence and have a perfect delivery of meaning.”

“I suppose that understanding of language comes because you are a writer.”

“Of course. Writers are privileged because they can write anything. No politically correct censorship for us. If we couldn’t write politically un-correct content — well, you couldn’t have fiction, period.”

“I suppose not. But surely everyone can be a writer?”

“Now isn’t that just the truth. And doesn’t that rather blow out of the water all political correctness.”

“I think you’ve visited this subject before.” Anita pulls his tail.

“Caught out in one. Now let’s eat.”

After dinner and after they’ve washed and dried the dishes Anita takes her clothes off. Desert of a different kind.

Her breasts sag a little but only to place her nipples on the top of those magnificent orbs. She cups them and offers them to Wild-man as an offering. He indulges himself while getting his own clothes off. There then follows a passionate encounter of the erotic kind. Witnessed by a number of fellow campers passing by the window, until the sexual athletes realize they are putting on a free floor show for their benefit, and drop the blinds.

As Willy lies afterwards in calm ecstasy he can’t help but wonder where such a remarkable day had come from.

As if he had spoken these thoughts out aloud Anita answers, “It was when I realized you understood, ‘The Clear Blue Sky’, that was when I decided on my course of action ... you do understand what it is in actuality?”

“It's the Quantum Field of the Biosphere. The Quantum Field that's generated by the Biosphere as a singular entity. If you were to describe it in computer or internet terms you'd say it was 'The Cloud' although that hardly does it justice.”

“Hardly. But a good 'yard-stick' never the less. How come you know so much about Quantum Mechanics?”

“A keen interest all my life. Ever since 'A' level physics when I was introduced to the very foundation of our physical reality. Only to find that that foundation is both probabilistic and approximate and hardly the firmest ground on which to build anything let alone reality — or so you'd think.”

“And yet here we are having just experienced the most real experience there is.” The warm glow of sex still lingers in Anita's words.

“That's why I think consciousness is the glue that binds it all together. Don't you think?”

“Don't you mean: it's the experientially experience that binds it all together.”

“And probably results in Quantum Entanglement between those having the same experiential experience.” They say this together as they experience it.

They look at each other in wonder and in awe.

The Next Day

Ambrose is running full tilt when he runs into Caledonia coming out of the campsite shop with a postcard display. The result is an explosion of various views of Lock Ness, a few of the Monster in various poses and a handful of 'dirty postcards' circa 1950; these scatter across the grass with Cal and Ambrose desperately trying to pick them up before they get dispersed a yard too far.

“Now look what yer've done, yer fec'n idiot.”

“Sorry. Sorry. Listen. Listen. Have you seen that 'drop-dead' gorgeous footballer, Little Lilly Bowden?”

“Don't tell me yer've got the hots for her. Yer do realize that she's only 12 years old?”

“It could be a sort of ... Romeo and Juliette ... sort of love affair.” Ambrose picks up a 'dirty postcard' and looks at it. The Image is of a cartoon woman with ginormous breasts struggling to get into a tiny bikini and The Caption reads, 'Hope over Experience'. Ambrose shows the postcard to Cal and says, “Are these supposed to be funny.”

“How would I know.” Then after a moment, “It's a nostalgia thing. It's meant to remind you of happy days gone-by. I suppose it's for the older generation but it sells mainly to teenagers like yerself.” Then after another moment, “And what's these, dirty finger marks. Well, yer going to have to pay for them.”

“Oh no Cal, please. Can you not just not tell me if you've seen Lilly.”

“Yes I have seen Lovely Lilly. Now, are we going to pay for all these 'dirty postcards'.”

“Oh alright. Just put them on my mother’s bill. Now where is she?”

“Down on the northern shore line. She’s going canoeing.” Then after a beat, “Hey yer fec’n arsehole. Yer mother hasn’t got an account with us.”

As Ambrose runs off, “Well, she has now. Just mark it down as ‘Nostalgia for Big Breasts’ with original fingerprints by Ambrose. That’ll please my mum, no end.”

Caledonia can’t help but smile.

In complete contrast, Lilly stands down on the northern shore line of the campsite, silently fuming. But not for long.

He comes waving and grinning and with altogether too much good humour, “Your friend Cal told me where you were. And your mother thought it was a good idea if I came down to see you to bring you the good news — well at least the good news for me and I suspect the bad news for you.”

“Well, spit it out then.”

“Your friend Wild-man Willy — strange name — isn’t coming. He’s gone off with that big fat slapper the one with the big tits.”

Lilly stamps her foot like a little girl that has lost her favourite hair grip, “A typical man. Wave a couple of double-Ds around and you can lead them anywhere.”

“If you’d only let me suck on your nipples you too could have double-Ds. Think of the power over men you could have. And an evens chance of becoming a big fat slapper.”

“Oh God.” Lilly cries out in self pity, “What did I do to deserve you.”

“Come on. No point in waiting for a person who isn’t coming.” Ambrose rushes into the water and pushes the canoe out before jumping in.

Lilly can see her plans have been blown clean out of the water — figuratively, that is — and picking up the picnic things she jumps in the canoe just in time before losing anything else that can’t be salvaged.

Ambrose passes her a paddle, “Now follow my lead; when I paddle on one side you paddle on the same side. Got it.”

“And what makes you Captain of this ship?”

“That’s easy. It’s because I know where I’m going.” She can hear the self-satisfaction in his voice which annoys the ‘bejesus’ out of her, “And where, pray tell, is that?”

Ambrose flaunts his superiority, “ I’ll let you know all in good time.”

“Oh no you won’t, you curly haired twit. You’ll tell me right now or I’ll take this paddle to that ridiculous curly haired wig of yours.”

Ambrose can hear real anger in her voice and decides the old adage about, discretion and valour, would have to be correct and yields the destination, "The electricity sub-station."

After a moment of reflection, "Why there?"

"Because the man at the campsite said there was a nice grassy field right next to it; ideal for a picnic and ideal for a bit of canoodling."

"Oh, a bit of canoodling is it?"

He can hear in the tone of her voice that he may well have passed the bounds of etiquette and good taste so he rows back a bit, "With your permission, of course."

The silence is long and he has to turn around to see if she's still there.

"Tell me Ambrose. Is this method of seduction successful?"

"I don't know. I've never tried it before." Then after a beat, "Besides, its all your fault, you have the most bizarre effect on me. I've never fancied anyone like this before. It's made me ... well ... bonkers."

"Bonkers is it. That's what fancying me does to you. Yes I can see that because I can definitely see that you are bonkers. What I can't see is why."

"Well, I don't know." Having turned around he relaxes a bit, lying on his stomach and looking up into her eyes, "You're very attractive ... in a 'boyish good looks' sort of way. The short cropped hair and muscular thighs lend themselves to the 'boyish good looks' thing. But for all of that, you're still very feminine."

"What! You have just described me as a screaming dyke and you can lie there with those puppy-dog's eyes and feed me all this tosh ... I'm so flabbered my ghaist is exhausted. Turn this canoe around and take me back to the campsite."

Ambrose sits up in haste, "I promise, I promise I won't annoy you any more. Please Lilly I'm not usually like this. I promise I won't say anything that sounds anything like being stupid."

"You'd better not."

He quickly turns around and starts paddling like mad. And so it is they reach the electricity sub-station without further incident. Only to find lots of workmen being busy but not too busy to stop and wave. Ambrose waves back then says, "Not much chance of having a quiet picnic in the field."

The field is right next to the sub-station and easily 'over-looked' by the workmen. Now Lilly doesn't fancy these men ogling at them while they have a picnic so, "Keep paddling, we can find a place further on."

And so it is that they reach the dilapidated pier at Inverfarigaig. Inverfarigaig doesn't register even as a village; more a settlement of houses and work buildings from a past era. What impresses Lilly and Ambrose is that the place is in the shadow of towering

craggy peaks. The view across Lock Ness is expansive and makes for a perfect spot for a picnic.

The place appears deserted and they settle down to sandwiches of avocado and mayonnaise, and, cheddar cheese and pickle.

“Did you make these?” Ambrose gushes with praise.

“See, I’m not just a pretty face. Not even a pretty boyish one.” Says Lilly more in fun than as an inducement to praise.

After what has turned out to be a more than a satisfactory early lunch they head up into Farigaig forest on one of the trails; after first visiting the toilets in the carpark and looking around the ‘out door classroom’ which is full of wooden statues of animals that live in the area.

Being young and fit they head up to Dun Dearduil the ruins of an iron-age fort.

The view from the iron-age fort is spectacular and Lilly and Ambrose can see why this place was chosen for a place of refuge and safety.

Lilly sits down on the grassy bank of what was one of the outer walls of the fort.

Ambrose heads over to an information board, “It says here this fort was occupied by Gallic tribes around 500 BC during the middle iron age period. Probably for a few hundred years. There were round houses and plenty of other buildings but it doesn’t say what happened to it.”

“They probably got tired of walking up the hill. Can you imagine having to do that a couple of times a day just to fetch water.” Lilly ponders, “I suppose their priorities were different in those days. You’d always be worried about other tribes pinching your cattle ...”

“Or women.”

“Oh yeah, I suppose so. If it wasn’t for the Rule of Law men would still be into that.”

“Things were much simpler in those days. I wouldn’t be wasting my time trying to seduce you. I’d simply carry you off and have my wicked way with you.”

“Oh really. You’d carry me off and have your wicked way with me.” She laughs at the thought.

“Well, I’d probably ask you first.”

“Excuse me young lady, would you mind if I can carry you off and have my wicked way with you.” She says this in a very posh accent for effect, “To which she would reply, ‘Fuck off you curly haired pervert before I use your goolies for football practice.’”

“You’re right of course. Things really have changed that much.”

“They certainly have. Yet it’s not that long ago. 2500 years. With 3 generations to the century that makes only 75 generations and that’s easy to grasp as we all know 3 generations — our parents and grandparents. And when you think about it, a hell of a lot has happened in that time. Computers, cars, aeroplanes and of course football have evolved in what is a relatively short time. The only thing these people who lived here had was iron and steel which they used for agriculture and fighting. 75 generations later and we have everything the modern era has to offer.”

“So how come. I mean what has driven the evolutionary process to evolve so quickly.”

Lilly grasps an insight, “You’re right. The evolutionary process itself is speeding up. So much has happened in just the last 200 years.”

Ambrose expands on it, “Since the scientific era became turbo-charged by the scientific method.”

“It’s even faster now. You can almost feel it.”

“It’s no longer just fast. It’s accelerating.”

“It’s a bit like our expanding universe. According to Willy our universe is expanding under an increased acceleration which might result in our universe tearing itself apart.”

“Yeah, but you don’t think our accelerating evolution will do the same?”

“No. I don’t think that. But I do feel as if we are heading towards some kind of ...”

“Some kind of what?” Ambrose can’t control his excitement.

“I don’t know. Some kind of ... apocalypse.”

“An apocalypse!” Ambrose is wide-eyed and staring, “You are joking aren’t you.”

“I don’t know. Perhaps apocalypse is the wrong word. It’s just that it feels like the end of something. Don’t you feel it?”

“I feel something. Like everything is out of control ...”

“And we’re heading for some definite end. No, not end, change, that’s it. We’re heading for some massive change and one we can’t stop from happening.” The shock of what she has just said shakes her out of her chain of thought as another one steps in taking its place without missing a beat, “Wave upon wave. Evolutionary history is made up of endless waves. There’s another one coming and that’s what we can feel — like surfers being picked up by a wave — you feel it before you can ride it.”

“And ride it we must.” Ambrose is there with Lilly and they share a moment.

Then back into the moment, “Have you noticed how dark it’s getting?”

Ambrose stares up into the sky, “We’d better get back. It must be late.”

Without a further word they get up and run down the track to Inverfarigaig with Ambrose wondering how the conversation got high-jacked when he had such an impressive piece of monologue already rehearsed about Robert Musil.

*

Now I bet you remember this. Again proving the veracity of this new form of reading. But the next time this comes up it will be in a totally different situation. Where the story in 'The Man Without Qualities' come to life in this story in regard to the Committee. Now if I were you. I'd get myself a copy of 'The Man Without Qualities' and not just because it is a jolly good read, which it is, but also it will provide you with the storyline for when it arrives in this story. Now that's about as clear as mud, right now, but it will be as clear as a mountain stream in all good time.

*

Arriving back at Inverfarigaig they collect their things from the pier and paddle off at speed with the light now fading fast.

Hardly a word spoken. It is as if they are all spent when it comes to talk. Even thoughts are just 'passing clouds'.

By the time they reach the camp site it is full on dark.

*

She watches as they emerge from the gloom. Just a shape on the surface of the lake. But she knows immediately it's them. The sense, the feeling of relief is intense. Ali loves her daughter and this long process of letting go has hardly begun. What could replace her in her affections. More than that. Simply. What could replace her. There simply wasn't anything.

*

She watches as they pull the canoe out of the water, "Did you have a good time?"

Lilly gives her mother a tight hug. Still a strong expression of what the child feels for her mother, "Oh, it was alright." She says in a bored matter of fact way.

"And how was Ambrose?"

"Not so bad. If he'd only leave out the kissing. And stop pretending that he's in love with me."

"Actually. I don't think he is. I think he's genuinely smitten. He actually told me. He told me he's fallen madly in love with you." Ali can't help but laugh, in a nice quiet way.

“Yeah, but. Even if I did want a boyfriend. I would hardly pick him. Would I? I mean, who wants a boyfriend that’s prettier than you. You could stick him in a dress put some lipstick on him and he could easily pass for an attractive girl.”

“You do realize that I’m just standing here and can hear everything you’re saying.”

“Then go away and stop listening to other people’s conversations.” Says Lilly with a cruel tone to match the cruel words.

Ambrose picks up his things and walks past the shoreline and onto the grass.

“And there’s another thing. His name.”

Mother and daughter say it together, “I wouldn’t call a dog Ambrose.”

Then, off in the distance, “I heard that.”

Ali and Lilly hug each other as they laugh.

Behind them — Out in the Lock. A shape glides past just below the surface of
The Enchanted Lake.



Chapter 4

Changing The Meta-Reality

Order without Laws is just as Strange
In the Physical World as it is in the
Social World.

The Answer to both lies in
Self-Organization;

The Anarchist's Dream,

The Physicist's Folly.

A Baby in the Womb Self- Organises

And Everyone Calls it:

An Every Day Miracle.

Every Atom and Every Molecule 'Knows'
Exactly Where They Should Be.

But How?

Can it be Derived from the Two States of
Our Universe Coming together:

The Endless Nowness of Being

Joining With

The Unformed Block

To Create – Life.

Is this a Question? Or an Answer?

Or both?

– Wild-man Willy

From the Book: Changing The Meta-Reality by
Self-Organising.

*

Ali with Olly in a backpacker baby carrier is waiting in line at the campsite shop and reception. Olly always feels important in this mode of transport primarily because he sits up high looking over his mother's head. He takes everything in as he looks around with interest until his sister takes hold of his hand and gives it a gentle squeeze.

Olly knows this form of communication and by whom. He gurgles and squeaks with delight then leans down to pull her hair. There then ensues a play fight until mum puts a stop to it.

"Who's that looking in at the window. Could it be your boyfriend." States Ali in wicked play.

Lilly pulls a face on seeing Ambrose; his face pushed up tight to the glass, "You can just guess who he's looking for." Lilly tries scrubbing her mind free of this apparition but without success, "Oh, and by the way, he's not my boyfriend."

"He is very good looking. Don't you think? Just look at those beautiful eyes; violet."

"Mum. Will you stop it. Anyway, he's not my type."

"So you do have a type. Let me guess. The centre forward for Watford. What do they call him, Troy Deeny?"

"No. Not as ruff as that. More like Wolves wing-back, Doherty; beard an all. Poor old Ambrose only has a few stringy hairs left over from a smooth skin advert."

They both laugh.

"I suppose you're laughing at me." Ambrose tries to be cheery but fails miserably.

"So, what do you want?" Demands Lilly.

"I take it you're going to get your corona virus shots and I was just wondering if I could tag along. My parents say they have got better things to do with their time — like making out their wills."

"Of course you can ..." Ali is interrupted by the Manager, "If there are people waiting to ask me about the corona shots — you can forget it — what I know is what is written on the board outside."

Groans and moans from a lot of the people queuing but Ali has something to say, "So where is this 'Clansman Centre'?"

"Its sign posted once you're in town." Comes back the reply.

Later

The building looks like it was a school at one time before its transformation into a celebration of the Clans. Having now being taken over by the Local Health Authority the members of The Clansman Centre who are still working look wonderfully out of place as they are still dressed in traditional highland dress. This juxtaposition could be mistaken for a Zen Koan on contemporary Scottish life; doctors and nurses in white, administering the

ant-viral shots, with Scottish highlanders dressed circa 18th century, organising a 21st century population. All very exciting in a confused sort of way.

Olly is having a 'field day'; there is so much to entice his little mind his head swivels around like a submarine's periscope surveying the ocean, until it 'homes' in on a particularly fascinating woman. He can feel her quantum field from 10 metres away. He has never felt anything quite like it; there is flying and soaring and high vistas of a strange landscape. He is captivated.

The woman, dressed in a nurses uniform, is small and wiry and blond and very very pretty, or so Lilly thinks, as the woman makes her way through to where the Bowden clan stand. This diminutive beauty raises her arms up to Olly who obliges her by offering her his, "Come with me you lovely little man."

Olly replies in kind if he only could, "Take me to that far-off country and don't spare the wing beats."

"Hey, what are you doing?" Ali catches on to what is happening between the woman and her son.

"Don't worry, Ali, I'm a nurse. Olly will be safe with me. I'll just take him along and have him given his shots."

It's only when the nurse and Olly pass the portrait of Archibald Macnab — a particularly nasty 'Laird' — then pass out through a door that Ali and Lilly are suddenly awoken to the possibility of danger as well as to that of concern. They both set off at once leaving Ambrose to keep their place in the cue. But on reaching the door Ali stops Lilly, "How did she know my name?"

"Must be psychic. "

"You wait here in case they come back."

Ali passes through the door leaving Lilly with nothing better to do than read the information board next to Archibald's portrait. A tale of wrong doing to people of the region and later to the people of Canada. He may never have murdered anyone but he abused and defrauded and robbed and raped and would seem to have had absolutely no conscience whatsoever when it came to exploiting other people for his own ends. It is like an omen to Lilly who abandons her post, crashes through the door into a hallway and eventually through another door into the open air at the back of the The Clansman Centre.

Ali is just getting up off the ground groggy and confused. Lilly helps her over to a bench seat before the interrogation gets underway. But to no avail. Ali seems to have lost her memory. And the only communication she can make is a mad pointing to the sky. Lilly looks but can't see anything except a faint spec that disappears into cloud almost the moment she spots it.

Laying her mother down on the bench seat she dashes back inside and fetches out a doctor, who, after a quick examination, sends for an ambulance.

Lilly goes through Ali's pockets until she finds her mother's mobile phone.

She rings her grandparents and talks to Big Richard, “Mum’s been taken ill and the doctor is sending her to the hospital in Inverness. It’s best if you meet us there. Can you tell Richard.”

“Richard is here with us. We’ll bring him along. But what’s happened?”

“I don’t know but Olly is missing. Sorry, I’ll have to go — the ambulance is here.”

The ambulance has been parked in the car park of The Clansman Centre. While Lilly watches them get her mother onto a stretcher a thought strikes her and she phones Wild-man Willy, “You won’t believe what’s happened. Mum’s been taken ill at The Clansman Centre and is being taken to the Hospital in Inverness. And little Olly is missing — believed kidnapped.”

“This is not one of your sick jokes?” Willy enquires but he can already tell that it’s not; there’s something in the tone of her voice.

“No. I’m serious. And there’s something weird about all of this. Come up to Inverness as soon as you can. Sorry, I have to go.”

Willy tells Anita, who is sitting next to him in her Alpha Romeo; they are parked up in a lay-by. But their conversation is interrupted by Anita’s mobile phone, “Hello ... what’s that ... you want me to go to The Clansman Centre in Fort Augusta ... and take charge of an investigation into a kidnapping. Yes of course.” She turns to Willy, “Sorry, I have to go to Fort Augusta and you will have to come with me.” Then she adds, “It’ll be for the best.”

Wild-man looks at Anita with increasing intensity as he can sense something fundamental has changed in her demeanour, “What is it? What is it you’re not telling me?”

Anita looks deep into his core accessed via his Quantum Field emanating from his eyes, “I was going to tell you just as soon as I found the right words. But, in a way, it’s better like this ... You remember how we talked about how the science community in general and astronomers and cosmologists in particular are convinced that Aliens are already living amongst us. Well ... they’re right. I’m one.”

Willy would have laughed, if he could, but the transformation that is sitting next to him makes any other reaction but shock impossible. Anita is giving him a glimpse of what she looks like back on her home planet; a green skinned Elfin like creature with pointy ears.

She switches back to her human form, “This is me here on your home planet. This really is me. The person you have been making love with, is as human as you are. Really.” The shock has frozen Wild-man into an almost catatonic state. “Let me explain it all. You know how we discussed how all Quantum Entities produce a Quantum Field. But what I didn’t tell you is that it is possible to detach the Quantum Field from the Quantum Entity that produces it. Once separated it can entangle itself with the Quantum Field produced by — in your case — your biosphere, which in turn entangles itself with the Quantum Field produced by your sun, which in turn entangles itself with the Quantum Field of our galaxy, what you humans call ‘The Milky Way Galaxy’, which in turn entangles itself through several other Quantum Fields until it entangles itself ultimately with the Quantum Field of the entire Universe.” She stops for effect, “And as a consequence it is therefore possible to travel throughout the universe at the speed of thought. That’s how I got here. It is simple enough — once you know how. It is also simple enough to then construct a

Quantum Entity, to attach to the Quantum Field of the creature I allowed you to see; once you know how, of course. I constructed Anita through a process of Self-Organisation, using the biologic materials that your world is so richly endowed. Just like a human baby does.” (see Appendix 3 — Reincarnation)

Most of what she has said has sunk in — if only in big and small chunks — but the question that arises is far more normal in human terms, “Is your home world like this one?”

Anita smiles in warmth, “Yes. It has a similar sun to this one and is in the ‘goldilocks’ region where water exists in its 3 forms. It’s a world covered in Forest, with trees similar to the ones here. Perhaps, one day, I’ll take you there.”

*

How do you convince anyone that you are an Alien — this is obviously a rhetorical question — because you do exactly what Anita did and reveal yourself; green skin, pointy ears, noseless nose and all.

Think about it. If this planet called Earth can produce a life form — our biosphere — then, how many other planets have done the same thing. Believe me, there has to be a lot.

So convincing people shouldn’t be that difficult once they realize that the Earth is not so unique but is just a good example of what an ‘ordinary’ planet looks like.

This would appear to be the real difficulty in convincing our fellow human beings that other life forms exist. The fact that life is not so special. That it exists all over the universe where the conditions are right. And that different forms of life have the same fundamental attribute of Consciousness — they all have an experiential experience.

*

Wild-man suddenly leaps onto Anita kissing her passionately on her mouth on her face. While she drapes herself around him waiting for his passion to subside.

“We need to go. I need to take over the investigation into the kidnapping. The kidnapping of baby Olly. Please don’t get upset by what is happening. The last thing that will happen is any harm to Olly. But he must be returned to his mother as soon as possible. And you, my lover, must help me.”

“Of course, whatever it takes.”

On route to Fort Augusta Anita fills Willy in on some of the background to this Meta-Reality that Wild-man now finds himself in.

*

Every story you have ever read is constructed in a Meta-Reality. This story, ‘The Enchanted Lake’, starts off in one Meta-Reality — the one that is incredibly similar to our

everyday life — and turns into a Meta-Reality more likely to be found in ‘science fiction’. Not an inconsiderable task if it is to be believable. And the best way to achieve this is to do what Anita does next and to fill Willy’s mind and consequently the readers mind with a quick but accurate sketch of the Meta-Reality you have all just entered.

*

How there are 3 Alien species from the ‘Milky Way Galaxy’ — all given names, by agreement between the Aliens, from humankind’s mythological past: The Elves that Anita belongs to; The Fairies a flying species; and the Hob-Goblins a species that live on and under mountains.

How, these 3 species have ‘Encampments’ within the Quantum Field of the Enchanted Lake.

How, The Lake is a Quantum Entity in its own right. Having 425 separate species living in it — just like all living Quantum Entities have living things living inside of them, including human beings.

How, a salt water connection at one end of The Lake, via the ocean, provides sodium and chlorine ions that move down the lake and that attract electrons that move up the lake to meet them.

How, this produces a living circuit that stimulates and effects all the species living in it.

How, the result is a powerful and unique Quantum Field that can be detected from billions of light years away, even amongst the vast array of Quantum Entities that inhabit the near-universe; and nearly as powerful as the Quantum Field of the Earth’s Biosphere which it somehow ‘piggybacks’ on.

And,

How, 1 other species has actually done this. But not the whole species just a singular creature. A singular creature who has been visiting Lock Ness for a few thousand years. Who comes for the fishing and to excite the local inhabitants with whom he has formed a special affection. One who goes by the name: Monster.

Anita has to admit to the fact that her species has been studying Earth, its biosphere and its top intelligent (representational) species — humankind — for a long time; since before the building of the Pyramids. It’s the evolution of the species that is the main interest and how that evolution has speeded up. Transforming many individuals — including Wild-man — into a state that makes them ready for the Quantum Leap into the transcendental form that is at present only a potential. A subject that is special to all Enlightened Species as they have all gone through it. But how, the experiential experience of this transcendental leap is so powerful it blanks out any mundane memory. Anita is hoping to experience it again through her human form but this time she hopes to hold onto the memories.

The questions for Wild-man Willy are legion. Here are a few sample examples:

Is the Evolutionary Process a living entity in its own right?

Does our universe exist in 2 states; one, The Endless Nowness of Being, and two, The Unformed Block?

And do these 2 states come together to create life. Life which is in the myriad forms created by the Evolutionary Process.

Many of these questions are still unanswered in full even by Enlightened Beings like Anita.

Wild-man Willy has long accepted the existence of the Unformed Block. A concept first derived from Taoism — the universe as a singular entity that incorporates everything in time and space; a singular entity fully integrated that possess all possibilities and all paths of all creatures held together in an holistic whole. Past, Present and Future held in a state of Nowness — a seemingly impossible state. And yet.

The Taoists came across this state through direct revelation. A state Willy has glanced if not fully realized. But enough to convince him of its existence.

And then there are the waves ... waving through everything ... even through the Unformed Block ... even through The Endless Nowness of Being ... giving life to ...

They arrive at The Clansman Centre as these thoughts conclude in acceptance by consensus — the usual way for Elfin kind. And fast becoming the way for Wild-man Willy.

They arrive in the carpark of The Clansman Centre where a number of policemen are trying to organize a large group of mothers and children.

Anita shows her warrant card to a policeman who points her in the direction of the main hall; Willy tags along behind trying to look official and bureaucratic; not easy when he is neither. And now that his mind is filled with Alien thoughts — literally.

Inside the hall Anita collars the Sargent in charge, “What on Earth is going on?”

“At last. I take it you are going to take over?” He can see that she is, “It looks like a kidnapping. With the mother rendered unconscious and now on her way to hospital in Inverness.”

“And where did this kidnapping take place?”

The Sargent points to the door next to the portrait of Archibald Macnab, “If you go through those doors and down the hall till you come to another set of doors and go through those you will find yourself in the carpark at the back of The Clansman Centre. It happened out there.” Anita heads off in that direction, but is stopped by the Sargent, “What do you want us to do?”

“What you normally do. Take names, addresses and statements. Then send them home. They can’t continue with the inoculation with an investigation taking place.” She sets off again and pulls up again, “The Doctor who examined the mother, is he still here?”

“Yes.”

“Find him and send him out to see me.”

Anita finds her way out into the rear carpark and scans the ground with human eyes and Alien senses. She spots something on the ground and picks it up. A button from a nurse's uniform. She 'sniffs' it with deep breaths through her mouth then holds it out for Wild-man to examine, "I doubt if you'll be able to smell it because it's very faint but it has the distinct odour of 'fairy dust'".

But Willy can just about detect something; enough to enhance his vision into technicolor, "Wow. What is it?"

"A particularly potent chemical the fairies use for rendering humans unconscious. Harmless but capable of leaving your average human unconscious for several days and without any memory for even longer. Useful if you are an Alien and need to control humans who may be on the brink of discovering who you are. This is almost certainly what this 'fairy' used on Ali." Anita scans the skies with human eyes and Alien senses, "Long gone. Not a trace. But at least we know which Alien Species did this."

The banging of the door alerts Anita and Willy to the arrival of the Doctor. She holds out an evidence bag and Willy drops the button in before he arrives.

"Did anybody see anything?" Anita starts in.

"Not that I know of. The mother's daughter, Lilly, said that her mother was delirious when she found her and that there was a peculiar smell. But that's about it ... except that the mother was pointing to the sky."

Anita and Wild-man share a moment.

"There was a nurse, I believe, involved." Anita guesses.

"Apparently so. But I didn't see her and she wasn't part of my team. The girl, Lilly, gave a good description and was convinced that this woman was the kidnapper. Although how they got out of the carpark without anyone seeing them, I don't know."

"Put it all down in your statement then perhaps you could help organize a search of the building. Perhaps you can inform the police that I've had to go to follow up a lead but I'll be back as soon as I can."

Anita and Wild-man hurry around the outside of the building get into the Alfa Romeo and drive off.

"Where are we going?"

"To the fairies encampment where I hope to discover which one she is and why she did it." Then more to her self, "This would have to be a matter of individual Agency. I can't see the other fairies going along with it. And certainly not the King and Queen."

"Agency?"

Anita looks curiously at Wild-man, "Agency — as in acting as a free Agent."

"You look on Agency as a quality. Like something that can be possessed?"

“Of course. Although there is no known connection between Quantum Mechanics and Agency. There must be ... somewhere. Sorry. We may be more advanced than human beings but we don't know everything. Agency is just one of those things. You probably understand this intuitively but have never given it much thought. Agency is just the notion that certain systems in the world like human beings, or Elves for that matter, have intentional states, like drives or desires, to bring things about or to make things happen. Quantum Fields in themselves don't possess Agency, only what's carried in the Quantum Fields — like our knowledge and sensations — possess Agency. A strange conundrum.”

“A strange conundrum indeed because it suggests we create the world by acting in it as free Agents.” He stops and thinks for a moment, “But surely we are not totally free Agents anyway. Aren't we governed by social and cultural ... 'norms'. Not exactly laws but rules and regulations, most of which are adhered to almost sub-consciously.”

“Exactly. This fairy must have ignored her cultural boundaries to act in this purely selfish way. Normally, fairies wouldn't act in this way. Stealing a baby and of an Alien species at that, would simply never happen. Whatever possessed this fairy to act in this manner must be incredibly powerful.”

“Unless, of course, she has gone bonkers.”

“Sorry Will, you will just have to accept that enlightened beings don't go bonkers. No, it has to be a matter of Agency. Because that's the only thing that can change the external world by internal decision making.”

*

Wild-man Willy has to digest everything that Anita is telling him and then he has to put it into a form he understands and can accept. He finally comes up with what follows and tries it out on Anita.

*

“As a free Agent I invent the physical world from all the concepts I know and have derived from observations and subjects like science, philosophy (both East and West) and also which I have invented by the use of my creative imagination.”

“Not bad. And if what you say is true then it is possible for everything in Reality to be an act of Agency?”

“So. Is it then. Is it true?”

“Why ask me. I'm just an Elf.” She disarms him with her modesty.

They start laughing and play fighting which is dangerous as they are driving along a busy road.

“Stop it, stop it. That's the real world out there. If we crash we'll definitely know if it's true or not. The only trouble is it could be incredibly painful.”

*

Ah, is pain a clue to what Agency is. Pain as the result of bad Agency. What is for certain is that Agency has one foot in the Quantum World as all creatures with Agency are Quantum Entities and the other foot is in the Classical World where Pain and Pleasure are experientially experienced.

Is it then possible to say that Agency is a set of abilities that exist between the two Worlds. Such as the ability to choose between two courses of action which will determine the outcome of the creature/entity, not only to help it survive but also help it flourish — here is a connection with Evolution. Always a good criteria to judge anything by.

There is also the ability to act in Worlds within Worlds. A World constructed out of a network of neurones, axones and dendrites that exists in the brain of a Quantum Entity is nothing more than a World that exists within another World. And here we see Agency acting between the two worlds of the Quantum World and the Classical World as well — the World in-between.

But how many other abilities does Agency possess?

No wonder that no one has cracked Agency! It makes my brain/mind hurt just thinking about it.

*

They arrive at the fairies encampment by a matter of Agency — meaning that they both acted in consort in regard to Agency; not having tested Willy's theory to destruction. Leaving the mystery of whether or not everything in Reality is an act of Agency. Or, whether Agency is just a single multi-dimensional element amongst many that brings Reality about.

*

Of course, it seems obvious that Agency is just one element amongst many, but that is darn difficult to prove. Give it a try. Then ask yourself if it is your Agency or ... (Fill in the blank space to see how difficult it is).

There are many such conundrums in the philosophic understanding of the Nature of Reality. So you better get used to it.

And it's not as if you can appeal to The Endless Nowness of Being because all that gives you is the experiential experience of the Nature of Reality at that moment.

Nor can you appeal to the Unformed Block because all that gives you is the experiential experience of the Nature of Reality as a singularity.

That, of course, just leaves the ‘get out of jail card’ known as Factor X. (see Appendix 5 — Factor X — What it means)

It is just as Anita Cassidy has summed it up on many an occasion: It’s a bugger!

*

The Fairies encampment is not at all like what Willy was expecting. It is a large baronial — for want of a better word — pile. Turrets and towers that would not have looked out of place in Gormenghast. Lawns surround ‘Lockletter Wood’ and run down to Lock Melkie a small lake on the other side of which is the road A831 from Drumnadrochil to Cannich.

Behind the ‘pile’ is the wood that the baronial mansion is called after.

Out in front are a number of stages on which a number of groups of highland dancers are practicing. This Alien Encampment is disguised as: The Highland Dance Centre.

Wild-man recognises a number of the girls from the ‘Invergarry Dance Festival’, “Are all these girls Aliens?”

“Some of them but not all and that’s because this establishment exists as a going concern. The Fairies were rather clever in getting human beings to come to them so they could be studied. We Elves concentrated on finding professions that we could use to the same ends.”

“Like you becoming a detective.”

“Precisely.”

One of the dancers leaves the stage and runs into ‘Lockletter’. As they pull up to the flight of stone stairs in front of the baronial mansion 2 figures dressed in flowing robes exit through the main doors.

“Ah, here we are. Here is Oberon king of the Fairies and Tatiana his Queen. Best if you let me do the talking — at least to start with.”

“Rather a nice touch using Shakespeare’s names for the King and Queen of the Fairies.” Wild-man speaks out his thoughts.

Although not directed at Oberon it is never-the-less he who answers, “Thank you for your praise. Wild-man Willy I believe.” He then turns to Anita, “Is he almost enlightened?” Oberon answers his own question, “He must be or you wouldn’t have formed such a close relationship with him. Still, a little risky, if you don’t mind me saying so.”

“Oberon, you know why we are here, so let us not flap about with inanities.”

“Come, talk with me.” Tatiana interjects, “Let these males of their species engage in observational jousting if they must. We at least can have a reasonable conversation. Although don’t expect an instant explanation. The Fairy, Lelia, who stole the human baby is no where to be found. The reason for this strange behaviour is unknown. All I can say at

this time is there would have to be a powerful reason or a powerful emotion to excite such a powerful motive for carrying out such a terrible action.”

“My thoughts exactly.” Anita takes Tatiana to one side, “Finding her soon will be problematic?”

“Indeed. A search will be instigated and carried out with vigour. She will be found, but when ...”

Oberon and Wild-man have drifted down to the only stage in operation where a lone dancer performs with great dexterity. All the other dancers have left their stages and retreated into the mansion.

“I’ve often wondered what it would be like to have an affair with an Alien. Is it as exciting as its potential would suggest?”

“Even more so. Although this is only my first time. So I’m no great expert.”

“Indeed not. Indeed not. Still it starts off a longing that I will have to guard against. Tatiana and myself have enough friction between us at present without just the whiff of titivation being added to our emotional chemistry.”

“Explosive?”

Oberon raises his eyebrows and swivels his eyes, “Could be. She has a short fuse attached to a bad temper. Not a good combination at the best of times.”

“Indeed not.” Willy concurs with some humour in his voice, “But this is not the subject that we should be talking about.”

“Perhaps not. But there is little that can be done until we find Lelia and the missing baby. So what can the harm be while we wait. Of course the subject matter may not be to your taste. Perhaps you would like to discuss the meaning of Reality. I can see from my entanglement with your Quantum Field that you have a keen interest and a strong desire to understand the Nature of Reality — a noble pursuit.”

“I wish I could access your Quantum Field with the ease with which you access mine.”

Oberon smiles, “It comes with practice. But, I would not allow you access to all of my being. That is considered a fundamental right as you will come to realize after your full enlightenment.”

“You talk of things that I have no knowledge of, so perhaps you can give me an insight into your understanding of the Nature of Reality.” Willy tries opening Oberon up.

“I’m a simpleton and by that I mean I like to keep things nice and simple. So, my definition of Reality is: What Exists; and as a consequence, What does it do.”

“You wouldn’t add: And Why.” Willy adds in the form of a question.

“By adding anything else you simply invent a jar of worms and then let them breed after letting them out. I told you I’m a simpleton: Reality is What Exists, and, What Exists does.

“I admire discipline. Perhaps I should limit my enquiry, like you have done.”

“No, no, you mustn’t do that. Your wanderings into the meaning of Reality have produced some stunning pieces of philosophical knowledge. Most entertaining.” Oberon laughs, “I particularly like this fundamental idea that you have, that all of Reality is based on Infinity. Which gives you an Infinite amount of wriggle room when it comes to what exists.”

“But that’s so true. The Nature of Reality would have to be Infinite to include everything.”

“So much for my simpleton’s perspective. According to your perspective everything exists and as such I’d have to include ‘everything’ into my understanding.”

“Precisely. And also; What do all these things do.”

Oberon laughs even louder, “And that my friend is another jar of worms. Keep it simple. Leave off after you have said: Reality is What Exists, and as a consequence, and What Does it do. Problem solved. As long as you ignore all the individual things that make up what exists.”

“Ah, I see.” Says Wild-man Willy, “Limit the problem to solve the problem. Pure genius.”

“Thank you.”

“No problem.”

Anita and Tatiana are working on more specific problems such as what should they do next in regard to Lelia and the missing baby Olly.

After much to-ing and fro-ing they agree that it would be best if Anita and Wild-man should visit the Hob-Goblins. And this for a number of reasons which includes the fact that Lelia had spent some time with Hob-Goblins on an exchange programme to foster better relations between the Aliens studying human beings on planet Earth. As such she has more knowledge about Hob-Goblins than anyone else; either Fairies or Elves. A lot of which she has not shared through entanglement with the rest of the Fairies — reasons unknown.

So it is that Anita and Willy set off for Dern, a place near Sarn Lock and An-T-Sionhaisit, a rocky outcrop south of ‘Lockletter Woods’ but which can only be accessed by retracing their steps on the A82 back towards Fort Augusta until they reached the village of Alltsigh, where they turn off onto a rough track, heading north.

Anita decides it is time to fill Wild-man Willy into the cultural differences between the 3 Alien species, “You must understand that all 3 Alien species have peculiarities that are peculiar to them. And contra-wise they also have similarities between them. Take social arrangements. Elves are closest to humans socially in that they have a democratic arrangement. Fairies are royalists and hence have an authoritarian social arrangement. But Hob-Goblins are furthest removed from humans on account that they are like ‘naked mole rats’ here on Earth. And ‘naked mole rats’ are more like insects in their social arrangements having a Queen who produces offspring, several males who service the Queen sexually for evolutionary purposes, and a large number of workers or helpers who are sterile females but who are each capable of becoming fully sexualised Queens. This

social arrangement is far removed from our own experience — either human or Elf.” Anita looks towards Willy to make sure he is following what she is saying, “There are many other species types of social arrangements, far more peculiar than that of the Hob-Goblins but these have little interest in human beings.”

“Exactly how many enlightened species are there in our ‘Milky-way Galaxy’?”

“76 at the last count. Making human beings the 77th. Not many when you consider there are nearly 300 billion stars each with solar systems and hence the potential for producing intelligent beings.”

“I guess not. Still, with 300 billion galaxies in the observable universe that would make upward of 23,000 billion enlightened species. Now you have to admit, Anita, that’s quite a lot.”

“I suppose so. I’ve never really thought about it like that.”

“How many have you met?” Wild-man enquires; trying to get his mind around the possibilities.

“Several hundred I suppose. Not many when you consider how many there are. And believe me, some of them are pretty weird.”

Wild-man laughs, “And I thought we humans were weird.”

“The trouble for you humans is that there are still plenty of humans that are extremely dangerous and as a consequence far from enlightenment. Or perhaps I should have put that the other way around. There are too many humans far from enlightenment and consequently extremely dangerous.”

“You can say that again. How do you turn them around?”

“You don’t. And they can’t be let loose on the universe. It’s all part of the enlightenment process. They are simply eliminated.”

“Wow. That’s billions of people.” Wild-man gets his mind around what Anita has just said and it shocks him.

“I’ll take you through it all when we’ve got more time. But right now I must try and prepare you for a shock of a different kind. Meeting Mad-Am, the Queen of the Hob-Goblins can be destabilising to say the least. So hang on to your feelings for me. They should offer you enough protection from any entanglement probe she might exercise.”

They arrive at a hole in the ground: 20 metres across and roughly circular and about 50 metres in depth.

Anita hangs over the edge by holding onto Wild-man, “Hello, Mad-Am. I need to speak with you concerning a Fairy and a missing human child.”

A blurred image of the hole is followed by crystal clarity. Water can now be seen falling into the hole from several places around the edge. Vegetation of all kinds can be seen clinging onto the rocky walls. At the bottom several figures can now be seen looking up.

Also a stone staircase winds its way up, and to Willy's amazement, it starts right next to him. Anita leads the way down.

Mad-Am stands some 5 metres tall; a heavily pregnant woman. There are 2 men standing either side at 4 metres tall and a number of other women at 2 metres tall and all of them wearing loose robes intricately tied with braided rope.

"This Fairy, Lelia, I know her quite well. She was an exchange in one of our 'getting-to-know-you' exercises. She sounded no alarms, on the contrary, she was most amiable." Mad-Am is obviously addressing Anita but she can't take her eyes off Willy whom she now approaches. She gives him a gentle poke with a large fore finger, "What a fine specimen you are. No wonder Anita has chosen you as a mate." She turns to Anita, "Once you have finished with him perhaps you can pass him on to me. I'd be excellent for his education."

"Just as long as you don't eat him when you are finished."

Mad-Am's laughter echoes around the hole, "You know full well that cultural trait died out a long time ago."

"I take it you haven't seen her or know where she is."

"I do not. Nor can I detect her presence within my domain."

"She studied your mining techniques. Would she, using this knowledge, be capable of constructing a 'hide-hole'. One she could escape detection from even you?"

"Perhaps for a while. But I'd find her in the end."

"Then perhaps you would initiate a search. It is not right that this baby Oly should be separated from his mother."

"You are right of course. And I will see to it that she is found even if it is outside of my jurisdiction."

Anita bows the top part of her body at an angle of 45 degrees in reply.

"Now for some refreshment." Mad-Am claps her hands then picks Wild-man up and sits him on her knee as she sits down. There is little room as Mad-Am's extended belly leaves barely enough. Wild-man can, squashed as he is against her belly, can feel the unborn jiggling around inside her; a rather disquieting experience for Willy but makes Anita laugh. It also makes Mad-Am laugh but in a different tone.

Water from the depths of the earth; from the depths of The Earth; rare and precious and filled with miraculous qualities are consumed. Until Wild-man's head spins and Anita has to stop him from consuming more.

He barely remembers climbing the stairs. Anita waits until he recovers a semblance of order to his intoxicated mind before she fills him in on an important fact about Hob-Goblins, "We've discussed Agency, that ability to act as a free Agent in the world — human individuals have it, as do we Elves and so too with the Fairies. But not with the

Hob-Goblins. Mad-Am is the only one who has Agency although that ability resides as a potential inside all of her female workers who have the potential of becoming Queens.”

“So she speaks for her whole species.”

“Well, it’s more than just that. It’s as if she is the whole species — at least in this particular Encampment — or so we think. How things pan out on their world is unknown as we have never visited it.”

“Have you never thought about visiting it?”

Anita screws up her face, “I can think of 100s of other species that I would rather visit. But having visited quite a few they never hold the same interest as species that are similar to our own.”

“Like humans.”

“Precisely. There are so many similarities between us; it’s quite beguiling.”

Wild-man Willy glows with pride. Then smirks with a disgraceful facial expression that Anita puts down to the effects of the ‘Deep-Earth’ water.

“It’s the similarities and the differences together that makes my relationship with you so absolutely wonderful.” Then a sudden thought strikes him and he spills it out in unguarded words, “Will it last. Will our relationship last.”

“Just because I’m an Alien doesn’t mean that I’m not subject to the same oddities and peccadilloes as humans when it comes to emotions and relationships. And besides, if you think about it, nothing lasts for ever.”

A sadness descends on Wild-man, “I suppose not.”

“But while it lasts we should enjoy it for what it is worth — an act of Agency shared.”

Willy brightens, “And what can be more wonderful than that.”

Anita sets off at speed as the Elvin Encampment is at the other side of Lock Ness and she wishes to get there as soon as possible as she has called for a full meeting of the ‘parliament’ to discuss what has happened and why. Not all Elvin will be present. But by far the vast number who are, will be. There are too many like Anita who hold positions inside of human organizations to make it possible for all Elvin to attend meetings at short notice.

*

If you are still wondering how Aliens seem able to contact other Aliens without using a specific procedure. It is because they simply leave an open access to their Quantum Field that alerts other Aliens automatically; this can be for Aliens of the same species or for all Enlightened species. Just think how much time this saves in terms of communication. Eat your heart out mobile phone constructors of Earth.

And now I must enquire how your transference from one Meta-Reality to another one has progressed. Has this transference been successful. You will know this if you still want to carry on reading the story.

There are probably a 1000 different ways of carrying out this transference. This one, the one that I have chosen — an act of Agency — has the benefit of being remarkably short both in time and words written.

You should, therefore, need little time to reflect, analyse and comprehend the words written which number in the 100s rather than the 1000s.

Sorry if I seem rather smug in regard to this essential transference but I am well known as an Arrogant Dragon — so you can't really expect anything else.

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Chapter 5

The Debate

Mathematics is a Representational Language that is Symbol Driven and Formal in its Execution & Presentation. Thus it is Unerringly Accurate and Precise.

Therefore it is Useful in Describing Facts about the Physical World.

As such it is Often Used to Build Models of the Physical World which Many Mathematicians Mistake for the Real World. Hence:

Mathematical Statements are best Judged by their Beauty and not by Their Apparent Descriptively Accurate Portrayal of the World.

This also coincides with the Fact That Reality is at best an Approximation and is Subject to Probabilities about every Aspect of Every Detail (see Quantum Mechanics).

Mathematics is Therefore a Representational Medium that is Useful for Constructing Abstract Koans of the Useless Kind.

– Wild-man Willy

From the Book: Statistics – A Modern Day Disease

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Buried deep in the Forest of Stratherick, the ancient Manor House known as Tom Lockruairida which stands by the side of the tiny Lock Lockruairida, is a large 3 story 18th century stone built monolith, that was fully restored by the Elfin-kind Aliens in the 1950s as an Educational College specifically for the purpose of providing Scotland's Civil Servants and Bureaucratic Services with personnel of the highest degree of intelligence and preparedness for the arduous task of running the country. Only Aliens need apply as only Aliens are accepted.

Anita, having arrived as a fresh from university student, barely out of what Earthlings would call her teenage years, fitted straight into the Education College as both a student for Scotland's needs. And, as a Researcher into the Academic Study of Human Culture for the Elfin study thereof. She did well in both roles and was allowed to apply for a post in the Scottish Police Force after several years of study.

Her rise through the ranks was considered exceptional. But this was hardly surprising as an Alien, well versed in the ways of Scotland's police force, it would have been unusual if she hadn't. This pleased everyone; humans and Aliens alike.

Her amiable persona soon dispatched the negative criticisms so often applied to 'high-flyers'. She was, as the High Chief Commissioner of Police was heard to elucidate: A right little beauty.

The character, Wild-man Willy, couldn't have agreed more.

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Their journey to Tom Lockruairida is filled with conversation to prepare Wild-man for his meeting with the Elfin-kind. They already know he is the lover of Anita and so is to be accorded special status amongst most of the Elves. There are, of course, those who don't approve either of her relationship with him, or, that he is being given access to an Elfin Assembly. If it isn't for the fact of Olly's 'stolen' status and of Willy's close association with the missing boy, he would almost certainly never have been given access.

Also, the Elves possess a potent agent which, if it is felt to be necessary, can wipe Willy's mind clean of the meeting — this is the normal default back-up procedure when faced with human beings who have acquired knowledge of the Elfin's presence on planet Earth.

The Debating Chamber is kitted out for an assembly of 400; there is only a tenth of that number present at this time. This is due mainly to 2 things: 1) Elves are away on Civic Duty inside the Scottish social system, and 2) They have not yet arrived from their home planet as the Enlightenment Event is not thought to be imminently pressing.

Wild-man Willy is scrutinised by seasoned eyes as he is brought into the special area that is reserved for those giving evidence or providing special knowledge about a subject being debated.

As the Chamber is egg shaped this area is at the fulcrum point of the circle that makes up one end of its elliptical form. At this point he can be seen by those present — about 40 Elves — if, as he is, facing the end. Or, if he is to face the other way he can be seen by the full assembly when present.

The Speaker — the Elf who decides who is to speak and controls the Debate — is directly in front of Wild-man Willy. He is an Elf of noble bearing in the form of a human being in his 50s, whose voice has a strong timber of great clarity, “Is there anything special about this baby Olly?”

“Indeed there is. He is blessed with a strong Quantum Field that is ... remarkably ... pure.” The strength of Willy’s statement is amplified by Willy’s emotional portrayal.

The Speaker turns to Anita who is standing next to Wild-man, “And you can verify this?”

“Indeed I can. Indeed anyone would have noticed this had they entangled their Quantum Field with his. A pure being of considerable strength.”

After a moment the silence in the Chamber is broken by mutterings, exclamations and the beginnings of conversations. There would appear to be a consensus forming concerning the status of baby Olly in regard to the fact that he is indeed special. And what’s more special in regard to his Quantum Field.

The Elves have taken the liberty of entangling their own Quantum Fields with that of both Wild-man Willy’s and Anita’s so they can get a distinct impression of Olly’s Quantum Field from the impression he has left on Willy’s and Anita’s Quantum Fields.

The Speaker allows the rumblings in the Chamber to subside before making a pronouncement, “This Fairy could have come in contact with Olly’s special ‘Quality’ and decided to investigate the significance in terms of the Enlightenment Process?”

Anita steals the moment, “It could be true. And if my attention hadn’t been focused elsewhere,” Anita glances at Willy, “no doubt I would have considered this a distinct possibility.”

“No doubt.” The speaker’s words are heavy with sarcasm, “Do you still believe this human standing next to you, to have Qualities that can help to locate baby Olly?”

“I do.”

“In a way, it would only be fitting for a human being to be present in this enquiry.” There is general agreement in the Chamber to these words spoken by Senior Lecturer Cadmium Sourdust — a Senior Lecturer in Human Evolution.

“Just as long as he is accorded equal status while he is with us.” The Speaker speaks with authority.

“But first he must be scrutinised to reveal his character. We can not just accept Anita’s judgement on this as she has formed an emotional attachment with him. Let us all look into him to see what we can find.” These words are spoken by Jakus Spifflebum, the Head of the Department of Human Affairs — a stickler for correct procedure when it comes to human beings.

Agreement is followed by Wild-man having his Quantum Field entangled with all of the those Elves present in the Chamber; a feeling that he is not likely to forget, as he feels it to be, how a baguette must feel like, as it is pulled to pieces for a gathering of French people at dinner. But he does not object nor put up any resistance but behaves with stoic fortitude.

“So what have we here?” Says Cadmium Sourdust with little disguised delight, “A Quote from an exceptional human, Albert Einstein, no less:
The most beautiful and deepest experience a person can have is the sense of the mysterious ... To sense that behind anything that can be experienced there is something that our mind cannot grasp and whose beauty and sublimity reaches us only indirectly and as a feeble reflection.”

“The Representational Conundrum.” Comes the reaction of a dozen voices with a dozen more saying, “The Mysterious Hidden Reality.” The rest of the gathering agreeing in different forms to both insights.

“And what about this.” Comes a voice from the back,
“Only Waves exist.
All Things are in a Permanent State of Movement.
Yet, they Remain in the Same Position.
The Waves Wave towards the Beach
Yet they Remain in the Same Position.
Movement. Waves. Remaining.
Only Waves Remain in Movement.
Only Movement Remains in Waves.
Only Remaining in Movement are Waves,
Because, Only Waves exist.”

“A quote from Wild-man Willy’s Book: ‘Passing Clouds’.”

A few moments pass then a large number of excited voices express the same sentiment: The permanency of movement that can only be found in Waves on all levels on the Scale of Reality.

Another voice, “And what about this. Another quote from his Book: ‘Passing Clouds’:

Is there such a Thing from which all Things Spring?”

The answer comes from the entire Assembly, “Infinity.” This is followed by much laughter.

Willy joins in with relief much to Anita’s pleasure.

“Now here is a nice little ditty.” The voice is already filled with mirth.

“Inertia is Accelerated Boredom
That can be Easily and Directly Sensed
By ...
Scratching One’s Bum.

-Wild-man Willy

From his Book 'Things to do on a Wet Afternoon'

The Chamber fills with laughter with Anita trying to hide hers behind a hand.

Anita then queries, "But I thought that is that from your Book: 'The Book of Laughter and Forgetting'?"

Willy bursts out in laughter, "I forget."

The Assembly follows suit — the laughter not leaving a dry eye in the Chamber.

Once recovered the Speaker takes the lead,

"Here is an interesting question that I have found deep in Wild-man's mind. A question I unfortunately do not know the answer to. Perhaps there is someone present who does. Here it is in its original form:

Why, Oh why, is the speed of light 186,000 miles per second?
Is it because Fairy's wings fall off if they fly faster than this?

— Wild-man Willy

From His Master Work : The Nature of Reality.

"The general consensus is that it — the speed of light — arrived with The Laws that Govern this Universe — reason or reasons being unknown other than the other Laws of Physics would not work if it was anything else." Anita Cassidy sounds apologetic, "Will and I discussed this at some length without resolution."

The Speaker throws it to the Chamber's Assembly but without success, "Then let us press on."

"I have a very strange ... something, which I don't know what it is." Comes a confused voice.

"The Endless Now of a Black Hole
Stops Our Universe Becoming just a Dream with a Pole,
Or,
A piece of Detached Imagination
Shot through with cancelations.

No, this is the stuff of Real Things like
The Objectification of Females as Sexual Objects.

But this won't keep me mum
Yum, Yum — Anita Cassidy's bum

— Wild-man Willy sings with glee with not an eye filled with tee

From: 'The Book of Erotic Songs' Fully Illustrated"

“It’s obviously a nonsense poem.” Comes another voice.

“But does it have any meaning?” Comes yet another voice before the entire Assembly breaks down in disorder.

“Sorry, sorry. It really is just a piece of nonsense — a nonsense poem of poor quality.” Says Wild-Man in deep embarrassment.

Anita on the other hand is exuberantly enjoying the moment, “Come, come, we have all indulged in nonsense poems as a means of clearing the mind of accumulated rubbish. So, let’s press on. I’ve got something here that will please you all.” She clears her throat to achieve maximum clarity.

“From the Perspective of the Unformed Block
Every Path has already been Taken.
But from the Perspective of the Individual’s
Free Will — the individual’s Agency — it is the Living Truth.
Consequently,
Free Will and Destiny have only the same meaning
If You Choose a Path.

— Wild-man Willy

From his Book: ‘The Clear Blue Sky’ “

“Wonderful. Wonderful.” Goes up the cry from a goodly number of the Elfin-kind.

Once the cry has run its course, Professor of Physics, Toad In-the-Hole, brings the gathering to intense concentration, “Here is something that I did not expect to find.

A Reference Frame is a large-scale Framework
For Measuring Positions, Velocities and Times of Events.”

He stops and addresses those gathered, “This is an almost normal definition of Reference Frames from Elfin-kind physics. This next part, however, I will have to spend sometime analysing.” He continues.

“A Frame of Reference at Right-Angles to Another Frame of Reference
Is a good Metaphor for Our Planet. (or any Planet, I assume, T. In-the-H.)
A Frame of Reference side by side with Another Frame of Reference
Is a good Metaphor for Parallel Universes.
A Frame of Reference inside Another Frame of Reference
Is a good Metaphor for the Unformed Block.

— Wild-man Willy

From his Book: ‘The Clear Blue Sky’ “

“You will let us know your deliberations on this matter.” The Speaker asks in the form of a statement.

“Indeed.” Concludes Professor Toad In-the-Hole.

The Speaker continues, “This, of course, brings us on to humanity’s scientific knowledge. To its highest form in the person of Albert Einstein. Wild-man has delivered a special rendition of his work in this piece that I found disguised as a Great Nonsense. See what you think.” He smiles benevolently at Willy.

“My Now is Different from Your Now —
 This is a very Special Relativity.
 Your Time and My Time are the Same
 Just as long as we are unaware of it —
 This is The General Relativity.
 These Events Exist Independent of Our Knowledge,
 But,
 Are they True?
 Yes, in the Unformed Block.

— Wild-man Willy

From his Book: ‘The Clear Blue Sky’“

The Chamber erupts in argument.

“Please, Please.” The Speaker tries to bring calm to the proceedings, “Try and accept the form that Wild-man has decided to put these quotes of Relativity in. For me, this is a piece true in spirit, if not in actuality. A philosophic perspective that would not be out of place in that category of work known to our Great Philosophic Tradition as ‘Deranged Truths’”

“‘Deranged Truths’ is it?” Comes the voice of an Elf — not in human form — who has suddenly appeared in the Chamber, “Is this how far we have been removed from what we should be concerned with?” He answers his own question, “Baby Olly should be our only concern. Focusing our attention elsewhere can only be detrimental to his well being.”

The Chamber remains silent; all remain silent except for Anita whispering to Willy, “This is our elected Prime Minister. Speak only when spoken to.”

The Prime Minister soon gives him the chance, “Wild-man Willy, you have given a good account of yourself to us all. You have already made friends amongst us and we wish you well in the Great Wave that brings Full Enlightenment — when it arrives. But for now you must help us find baby Olly as he would seem to have a purpose in the Full Enlightenment process. Concentrate your mind on his Quantum Field and the experiential experience of your entanglement with him ... Can you see anything in your mind’s eye?”

At first Willy can only see the Prime Minister’s head — its angulation, its metallic green skin, its striped golden snake-like eyes set into deep sockets, the ridge running down from between the eyes to the very human like mouth. This, he thinks, is what Anita looks like in her species form. It breaks the spell of the image of her in his mind’s eye and in a sudden flash he sees an ancient stone building overwhelmed by vegetation on a small island — then it’s gone. But not before everyone in the Chamber has that image in their mind’s eye.

“Anyone?” Asks the Prime Minister.

But there is no one that recognises the island image.

“Then let us bring in the full complement for this Assembly Chamber and then make good a search of all the lakes in the region.”

No sooner the word than the deed. The Chamber fills up with human formed Elves and those still in their normal green species form.

“Come, let us go.” Says Anita to Willy.

Outside they get into Anita’s car and drive off.

“I wish I could have explained more about my ideas and concepts.” Willy states in heart-felt frustration.

“Such as what?”

“The sum over all histories, for a start.”

“Then let me hear it come from your mouth. You know the nuance that is applied through the spoken word is more accurate than in any other form.”

“True ... Then here it is:

If you follow all Paths Equally and you Accept the
 ‘Sum Over All Histories’ interpretation of Quantum Mechanics
 As the Living Truth,
 Then
 You end up Following the One True Path
 As it is the Only One Left.
 (pause for effect)
 If it is not the Only One Left,
 Then,
 You are Lost.

This was actually written on a Sign. A Sign Over the Door of the Lost Luggage Office in Victoria Railway Station, Bombay, India..

Anita laughs but then turns more serious, “That, of course, implies causation — the ‘cause’ here is Following All Paths Equally, leads to the ‘effect’ of The One True Path. But this begs the question: Can there be a chain of causation that starts with no cause?”

“Like our universe, do you mean?” Willy expands.

“That is an unknown that begs the question ... now, how did Leibniz put it: ‘No fact can be real or existing, no statement true without a sufficient reason for its being so and not otherwise’. There must be a reason for whatever ‘cause’ and it follows then that there must be an ‘effect’ and so on in an unending chain of ‘cause’ and ‘effect’. I rest my case!” Anita smirks.

“What nonsense. You still haven’t answered the question: Can there be a chain of causation that starts with no cause.” Willy remonstrates.

“What do you mean? I’m the one that asked the question.” Anita fakes annoyance.

“That may well be true but you now have to fulfil the underlying question about how many questions can be asked. And to do that you must ground your answer in the fundamentals of Reality at its very foundation.” Willy smugly replies.

“You mean in Quantum Mechanics?” Anita

“What else.” Willy is flippant in his reply.

“And they are?” Anita enjoying being pedantic.

“There are 4 criteria that Quantum Mechanics is based on’

- 1) The Quantum State — a complete set of Definite Facts that are Axiomatic.
- 2) The Superposition — a weighted set of answers in a ‘sum over all histories’ event, in a regional volume in the Unformed Block.
- 3) Schrodinger’s Equation — which reveals the tendency to spread out States of Precise Positions into less contained ones.

And

- 4) Probabilities for all known Facts, Measurements and Questions.”

Wild-man Willy then gloatingly adds, “ From my Book: ‘The Clear Blue Sky’”

“Nice try! Adding on ‘Questions’ to criterion 4), when you know nicely it doesn’t belong there.”

“It doesn’t in terms of present day convention, but it should.” Willy smirks.

“Says who?’ Anita’s annoyance jangles in the air like a living creature.

“I just did. Weren’t you listening?” Willy abandons his philosophic wrestling match with Anita for a physical one.

She pulls off the road and pulls off her clothes. The car bounces around like it was a living creature with an uncontrollable itch.

His green head slowly emerges from behind the seat and gazes down at them. The Prime Minister, for it is none other but he, speaks softly so as not to take them by surprise, “Excuse my interrupting your mating but I really must know if these criteria are asked questions?”

After the deflation he experiences at being interrupted in his ‘mating’ Willy answers, “That’s how we humans arrived at the 4 criteria — we asked the questions and the criteria were the answers.”

“I see, but how is that connected to the ‘sum of all histories’ in this interpretation of Quantum Mechanics?”

Wild-man eases himself up from the position of love-making and looks directly into the Prime Minister's eyes, "It's all done through consciousness — everything is experientially experienced." Wild-man can feel the Prime Ministers unknowing, so, "Try following this line of reasoning:

The 'sum of all histories' gives you all possible probabilities but there is only one we remember — the one we remember IS an act of consciousness. Now here's the switch — it IS now the conscious act of our consciousness that is the Fundamental Concept in Quantum Mechanics. And, as the ancient Chinese pointed out 3000 years ago: Knowing the Concept we can forget the words. Even though we need the words to describe both Quantum Mechanics and Consciousness."

"And that is why Consciousness IS the answer to everything!" The Prime Minister states from a state of revelation.

"It's obvious once you see it — without Consciousness there isn't anything. Without the experiential experience there can't be anything. It's as simple as that."

The Prime Minister doesn't waste words in saying goodbye.

"Sometimes it's the simplest things that are the hardest to grasp." Says Anita with a simple insight.

"Now where were we before we were so rudely interrupted? Ah yes, now I remember."

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Chapter 6

Entanglements

How much do we really need to know
About a Mind to Understand what a Mind
Will do? Surely we would need to know All
Possibilities And Probabilities.
Especially if we are to Construct a
Believable Story that will be Considered
To Be a 'Modern-day' Classic – The novel as
The Ultimate Agency of Creative Intelligence.
'Modern-day' here means All Things
Quantum – like Quantum Entities, Like
Human Beings that produce Quantum Fields.
Quantum Fields that can be Detached from
The Quantum Entity and Entangled with
Other Quantum Fields that are
Already a part of other Quantum Fields.
Thus, Allowing Travel Throughout the
Universe at the speed of Thought.
This is more than just a Distinct
Possibility, more like a Bayesian
Probability with 99+ % Chance of being True.
And if it is True then 'The Enchanted Lake'
Is a sure-fire Winner when it comes to
Commercial Success.

– Wild-man Willy

From the Book: The Enchanted Lake

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Ah, you may well say, self-referential content is obviously necessary — even prophetic when it comes to producing a ‘modern-day’ classic. Especially when it is only the ‘modern-day’ classic that can guarantee commercial success.

It is a well known fact that Wild-man Willy, neither the Writer nor the Character nor the Commentator, have ever written for money before. Purists, they have only ever written for personal pleasure and to pass on to their fellow human beings and various Alien species knowledge that will benefit them all.

The reason for this change in their Purist personas is entirely practical in that they will be considerably better off in doing so. Better off in all things except in their Purist perspective. But even here they will be better off from the stand-point that they will no longer be considered as Arrogant Dragons of ridiculous proportions for holding such an outmoded view. Purists — Prats, more like.

This knowledge has, of course, been passed on to various individuals via Entanglement.

None of this, not any of it, is in Olly’s mind. Nor, in the Entangled mind’s of Olly and Lelia. Their Entangled minds rendering them almost a singular mind were ignorant of this knowledge. Why would their Pure mind/s Entangle with Wild-man Willy’s various minds for any reason let alone a one of such mundane value.

Let me make this very clear, Lelia has fallen ‘in-love’ with Olly’s Purity. This Purity being a natural ingredient of his make-up as opposed to the self-aggrandising purity of Wild-man Willy in any of his various guises.

Olly has fallen ‘in-love’ with Lelia for he had never met anyone or any thing even remotely like her.

Theirs is a genuine ‘love affair’.

Their Entangled minds are as one and made of pure love.

Of course it can not last. But that day is drawing nearer and so they are forced into avoiding discovery as this illicit love affair is upsetting not only Olly’s family but also Lelia’s family and, what is even more amazing, 3 Alien species from this galaxy, 1 Alien species from a different galaxy, and — if they only knew it — the whole of what is left of the human species.

Romeo and Juliette eat your hearts out. Or, should that be: Shakespearian indulgences in suicidal cannibalism.

All of this begs the question: Are genuine lovers always Entangled?

Most of us have experienced love. So we should be able to answer this in the affirmative.

You don’t have to be an Alien species to experience Entanglement. All you have to be is ‘in-love’.

Where, along human beings Evolutionary Path, did this Quantum ability happen? Is it a part of the Evolutionary Process? Is it a step on the way to Full Enlightenment?

And does that not beg the question: Does the Evolutionary Process — a fundamental part this universe — have a definite conclusion?

And is that conclusion Full Enlightenment? And is not the Experiential Experience of Full Enlightenment not Love?

Love. We all know what it is but we can only communicate what it is by reference.

And that is because it is an Experiential Experience of a Unique Quality.

Was it always there?

TIME FOR A BIT OF SPECULATION.

Did it exist at the beginning of the universe? Or did we have to go through the Evolutionary Process to attain this Unique Experiential Experience? It makes sense of why the universe exists as it does, if it is part of the Evolutionary Process.

It also explains why Love is held in such high regard. Not just by human beings but by Alien species of all persuasions; even by Hob-Goblins.

Then here it is in its perfect form, in the Love that Olly and Lelia enjoy.

And perhaps in the Love that the character, Wild-man Willy and Anita share.

If Love is the End product of the Evolutionary Process in our matter filled universe is Anti-Love the End product in an Antimatter filled universe — this is more than just an academic question because antimatter does exist even in this matter filled universe.

We humans emit the occasional positron — the antimatter equivalent of the electron — thanks to radioactive potassium 40 in our tissues. A medium sized banana produces one very 75 minutes because bananas contain a lot of potassium 40. These positrons are annihilated the moment they come into contact with an electron, releasing 1.022 mega electron volts — a tiny amount of energy. Scientists have observed and measured these so we know that antimatter exists. And, according to theory (Big Bang), the same amount of antimatter should have come into existence at the same time as matter did.

So, where is it ?

The easy answer that I propose

— HERE'S THE SPECULATION —

is taken from my own perspective as a philosopher, it also answers two other embarrassing questions for physicists. Namely, what is Dark Matter and what is Dark Energy.

I must state here that I am a philosopher of both Ontology (the study of the nature of being) and Epistemology (the study of the theory or grounds of knowledge). I use these two branches of philosophy to balance out a realistic perspective for my enquiries into the Nature of Reality. And, I may say without fear of contradiction: with some success.

Has Antimatter 'somehow' been transformed into Dark Matter. While at the same time has Antigravity sprung into existence — both these events happening close to the Big Bang event.

Dark Matter being matter that is susceptible to Gravity's attraction but nothing else. This has been observed by scientists.

Dark Energy being an antigravity force that is rapidly expanding the universe. Also observed by scientists.

The transformation of Antimatter into Dark Matter is problematic and may require new physics.

Whereas Dark Energy as antigravity would seem straight forward. Our universe is expanding at an ever increasing rate as it would if under the influence of antigravity.

At present I can't see the connection between Dark Energy and Dark Matter other than they are transformed types of antimatter. But it is reasonable to assume there is one and that once the connection is revealed the transformation of Antimatter into Dark Matter will be obvious.

Let us now return to Anti-Love. Does it exist in the same way as antimatter exists in our matter filled world.

Anti-Love must be like wickedness, hatred and viciousness. We definitely see these in our Love filled world; mainly because they are in such contrast. But like positrons are annihilated by electrons, are pieces of wickedness, hatred and viciousness, annihilated by acts of kindness, generosity and compassion. This is obviously true and in a way that appeals to our common sense.

The trouble is, this all seems a bit far-fetched; a genuine problem often associated with SPECULATION. And no matter how much it might appeal to our creative intelligence one has to try to keep within side the bounds of common sense. So for the time being I'll leave it all on the back burner as:

A SPECULATION TOO FAR.

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Love is at the centre of the pain that Ali is experiencing now she has recovered from the effects of 'fairy dust'.

She is going through the various stages of distress. Uncontrollable grief, followed by anger, followed by a desire to kill, followed by a cold detachment as she tries to figure out who is responsible for the removal of her precious love; her dear son; Olly.

The rest of the family are going through the stages with her. Although the manifestations of each stage are similar some take on a dangerous turn as is the case of Gran and her desire to kill leading to her cleaning and priming her shot gun. The rest of the family would normally have found ways to take the deadly weapon from her but now, under this huge provocation, were actively encouraging her in her demented desire to fill the culprit full of holes.

Ali, in going through the possibilities of action, has triggered a course of action in her daughter. Lilly phones Wild-man Willy on his mobile, "Willy, you must come and help us to find Olly."

"Indeed I will. But first, tell me how your mother is."

"She's calmed down, and remarkably so. Gran is threatening rough justice with her shot gun but the rest of us are more confused than anything."

"The best thing to do is for us all to meet up at the campsite. Anita has something to tell you all."

"Olly's not dead is he?"

"No. Nothing as tragic as that. But something more ... well more, mind blowing."

"Mind blowing?"

"Yes. And rather wonderful. And ... it's better if she tells you herself. We should be back at the campsite in about 40 minutes. See you then."

"But wait ..." But it's no use Wild-man has hung up.

Anita and Will have made a big pot of 'special' tea in Anita's wooden hut. They have decided that a place secluded from prying eyes, and ears, is best for what has to be communicated.

Once the camp vans have divulged their cargoes into Anita's hut and everyone has found a seat — highly recommended by Wild-man Willy — and each and everyone furnished with a mug of the hot sweet 'special' tea — also highly recommended by Wild-man Willy — Anita is ready, "I'm afraid there is no realistic way to say this. I'm afraid Olly has been kidnapped by an Alien."

The silence is, as is often said by writers, and individuals in conversation: deafening.

Until Lilly recovers enough to ask, "What kind of Alien?"

"A one with wings. A sort of a fairy-like Alien. They are very nice Aliens and don't wish any harm to humans. The abductor is named Lelia and although we do not know the reason for her actions, we can definitely say she has no intention of harming Olly. On the contrary it would seem she has ... fallen 'in-love' with the little man."

“And what drugs are you on?” Asks Gran brandishing her shotgun as she jumps to her feet.

The shotgun turns to dust as Anita now in her green Elfin form takes it away from her, “I am also an Alien and this is what I look like when I am not in my human form.”

Big Richard catches his wife half way on her fall to the floor.

The rest sit in stunned silence mesmerised by Anita’s transformation.

“That will do. I think they have gotten the picture.” Says Wild-man Willy in a cheerful tone.

Anita flips back to her human form sporting a playful grin, “Don’t worry about it. You’ll soon get used to it. Most things have more than one form — take the universe we live in, it has the Endless Everyday Nowness we are living right Now but it also comes in the form of the Unformed Block the singularity of our universe. And once you lot have attained Full Enlightenment and can detach your Quantum Field from your Quantum Body, you too will understand the dual nature of most things in Reality. As such you will actually want to try having a different form.”

“Well I’m looking forward to it even if you lot aren’t.” Says a cheerful Wild-man, “However, there are more pressing things right now. We must join the search for baby Olly. The only clue we have is that he is in a small ancient dilapidated building on a small island on one of the smaller Locks in the region. It’s just a matter of dividing up the region we’ve been allotted and visiting them in a systematic way.” Says Willy while laying out a map on the table.

The map has already been divided up into regions. Willy points to one region to the north-east of Lock Ness, “This region is often referred to as the ‘Inverness Lake District’ on account of there being a good number of lakes of different sizes. So this is where we will be concentrating our search. We have 3 vehicles so I suggest Big Richard takes one and covers the southern most Locks of Lock Ruthven and Lock Ceo Glais. While Little Richard takes Lock a’Choire and Lock Duntelchaig. Leaving Lock a’Chlachain, Lock Ashie and Lock Dockfour for me and Anita. We can use the village of Dores as our base and place to meet up. There’s an Inn that serves excellent food with a very amiable landlord — he’s an Elfin-kind Alien — who will help us to co-ordinate our search. So if we set off now we can cover the area and be back at The Dores Inn by 5. Any questions?”

“What am I going to do with Gran?” Asks a bewildered Big Richard.

Anita pops the contents of a file into Gran’s mouth, “She’ll be fine, in fact, she’ll be the best she’s ever been once she comes around.”

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How would anyone react to meeting an Alien? You just have to look at all those Sci-Fi movies, where this happens, to get a general picture. But in reality, a one where Aliens are used to having to deal with these reactions, wouldn’t they find a simple solution. A simple

solution, like mind altering drugs to take away the fear and all other negative reactions to confronting Alien species for the first time.

Of course they would!

So put any horrible ideas to one side. Aliens are, if not quite like you and I, are remarkably the same; they have feelings, sensations, curiosity, Agency, consciousness and obey the Laws of Physics and follow the Evolutionary Process.

Alien species from other planets are hardly any different from species from our own Biosphere.

*

As they head out to their vehicles Lilly springs a request, "Let me get my camera. It will only take a moment. I left it in the shop." She runs off before anyone can say anything.

At the shop, the Campsite Manager can remember finding Lilly's camera but not where he put it. So it takes some time in the finding. But by the time he does Lilly finds that she has been deserted; all 3 vehicles have already left; the occupants all assuming that Lilly is in one of the other vehicles.

"I don't believe it." She cries out in despair, then, "Oh no. What have I done to deserve this."

Ambrose, waving as he runs, calls out to her, "Don't worry. I'm here now."

He crashes into her sending her reeling away, "Sorry. I get a bit carried away. And besides it's all your fault. If you weren't so drop dead gorgeous I wouldn't act like this."

She takes an aggressive stance, "Look you curly-haired wassock. Why don't you dig a big hole and drop yourself in ... head first."

Ambrose laughs, "Oh, you are a one." He gives her a friendly punch on the shoulder, "But I know where they've gone. And what's more I know how we can 'hook' up with them."

Lilly eyes him suspiciously, "Well come on then, spill the beans before I . spill . your . blood." She says this last bit in descending tones.

"Dores is further along the Lock and we can easily get there by paddling a canoe. One of which, just so happens to have been rented by me for the very purpose, thereof." He grins.

"And in that backpack you're carrying just so happens to be refreshments for the journey."

"Of course, my little strumpet. I can't have you fading under the exercise of attempting such a journey."

"And exactly how long is this journey?"

“10 or 12 miles. A couple of hours steady paddling. Nothing for a fit young woman such as yourself.”

“With a picnic thrown in. And if you’re really lucky a quick shag to keep the spirits up.”

The shock on Lilly’s face quickly passes. Soon to be replaced by a more normal sneer, “I suppose you are well practiced in the art of love-making?”

“Well actually, I was hoping that you could give me a few pointers. Just to get us going. Apparently, it all comes quite naturally. And before you know it we’ll be banging away like the proverbial shit-house door.”

This has Lilly gasping for air, so wracked by laughter she is, “The proverbial ... shit-house ... door.”

“I’m glad you are entering into the spirit of the thing. I was worried you might be annoyed at the suggestion of such a tender intimacy.”

This last statement really is too much and Lilly lowers herself to the ground, “A tender intimacy.”

“Well I don’t know what to call it. And you’re very hard to read. Honestly Lilly, sometimes I don’t think we’ll ever get it on.” He allows real sadness to colour his words.

Lilly hears his genuine emotion and it affects her. And what’s more she allows it to effect her. She gets up kisses him on the cheek, “Come on. Let’s get going. There’s a baby to rescue.”

They soon set off at a brisk pace in a bright orange canoe all a glow with loves bright young things.

After about an hour of steady paddling Ambrose spots a grassy bank, “Lets pull in here and have some refreshment.”

Just at that moment a large shadow passes under the canoe; the wake of the beast that made it raising the canoe up a couple of feet.

“What was that?” Lilly cries out in a mixture of fear and excitement.

“That’s Nessie.” Cries out Ambrose in a mixture of excitement and pleasure.

“You mean the Lock Ness Monster.”

“Monster? He’s a real sweetie.”

“You talk about him like you know him.”

“I got to know him many a long year ago when I was just a young whippersnapper.”

“A young whippersnapper.” Lilly tries mimicking Ambrose.

The canoe bumps into the shore and they get out and drag the canoe up onto the grassy bank. Then realizing that one of the paddles has been left behind they have an impromptu race to see who can get it first; a draw. Tugging on the paddle from both ends soon has them meeting in the middle and actually touching. And actually looking into each others eyes.

“Put your head on the side like this and open your mouth just a little so you can extend the tip of your tongues and I’ll do the same and then we can have our first kiss.”

The kiss goes off rather well or so Lilly thinks as she hasn’t thrown up, “Can we try it again but this time we’ll put our heads on the other side.”

After a long time playing tonguesies and feeling each other’s bodies, Lilly announces, “Yes, this side seems more natural.”

“Excuse me. I hope you don’t mind me butting in but Ambrose has forgotten his manners. And he really should have introduced us before now.” The voice has a plumb-in-cheek ring to it and doesn’t fit the rather wicked mouth from which it springs; all those backward curved teeth can leave no doubt to the nature of the ‘wee beastie’.

“Oh ... My ... Great Aunt Sally.” Are the only words that escape Lilly’s mouth.

Nessie’s head is more than 1 1/2 metres wide and 1 1/2 metres long and perched on top of a long neck more than a half a metre thick. The multi-coloured scales lock into each other behaving like a medieval chain mail suit of armour.

“Sorry, sorry. Lilly this is Nessie. Nessie this is Lilly. Lilly comes from the South Hams and Nessie comes from the M65 galaxy somewhere over there.” Ambrose waves his arm in the general direction of Inverness.

“Lilly, my poor child. Let me assure you that Ambrose is not always such a prune. It’s the effect you have on him; as he’s bonkers in-love with you.”

Lilly just stares at Nessie until the silence becomes uncomfortable.

Then it dawns on Nessie and he addresses Ambrose with a lecturing tone, “You haven’t told her, have you.”

“I’ve been waiting for the right moment.” Comes Ambrose’s feeble reply.

“I think you’ll find that this is it.”

Ambrose turns green with pointy ears and only a bridge for a nose.

“Oh ... My”

He turns back to his human form.

“I’ve been kissing an Alien.” More statement than question.

“Bet you never thought that would be so great.” Says Ambrose hopefully.

“What I can’t understand is why I’m not freaking out completely. It has this feeling of inevitability about it; like it is just as things should be.”

“Ah well, that would be Anita and the sweet tea she made sure you all drank. It contains an anti-shock element to get people over the initial shock and until all of this seems quite normal and reasonable ... which it is.”

“Normal and reasonable.” Lilly tries out these ideas, “Yes, yes, I can see how it can all seem quite normal and yes, even reasonable. After all Aliens from other worlds would be bound to find human beings, especially in this stage of their evolution, fascinating.”

“Oh we do, we do.” Ambrose gets carried away.

“I’ve been enjoying human company for a long time. Even though your evolutionary development is far removed from my own species.” Nessie says this as he sidles up to Lilly opening vents just above his mouth that can easily be mistaken for smelling apparatus; which they are. He gently nudges Lilly in her genitalia and takes a deep breath in, “Ah yes, Ambrose my boy, she’s definitely ready for mating.”

“I beg your pardon. I’ll say when I’m ready for mating. And ... And ... I will not have you sticking your nose into my privates.”

Nessie draws back, “My apologies.” He turns to Ambrose, “She’s quite a girl. I’m not surprised you’ve fallen for her. Feisty. Yet playful.”

“If you only knew.” Ambrose chimes in.

Lilly bursts out laughing, “Here I am discussing my readiness for mating with two Alien species and it really does feel quite normal.” Then a moment of doubt, “That tea of Anita’s won’t wear off, will it?”

“No, of course not. It is designed to provide the psychological bridge between two different realities. Your pre-Alien reality and your new with-Alien reality.”

“Oh good. I don’t think I could handle that transition without going bonkers.”

“Nonsense.” Ambrose’s smile has real warmth in it, “Lilly my love, you can handle anything.”

A loud splashing noise behind Nessie has the ‘wee-beastie’s’ attention captured in less than a moment. A shoal of fish have just broken the surface and that can mean only one thing; a sturgeon is on the hunt.

“Sorry got to go. Dinner calls.” And with that Nessie turns and glides with speed back into the Lake.

As Lilly watches a line of bubbles left by Nessie, Ambrose makes a suggestion, “Come on let’s have a picnic.”

The idea has a sudden appeal for Lilly, “Race you!”

The fun of being alive is powerful in the young of all species and they make a lot of noise laughing and squealing and splashing in an impromptu race of no consequence — so much for Love in a Time of Transition.

*

Chapter 7

The Searchers (Part 1)

The End is the End is the End of the End.
There has never been an End Except in
Books.

Even then these Words 'The End' can be
Substituted for 'The Beginning'.

And this, of course, is the Difference
Between Representations and Reality;
Representations can Begin and End,

Or,

End and Begin.

Reality Simply Goes on ... Forever.

– Wild-man Willy

In Conversation with Anita Cassidy

*

Dores is a small village at the junction of the B852 and the B862 near Tor Point. Its name in the local dialect means 'black wood', so we can assume that there was a 'black wood' at some point in time. Whether the name refers to the colour of a wood that once stood there, or, if the name referred to the wood having a dark reputation is unclear. There is no wood there at all, at this time, to give a clue. But, there is a distinct feeling of foreboding that many people have remarked on. Thus providing a clear understanding of what 'black wood' could mean; it has a dark reputation for good reason as, no doubt, we will find out.

For the moment, this foreboding is exactly what our Searchers can feel.

*

Yes, even Gran. Who has regained consciousness but is, and will remain, under the spell of the 'special tea' and 'special draft' that Anita has given her, for a very long time indeed.

Not that this worries anyone as Gran is displaying all of her good qualities without any sign of her dark aberrations. To illustrate just what an amazing transformation has taken place in Gran's behaviour let me relate an incident that now occurs.

*

Gran, now sitting in the passenger seat of the campa van that has the furry dice dangling from the rear view mirror, can hear a squeaking. A loud deep squeaking accompanied by several other tiny high-pitched squeaking. She works out that this squeaking is coming from one of the furry dice. The very dice that Squeak-Squeak has been hollowing out.

It now turns out that Squeak-Squeak is not, as everyone has assumed, a male mouse but in fact is a female mouse and one that has been pregnant and which, since embarking on this mad journey to The Enchanted Lake, has given birth to 7 babies.

Gran is delighted as she peers in through the hole into Squeak-Squeak's delivery nest and witnesses the baby mice suckling their mother, "What a wonder life is. 7, yes I can count 7 babies enjoying life's first joyous experience. All in the comfort of their mother's Quantum Field." Gran is quite over come as she herself allows her Quantum Field to entangle with that of Squeak-Squeak and her children.

"We're here." Big Richard announces to his passengers, "For good or for ill."

They all clamber out of the campa and into a disturbing sensation of foreboding. A sensation not too dissimilar from that derived by pressing the red area around a boil.

"I think I would like to go home now." Ali sums up her feelings.

"Not so quick. First we'll have some light refreshment at The Dores Inn before heading off to Lock Rutwen and Lock Ceo Glais. Then and only then will we see about going home."

The Landlady of The Dores Inn is a formidable creature; wide of girth and oft 'wide of the mark'. She does little to dispel the grim atmosphere of the village but does the 'searchers' a favour by sending them outside to where seating faces the Lake.

The sun is high in the sky but hidden by clouds, however, light plays on the Lake in shafts, providing a dazzling show of one of nature's finest exhibitions.

This magnificent spectacle is all the more intensely felt because of the dark contrast of the gloom filled foreboding.

They escape the gloom filled foreboding of Dores only to be plunged into the dark atmosphere of Lock Rutwen.

Ali and Gran stand up to their knees in the waters of Lock Rutwen. They hold out their hands and concentrate on spreading out their Quantum Fields.

Ali can't feel anything, "If Olly were here I'd know." She drags her feet through the water until she's on dry land, "Come on Gran. You're wasting your time."

Gran has one last effort but to no avail and she too gives up.

Lock Ceo Glais provides no better an outcome. And all 3 sit dejected on the side of the lake.

"I don't fancy going back to Dores just yet. So, what do you want to do?" Big Richard provides them with a choice that doesn't exist. They sit and ponder the impossibilities.

Meanwhile.

Little Richard and Hannah are up to their waists in the waters of Lock Duntelchaig.

"I just can't believe it. After all you've said about how much you love me and the once I get my Quantum Field entangled with yours — Zilch!" Hannah's furious and wades out of the lake using big strides to do so.

Little Richard follows her out angry and frustrated, "Hannah. It's not like that. My mind doesn't work properly when I'm hungry. And I'm ravenous. So naturally my feelings aren't prominent."

"Prominent!? None existent more like. How can you be so two-faced ... and there's me hanging out my emotions for the whole world to see. And there's you hanging out ..."
Here she becomes tongue-tied until she goes back to her original expression expressed as an expletive, "Zilch!"

He rugby tackles her and they end up writhing on the grass in a wrestling match. One Little Richard is slowly winning until she bites him with real force on his nose. Drawing blood. Drawing out venom from deep within his psyche, "You fucking bitch! Well if that's the way you want it then go fuck yourself. I'm out of here."

He leaps to his feet and storms off to the camp van parked up a couple of hundred metres away. He starts it up and roars off without a second glance. Not that a first glance would have revealed Hannah to be anywhere in sight. This was a definite parting of the ways.

Little Richard drives like a lunatic until taking a bend too fast he is forced to alter his mode of driving as he has had to break to a standstill as he has left the road and barely makes a stop before running into a small copse of trees.

Back on the road he soon drives down into the tiny hamlet of Dunlichity and pulls up outside a small shop where he loads up with a Cornish pasty, a Melton Mowbray pork pie, two Scots eggs and a Bonny Scotland fruit cake. A bottle of 'Irn Brew' fulfils his desperate accumulation of 'goodies' for an impromptu picnic.

With his 'goodies' stored about his person he wanders into one of the most interesting churchyards in Scotland. Picking out a large yew to lean against he 'sets to'. Devouring whatever comes to hand first — a Scotch egg and the Melton Mowbray pork pie — his initial hunger abates somewhat and he looks about discovering that he is in a large and ancient graveyard.

It is then that he notices a young woman dressed in a dark blue dress, big leather black boots and with woad drawings on her body. He recognises, Caledonia, from the campsite. He wanders down to see what she is doing as she is crouched over a gravestone taking notes.

"Sorry to disturb you but I couldn't help wondering what you are doing."

"Fec off, yer pervert. I know exactly what yer after." She says this without even looking up.

"I'm sorry. I'm Richard. From the campsite."

"I ken who yer are — the boyfriend of the painted trollop."

Richard reflects on this for a moment pondering on the old saying about kettles calling the pot black before saying, "Would you like a Scotch egg or a pasty?"

Cal leaps to her feet and takes the proffered egg, "That'll do nicely, thank yer very much." She gives him a very sweet smile revealing just how attractive she is, "Where's she at then?"

"Oh. We've fallen out. So I have no idea where she's at."

"Oh good. I fancy a shag. Are yer up for it?"

"Just let me finish this pork pie and we can get right down to it. How about under this old yew tree?"

"And why not. I like fecing out of doors."

*

And so they did. Amongst crumbs and tiny insects that would remember the day for many a long year as the day of 'ground shaking' and 'manna from heaven' and 'sweet smelling rain'.

It was one of those memorable occasions that springs out of nowhere into the 'here and now' and fulfils gratifications of the most gratifying kind.

There was no remorse nor guilt. Only a warm wet spot of love juice. And even that was enjoyed by the local fauna.

*

Meanwhile.

Wild-man Willy and Anita Cassidy have explored Lock a'Chaichain and Lock Ashie and have moved on to Lock Dockfour which has a special status as it is, in fact, a continuation of Lock Ness. A strange arrangement in terms of places and place names; guided as much by the local terrain as by anything else; Lock Ness is squeezed, more pinched at what is a false end which ends up becoming Lock Dockfour by default.

Anita has picked up on something — just a vibration in the Quantum Field of the Lock. But which Lock? Lock Dockfour or Lock Ness.

She allows the vibration to guide her to a small island not far from land. She walks out onto the water. And from where Willy stands it looks like she is actually walking on water. He watches as she zig-zags across the Lock until she finally reaches the island.

Anita turns to Willy on the shore, "There's a submerged bridge just below the surface of the Lake. It starts just down from where you are now."

Wild-man searches along the edge of the Lock until he eventually finds where it begins. Then following in Anita's footsteps (metaphorically) he winds his way out to where she stands.

"What on earth, or should I say, who on earth, built such a remarkable device?"

Anita smiles with the advantage of prior knowledge, "They were used by ancient Scots as a means of defence. This island is man made and named a crannog. You won't find it marked on any map and I would bet my green skin that it was made fairly recently by a certain fairy that we would dearly like to meet."

Meanwhile.

A giant shadow crosses the backs of Gran, Big Richard and Ali. They feel the awesome presence of, Mad-Am, the Queen of the Hob-Goblins. Once they have turned around they are overcome with a perfectly rational fear.

She is, after all, a giant that could strike them down with ease, but this is not her purpose, "Open up your minds as I will open up my mind to you and let our Quantum Fields entangle in serenity."

Gran describes this experience like entering a giant jellyfish. The inside of which is full of blobs of light — each a Quantum Entity both joined and separated from the Queen.

The Queen is the Colony as much as the Colony is the Queen.

The moment passes.

The Queen addresses them with heart-felt words, “You are all worthy of the transition. Enlightenment will come easy to you. As for Olly, he is safe somewhere or I would have been able to tell if he was not. But, he is not here. We must continue our search elsewhere. Until we meet again I wish you well.”

She is gone in a flash of shadows.

“Who in Heaven’s name was that?’ Queries a startled Ali.

“I don’t know.” Gran speaks through a smile, “But I don’t think it was Scarlet O’Hara. But. It could have been ‘Deidre of the Sorrows’ — she had red hair and wore a green dress.”

“But ... that thing ... didn’t have red hair or a green dress.”

“I know. But she could have.” Grins Gran trying to be helpful.

Ali and Big Richard breakout into unguarded laughter. Then Big Richard turns to his daughter, “If you were to wear a pink party dress and have pink high-lights in your hair we could call you ‘Ali of the Happies’ — a suitable name for a wonderful mother of two wonderful children.”

Ali throws her arms around her dad and kisses him on the cheek.

Meanwhile.

Hannah dries her eyes with the corner of her designer top. Looking up she sees coming across the lake what looks like a flock of birds of various and varying size. At the centre are two figures in long robes with butterfly wings of enormous proportions and with inlaid designs of intricate beauty.

Oberon and Tatiana arrive in a rush of sound as the accompanying fairies surround a startled Hannah.

Tatiana speaks in musical tones of melodic strength:

“Wipe away those tears, They were never meant to fall,
 Across a face so less likely to appall.
 He loves you with a full heart, Only he cannot express his feelings,
 The situation having robbed him of such dealings.

Take this,” Tatiana rubs sparkling dust from her hair onto Hanna’s hands,

“Then rub it into his face, Best to reveal his real desire,
 So he will no longer keep you in his mire.”

And with that they are gone.
 Dancing across the Lake,
 With only a few swans to scare, anon.

Meanwhile.

Wild-man Willy chases Anita across the hidden bridge and all the way to where the car is parked.

Once inside Anita demands that 'dear Will' turn on the radio, "There's something tragic that you need to hear."

The radio gives forth its news in solemn tones:

"Several people were killed last night by a drone strike while trying to cross the border. The First Minister told the Scottish Parliament that he hoped that this would deter further attempts by refugees to gain access to Escosse. The use of the term Escosse instead of Scotland by the First Minister is seen as a further distancing of the two countries. As the Covid - 25 virus is now running rampant across Europe with mounting death tolls due to the increased mortality rate in all categories of demography. The First Minister insisted that taking such measures was the only way of keeping the people of Escosse safe. Now here is the weather."

Anita leans across and turns the radio off.

"Where did they get the drones from?" Asks a disturbed Willy.

"They are home grown." Anita gives back, "We had to do it. It was obvious what would happen once the virility of the Covid - 25 virus was known." Anita can see how disturbed Wild-man is and decides to tell him the whole situation, "Will, it's like this, the Earth's Biosphere has triggered the mechanism that it uses to keep it in stasis. It's going to take whatever steps are necessary to halt the No 1 parasitic species — that's you human beings — from wiping out countless more species that make-up your Biosphere. It's not as if human beings weren't given any warning — what do you think Covid - 19 was about. Your Biosphere doesn't take such lethal action unless it is necessary. But human beings have been responsible for the biggest mass extinction since the end of the Cambrian. Trillions of individuals from millions of species have been wiped out. It had to stop. It is being stopped right now. The Elfin-Kind estimate at least 7 billion will be dead with less than 100 million human survivors. Naturally, Scotland, or should we be calling it Escosse from now on, has to be protected; we Aliens live here. Our human bodies are as susceptible to the virus as yours is."

"Wow." Is all Wild-man can manage.

"It will soon be over and then this slaughter will just be an historical statistical fact."

"Except for those of us who have lived through it — then it's a nightmare set to haunt all of our dreams for a life time."

Anita smiles a cunning smile , "Don't worry, I have a remedy for that."

"You do? Really?"

"Of course. What do you think we've been doing for the past 50 years, if not dotting the t's and crossing the i's of every eventuality."

Wild-man is much relieved which allows his mind to ask other questions raised by their conversation, “You have made the point that the Biosphere has acted in regard to humankind’s blind stupidity to it’s fellow species that make up the Biosphere. Are you saying the Biosphere is acting with Agency — like a free Agent?”

“It did so but billions of years ago during the early stage of this planet’s evolution. It brought into being in the body of the Biosphere, viruses. A means of controlling dangerous species — like human beings — if they are breeding out of control and becoming a menace to other species and a danger to the Biosphere itself. Viruses are an excellent way of bringing back the stasis of the Biosphere.” Anita is trying to sound reasonable without ignoring the emotional content altogether, “All Quantum Entities like the Biosphere exercise Agency. It’s just here it’s acting against a parasite that is part of itself. Who would have guessed that human beings 10,000 years ago when there was only a few million, would have gone on to almost destroy the Biosphere by sheer numbers alone.” Anita keeps checking Willy’s reaction to what she is saying, “Having this automatic response stops any accusation that the Biosphere is taking revenge. Or Acting with malice. This virus is simply doing its job — bringing back balance to the Biosphere. And if that means killing off 7 billion humans then that is just ... how would humans put it?”

“Tough Love.” Offers Wild-man in an immediate response without too much thought attached.

“Tough Love.” Anita repeats for effect, “But what is it without the emotional context?”

“It’s just commonsense.” Wild-man’s reply sounds hollow now that it is devoid of the emotion.

Anita doesn’t wait, “That’s why the 7 billion soon-to-be-dead are best seen as ‘an historical statistical fact’.”

“Once they’re dead.” It’s now Willy’s turn to state the obvious.

“Try this on for size: as we wade through the dead and the dying, as a Free Agent I invent the physical world from all the concepts I know and have derived from observations and subjects like science and philosophy, and, from which I have invented by the use of my Creative Imagination. If this statement is true, then, it is possible for everything to be an Act of Agency, including the death of 7 billion human beings.”

“Whoa-up-there girl! That’s an idea with bells and horns on it.”

Anita is brought up sharp, “Bells and horns? Now there’s a thought.”

“But the essence of what you are saying is that: ‘I’, ‘We’, invent the world by an Act of Agency.”

“That’s it. You’ve got it in one.” She leans across and kisses him on his tightly closed lips, “Best if you get used to the idea before applying the bells and horns. Try ‘bells and whistles’ it sounds better.”

Wild-man realises he’s been played and jumps on Anita in an act of foreplay which brings screams of delight from her, “See, I told you I had a remedy.”

Another bout of sex soon turns into another bout of calm deliberation.

“Why haven’t you taken this all the way back to where it all started.” Wild-man digs in to the ‘hill-of-beans’ she’s exposed in their conversation so far.

“Is our universe capable of Agency? Is that what you mean?” Anita questions rhetorically.

“Well, I’m certainly not talking about God. Even though a God would have acted with Agency in creating the universe. We both believe in the Infinite Multi-verse which produces our and every other universe. So it would have to be inherent in our universe from its inception. Correct?” Willy knows that she knows.

“Correct. Just remember that our universe comes in two forms — The Endless Nowness of Being, and, The Singularity of the Unformed Block. It’s the Singularity of the Unformed Block that is capable of Agency. And although it seems an abstraction, the Agency that it brings into being is in fact Evolution. The entire Unformed Block is a process of Evolution on every Scale of Reality. This is the Agency of the Unformed Block — Evolution.” Anita delivers exactly what Willy wants to hear and he replies in kind, “So it’s right there/here from the very beginning.”

“Except, of course, there is no beginning in an Infinite Multi-verse.”

“It simply appears fully formed as the Unformed Block ready for an unspecified Evolution of The Endless Nowness of Being.” Willy sums up

Anita strokes his face, “And we know how wonderful that is.”

Willy’s insight encompasses everything, “Even the 7 billion soon-to-be-dead fits into this great scheme of things — then, of course, they are definitely best viewed as just ‘an historical statistical fact’. Rather 7 billion dead humans — just one species — than millions of dead species and the trillions of individuals that would perish if this one species were allowed to carry on.”

“When its put like that it not only sounds reasonable but it is reasonable.”

“One death is tragic. 7 billion deaths are just statistics ... this is the first time I’ve ever seen that saying for what it’s really worth.” Willy laments his own stupidity.

“And Amen to that.”

“And Amen to that Amen.”

*

Chapter 8

The Searchers (part 2)

To Chose or Choose to Question – The two
State Solution.

The One State Solution – Question to
Choose and then Chose to Question.

Or

Should that be: Choose to Question and
Then Question to Chose.

Either Way it Demands an Act of Free
Will.

Where Free Will – To Act as an Agent – is
The Ability to, Choose or Chose, Between
The One State

Or

The Two State Solutions.

Or

Not to, choose or chose, at all.

– Wild-man Willy

In Conversation with Anita Cassidy
Who was Mightily Impressed
Even though She didn't Understand a Word

*

The Doris Inn once more plays host to the Searchers.

They sit in a line with their backs to the wall facing the Lake. From Left to right — seen from facing them.

Big Richard, Ali, Gran, Little Richard, Hannah, Anita Cassidy and Wild-man Willy. They wait patiently for a communication from the Elfin-kind.

As dusk approaches storm clouds gather, increasing the sense of foreboding already present. Flashes of lightening can be seen in the far distance across the other side of the Lake.

*

Now, I have debated, long and hard, with myself in my many guises, about whether or not to tell you about the story that I can attach to this foreboding. In a way it is a story that is disingenuous and that is because it is mainly made up of old tales and yes, even myths. But, having decided on a revelatory course of action I must now say this: don't say that you haven't been warned.

We are now looking back to a previous era. A time long before our modern era. A time long before Shakespeare's era. An era around about the time of Chaucer. A time when Scotland was a sort of wild paradise filled with pockets of horror. Dorris of the Blackwood, existed then.

In that wood there lived a woman who made her living by selling her sexual favours. Her name was: Nelly 'bow-legged' Lak-Lan. 'bow-legged' on account that she had had that many lovers that the natural shape of her legs was curved into the shape of having a man permanently between them. Now I did warn you how this story was made up of old tales.

She, by all accounts, had enjoyed her sexual desires from an early age — perhaps as young as 10. The women of the small town she was from — the one that existed before the present one of Inverness — couldn't stand the competition she provided for their men folk, drove her out. So she set herself up in the Blackwood as a sort of latter day social worker providing the services for the men folk of the region that they were not able to get at home.

Apparently, this was a common occurrence and not just in Scotland nor in just that era. There would appear to be a number of women in every social grouping that enjoy the sexual act to such a degree that they abandon all social cultural habits and let it all 'hang-out'. These women 'hung-out' on the periphery of towns and villages everywhere — all over Europe. And, indeed, they would still be plying their trade if it wasn't for the fact that many women today are giving it away for free. Hence the term, 'Big Fat Slapper'.

Nelly 'bow-legged' Lak-Lan was unfortunate in that she was plying her trade next to a town that had recently succumbed to a puritanical form of Christianity. The usual 'rules and conditions' were soon to be applied to any of these free-loving women — including Nelly 'bow-legged' Lak-Lan. They were registered by the local 'zealots' as being 'witches' and the 'Devil's spawn' and other terms of viciousness, such as 'cock-sucker Sallies'.

Dragged from her hovel by a crowd lusting for blood, poor Nelly was fucked to death by a burning stake wielded by the very men that had enjoyed her sexual favours. A Black deed in a Black wood.

Such horror registers itself via the Quantum Act into the Quantum Field of the very landscape. Resulting in this sense of foreboding emanating out of the rocky crags and valleys of the streams that make up the landscape of Doris.

I should also say here that this is a good example of humankind's cruelty to fellow members of their own species. So it should not be of any surprise then, that humankind performs such terrible acts of cruelty against other species even to the point of complete annihilation. Humankind has eradicated millions of species without a single thought of compassion for either the species or the individuals that make those species up. Hardly any surprise then that few species will shed a tear at the demise of humankind. No surprise at all.

*

At last Anita comes to the rescue, "I have been in touch with the Elfin-kind Assembly and they have agreed to a course of action that I have proposed. If we make our way down to Dorris Beach we will find a ferry waiting for us. My idea is quite simple. If we all open our Quantum Fields up and harmonise them with the Quantum Field of Lock Ness then we can surf far out into the surrounding area. And with our Olly sensitised Quantum Fields we — that us gathered here — should be able to detect his powerful and intense Quantum Field or at least detect a disturbance caused by him. We will start up here in the far north and slowly make our way down the west bank until we come to Fort Augusta at the very south of the Lock. We will then return north along the east bank finally returning to Doris. Unless, of course, we find Olly. In which case our Alien friends will take action to resolve this tragic event."

"So, we are to act like scientific sensors attached to a Quantum Field device for searching the Quantum Field of Lock Ness." Little Richard enquires.

Anita takes a few moments to reply, "Yes. More or less. Each one of us has a different type of sensitivity to little Olly. So anyone of us might register a recognition depending on the circumstance of his situation. So Richard, you are right, we are all like sensors tuned in to different wavelengths — I'm speaking metaphorically here — any which one us has the possibility of detection."

Wild-man leaps to his feet, "Come on then, let's get down to the beach."

There's a general sense of relief as they file out. The sense of foreboding lifts the closer they get to the beach and is dispelled entirely when they see the ferry pulling in.

Waiting on deck are two familiar faces who are greeted like long lost friends.

Lilly hugs her mother tight, "Have I got news for you."

"And have I got news for you." Ali undermines her daughter.

“No, I really mean ... I’ve got ... spectacular ... news for you.”

“Oh, you mean that old news about you having a curly-haired Alien for a boyfriend?”

“That’s not fair. Who told you?”

“Wild-man Willy’s Alien girlfriend.”

“Dam blast. There’s more Aliens around here than football supporters.”

“Not to worry. They’re all very nice and very helpful.” Ali kisses her daughter on her head.

“So where are we going?” Lilly asks as the ferry turns on its axis.

“Down the west bank of the Lock. Trying to spot disturbances in the Lock’s Quantum Field caused by Olly.”

“Isn’t this going to be very difficult?”

“Probably, but we have to try.” Ali encourages her daughter to be positive.

“I suppose.” Lilly responds trying.

Night has fallen — in dark clouds and drizzle — as they drift down The Enchanted Lake. The Searchers have tuned their Quantum Fields to The Lake’s Quantum Field under the instruction of the Elfin-kind crew. Lilly describes the sensation — to no one in particular — like warm sea-weed slowly being pulled across the skin on your belly, tugging with sudden increases and decreases as the strength of the Quantum Field varies. Not an unpleasant sensation but not a particularly nice one either.

But then something different altogether; a blip.

They all feel it, Searchers and crew. A blip.

An argument amongst the crew is soon resolved and the Captain, or Spokesperson as the Elfin-kind call him, addresses the Searchers, “What we have here, in what we have just felt, is a blip in The Enchanted Lake’s Quantum Field. There are a number of blips in the Quantum Field of The Enchanted Lake, all with different causes. This one is caused by a rather wonderful garden that was put together by a very sensitive human being. It is the Abriachan Garden. Constructed along the lines of the Theory of Companion Plants; where it is recognized that certain plants get on well with certain other ones. This is, of course, due to the fact that each plant has a Quantum Field that Entangles with the Quantum Fields of the other plants and does so in a most harmonious way as to make the whole garden a Quantum Entity in its own right. So here you can see that starting with just one plant it is possible to build up an entire garden knowing the Quantum Fields of the other plants.”

But here we have a garden that is not started by one plant. But instead at its centre is a stone. This stone is known as the Font Stone; dating from the time of St. Columba. It is covered in moss, which is in fact, many plants in Quantum terms. The stone has a hollow at its centre which is always filled with water. The water provides the nourishment for the moss and the moss provides the beginning for the sequence of companion plants that are in such harmony that each plant's Quantum Field builds up into a blip in the Quantum Field of the entire garden and that in turn registers as a blip in the Quantum Field of The Enchanted Lake; the blip that the Searchers and Crew have all experienced. This blip is so strong it could easily hide the Quantum signature of Olly and/ or of Lelia. So the only way to be sure that they are not hiding in the blip is for our Searchers to visit this wonderful garden and see for themselves.

*

There is no argument amongst the Searchers and so they are soon on their way — landing on the derelict Abriachan Pier. The three mile walk up the hillside energises the Searchers so that the blip can be felt with increasing strength until they finally enter the garden itself.

Then a profound change. The stillness quietens them all.

*

Chapter 9

Big Olly

The Mind is Something Special:
It Sees the Past as Static and Fixed;
It Sees the Present as an Experiential
Experience – The Endless Nowness of Being;
It Sees the Future as an Act of Imagination
Then Acts with Agency to Bring it About.

This is the Mind-set of all Humans and
Aliens.

– Wild-man Willy

In Conversation with Anita Cassidy
Who was Mightily Impressed
As She Understood every Word

*

*

Big Olly is Little Olly's father. The same Little Olly that had been kidnapped by Lelia the Fairy Alien.

Big Olly has been a friend of Ali for many a long year. They have a strong bond. So it is easily understandable that they would eventually have sexual relations as they both have a mutual attraction for each other.

This is not a conventional relationship as Ali has had a bad experience in that regard. She had fallen for a man who was happy enough to mate with her but when she got pregnant was not willing to take on the responsibilities of being a father and had abandoned her.

Ali simply took on the full responsibilities for her daughter Lilly. She is very successful as a mother. Lilly growing up to be well nurtured, evenly balanced and if a bit of a 'madam' a delightful happy child who is loved by one and all and even by Aliens once they have got to know her.

So successful is Ali at being a mother that the idea of sharing responsibilities with another person is never going to be up for consideration let alone to be acted out.

Falling pregnant to Big Olly is a situation that is not under consideration in any conventional sense. Ali is already fully in command with the Act of Agency that she has chosen; Big Olly is to be recognised as Little Olly's father and can contribute to his son's wellbeing as long as it doesn't interfere in Ali's overall command of what she considers to be her family. It is an arrangement that pleases Big Olly as it fits in with his profession as an engineer in the Army; he is often away for long periods of time and would never have been much of a father in a conventional sense.

The situation suites all concerned including Lilly, who never having had a father didn't know what one looked like but she is well pleased with Big Olly as he makes such a fuss over her when he is around.

Big Olly was in Botswana-land building a school for a local tribe when the Covid 25 virus first appeared. Not many people are aware that Army engineers build schools and hospitals when not engaged in warfare; a situation which would please these soldiers if the truth was known.

The situation in regard to the virus was well out of control by the time that Big Olly and his company were ordered out. They were fortunate in that the Royal Air Force transport plane was able to pick them up from a dirt airfield near where the company had been working. And, in that it flew all the way to Newcastle-upon-Tyne airport missing out more infected regions. Big Olly is about to start on an adventure that because of its 'derring-do' nature will be recorded in the 'Annals of the Pandemic' for all of humankind to admire down through the ages.

*

Big Olly knows that Ali and her family are on holiday in the Lock Ness region of Scotland and has decided to go straight there to join them.

These plans — planes, trains and automobiles — are soon scuppered as he finds out that the Scottish Government — now known as the Escosse Government — has closed the border with England.

Realizing the dangerous situation he now is in, he determines that the only thing that makes any sense is to breach the border. Thus it is he steals a motor bike from a deserted motorbike sales yard and keeping off the main roads makes his way to Berwick-on-Tweed; where he makes new plans.

Berwick is on 'lock-down', so breaking into a library is comparatively safe. Via internet connection he establishes the whereabouts of the local diving club, where he puts together a store of equipment; a wet suit, a dry suit, aqua-lungs, and 3 mini devices, like mini submarines, for dragging a diver through the water. These he loads into a 4 x 4 — the diving clubs vehicle of choice.

Then he has a sleep while waiting for the 'dead of night'. He calculates that the best place to enter into the river Tweed is at Wark, and he is right, in that he easily finds a place to drive himself and his equipment right up to the water's edge.

There is some activity on the other side of the river. Vehicles obviously on patrol, looking for people just like himself trying to get into the safe haven of Escosse.

He finally takes the risk when there are no vehicles or red night lights visible.

He lashes the 3 submersibles together and having put on his diving suits he uses a snorkel to breath saving the aqua-lungs for emergency.

All goes well as he keeps to the English side of the river and near enough to the bank as to benefit from a slow river speed. It is only when he is on his third submersible — the other two having run out of charge — that he sets out across the river.

During this time in the river he can hear gunfire someway off.

He comes ashore west of the village of Birsham, on the A698. He quickly gets out of his swimming gear which he hides in undergrowth. Then running at a steady pace for 15 minutes then walking for 15 minutes he shadows the road until it is coming up light.

*

It should be said here that he is very fit for a man of 41 years; a none smoker and a perfect body mass index for his height. His work having kept him fit both physically and mentally.

*

Olly finds a barn outside Kelso and eats what food he has left before sleeping for several hours; far more than he had intended.

This proved fortunate as a farmer arrives parking a Landrover in the barn and then leaving when a woman arrives in an estate. Big Olly has observed where the farmer has hidden the keys of the Landrover. And so it is that Big Olly is provided with a means of transport to get him out of the region that is too close for comfort to the border.

He avoids going into Kelso and quickly makes his way to Galashiels where he risks parking — albeit in a line of cars next to an industrial estate. He even enjoys a pub meal while deciding what to do next.

But this decision is never made as a squad of the Cold Stream Guards come into the pub dressed in combat fatigues and carrying weapons. Big Olly is as quick in mind as he is as fit in body. He marches right up to them and introduces himself; Master Sargent Olly Grey of the Royal Engineers; recently returned from Botswana-land and trying to get up to Lock Ness to join his family on holiday.

The Guards are amiable with a fellow ‘squady’ but they have to check him to see if he has brought the virus back with him from Africa. They produce a device that takes a blood sample and analyses it in a few minutes. A device that has been designed by Elfin-kind members of the Scottish Technology Board.

His test result is clear and as such is treated like a long lost friend by the Cold Stream Guards. Olly buys them a round of drinks when they tell him they can take him at least as far as Glasgow where they are going to a colleague’s wedding.

*

What luck — or is it luck?

Olly has realized that since leaving Botswana-land he has had nothing but Good Luck; the flight to Newcastle, the ease with which he had made Berwick-on-Tweed, the crossing of the border, the barn and the Landrover, and finally the meeting with a bunch of friendly squadies. All episodes of Good Luck.

What constitutes Luck — Good or Bad?

But we’ve visited this subject before when Wild-man Willy was having his feet cleaned by the fish in Lock Oich. So there really isn’t any need to revisit this fascinating subject.

Only to say that Olly has even more good luck as he is offered a lift from Glasgow to the Lock Ness region by a man at the ‘squaddies’ party.

*

Well it isn’t quite as Lucky as all that because the man only takes him as far as the sign post to ‘The Narrow Road to the North’ at Spean Bridge because he, himself, is going to Kinlocklaggan on the A86.

As Olly stands looking up at the hand-made sign post he has the strangest feeling — something akin to *deja vu*. Little does he realize that his son, Little Olly, has gazed upon

this very sign post and has imbedded a Quantum memory in it; the sensation of which is what he is feeling at this very moment.

As he gazes up at the sign post a car pulls up and asks him for directions.

This is the final piece of Good Luck that he is going to have on this journey as the woman wants to get to — yes, you guessed it — Lock Ness.

Getting into the car he introduces himself, “I’m Olly Grey. And I assume you must be the Good Fairy.”

The woman, Heather Ferguson, laughs and gets Olly to recount his remarkable journey.

Once he has finished Heather can only remark, “What a Lucky so-and-so you are.”

To which Olly can only reply in truth, “I don’t believe in Luck.”

So well do they get on that Heather, an attractive woman in her 30s, persuades Olly that he should accompany her to a big party that is taking place at Drumnadrochit, on the banks of Lock Ness, in celebration of the formation of the Young Escosse’s Peoples Party, or YEPP, for short.

Olly realizing that his chance of finding Ali and the rest of the Bowden Clan that night were slim, decides that a party, as a celebration, is a very tempting prospect. That Heather is alluring and down right encouraging has absolutely nothing to do with it — like heck it doesn’t.

*

Chapter 10

The Enchanted Garden

Fundamentals are not to be taken Too Seriously;
As One Fundamental may not be as Fundamental as Another One That it Depends On to be Fundamental.
And Remember:
This Statement Itself could easily be Fundamentally Wrong.
Try this as an example:
The problem often lies in finding genuine Bedrock – the fundamental that all other Fundamentals depend upon.
Like that all fundamental Physical Particles are in fact Packets of Waves.
Making Waves the Ultimate Entity Our World is based on – Probably the Flimsiest Bedrock Imaginable.
But then, I haven't started on Words yet!

– Wild-man Willy

From the Book: 'The Building Blocks Of Reality' or as its sometimes known 'Metaphysical Lego'

*

*

If it were possible to see The Enchanted Garden from above its structure would have resembled a spiral-armed galaxy where there are longer and shorter arms and arms made up of several entwined smaller arms. A total of 7 arms each with its beginning at the Font Stone. This would have been a bewildering structure if it could have been seen from above, so then, how much more so bewildering is it as seen across the plane as our Searchers are forced to do.

Then to make things even more difficult the darkness of the night is suddenly illuminated by the moon dancing in and out of cloud. A Flash sometimes reveals a grassy walkway only to have it snatched away by the black imposed by the now invisible moon.

It is hardly surprising, then, that the Searchers soon lose contact with each other; disappearing with each alternative Flash; not reappearing with the next.

*

For Lilly and Ambrose this is an almost mystical experience. When suddenly and without warning they are entrapped in an arbour of tangled vines. They sit down on a stone seat and embrace with passion. The moonlight playing tricks with the contours of their faces; first a demon then an angel; what joy.

*

The human being who had first constructed The Enchanted Garden had a special sensitivity to the Quantum Fields of the various plants and how each plant's Quantum Field Entangled with other ones. Those that Entangled in harmony were Companion Plants — thus the Garden was harmonious in this special way.

It had taken him many-a-long year to arrange the plants so that only Companion Plants were next to each other. He neither knew nor cared that the structure as viewed from above resembled a spiral-arm galaxy.

He was able to pass on his sensitivity to apprentices that he had chosen because he had noted how their Quantum Field had Entangled with his. So it was that when he died his apprentices were able to develop the garden with more and more plants from all over the world.

The result: The Enchanted Garden — its special power is the fundamental power of all life — love and its eternal companion — sex.

*

Lilly and Ambrose couldn't contain themselves under the spell of the Garden's magic. They rip each other's clothes off and are just about to start mating when, "Excuse me but I do hope you are going to use contraceptives." Wild-man Willy's interjection does not go down well.

In a spiral-arm not too far away. In another arbour, this one blessed by a stone bed, Little Richard and Hannah are fighting the effects of the Garden and the internal conflict of their feelings for each other.

Moonlight lights up Richard's face and Hannah's hands. She remembers what Titania, the Fairy Queen, had said to her and she rubs her hands all over Little Richard's face.

He is transformed into the raw passionate desire that Hanna so desperately wants to see.

Neither can contain themselves and rip each other's clothes off, until naked, they come together in a state of Quantum Field Entanglement of the most potent kind.

*

It should be noted that human bodies fit together with the ease of jig-saw puzzle pieces — that's the physical side. But when it's the right of destiny, the emotions come together like the picture on the jig-saw puzzle — Rembrandt's 'The Lovers' perhaps.

But here, the picture is that of a new born baby.

*

In yet another arbour in yet another spiral-arm not too far away, Big Richard and Lee, grasp the moment and themselves. Love making in the aged; physicality, barely comes in to it. It is more like 'walking the dog', or 'washing the dishes', or 'making the bed' — a joyous experience never the less.

Long and lasting it makes up for the dynamic enthusiasm of youth by not even trying.

So it is.

So it is that The Enchanted Garden has fulfilled its fundamental purpose in regard to human beings.

Not so with the Elfin-kind Aliens.

They quickly move in on the very centre of the garden — coming in along grassy paths between the spiral-arms of Companion Plants.

6 crew members and Anita Cassidy.

They look down at the Font Stone, covered in moss, as it is, and the 'well' of water at its centre.

They know what they have to do. 7 hands dip into the 'well' at the centre of the font stone.

Olly and Lelia have been there; hidden by the blip. They had spent many happy hours undisturbed in their own company. It is the other fundamental purpose of The Enchanted Garden that they have indulged in — LOVE. LOVE in its purist form: unconditional.

But now they are gone. Heading south-west and with the speed of a hurricane.

There is no time to lose.

The Searchers are assembled back on board the ferry and set off down The Enchanted Lake at a speed that is hardly credible.

But now there is a companion with them.

He is playing in the bow wake like dolphins do. But this is no dolphin.

Nessie has caught on to the excitement in the Quantum Field of the Lock.

He had no intention of missing out on what he perceives as a 'coming-moment'. Perhaps even 'The' 'Coming-Moment'.

He is after all humankind's oldest Alien friend — as such, his is the honour of the moment.

He smiles to himself and laughs in union with The Wonderful Enchanted Lake.

And, with the Biosphere that has made it all possible, he cries with joy.

*

Chapter 11

The Gathering

Entangled Quantum Fields Share a Quantum State Experientially Experienced by the Participants.

One on One Like Lovers.

A few Like a Wedding or Funeral.

Many Like a Football Crowd or an Audience At a Music Festival or a Celebration of Like-minded people.

Entanglement Needs Resonance to Achieve The 'Hive' Mind – Many Minds as One.

Once Achieved Never Forgotten – The Very Seed of the 'Rapture', It Springs forth Like Life Itself.

Transformative and Transforming – Experientially Entangled.

A moment of Bliss that Lasts Forever.

– Wild-man Willy

From Anita Cassidy's Record of the Rapture

*

The ferry speeds into Urquhart Bay at a reckless pace. It pulls up in front of the Great Ruin of Urquhart Castle that stands on Strone Point, which marks the southern boundary of the Bay.

The Alien Captain apologises to his passengers for his lack of care; the Searchers forgive him for what has been an exhilarating ride and a celebration is called for. But there is a Celebration already happening on shore or so it sounds; Bob Marley and the Whalers reggae across the water like the soundtrack from a 70s rock festival.

The ferry hugs the shore-line until it passes Lewiston then the Captain drops anchor.

The sound of a huge crowd on shore almost drowns out the music with single voiced spikes and massed rumblings trying to outbid each other for that accolade.

The Searchers and crew know that Little Olly and Lelia are here — they can feel them in their Quantum Fields.

There's only one thing to do.

Once ashore they split up — each searching in their own way.

They search mainly amongst young humans — there are Aliens here, and in great quantity — but it is the young humans that have brought this Gathering together and, as a consequence, is of the greatest interest as it is amongst these young humans that the lovers will hide.

These young humans are here to Celebrate the new world that has been afforded by the deadly virus — Covid 25.

The latest news has revealed the full extent of the pandemics artful destruction. 7 1/3 billion people dying or dead. What more can be said?

It is therefore a Celebration of the enlightened survivors — the People of Escosse being prominent in this regard.

To mark this poignant event the young people of Escosse have decided to launch a new political party to capture the essence of what they stand for. This is summed up in the Party's Manifesto that can and has been printed on T-shirts:

- 1) Free Health Care For Ever— A Basic Human Right
- 2) Free Education for Life — A Basic Human Right
- 3) Freedom from dictatorship of any kind — A Basic Human Right
- 4) Free to choose whatever life any individual wants to live as long as it doesn't conflict with the other Freedoms and the Custodians' responsibilities (see below) — A Basic Human Right
- 5) A new economic system based on the recently discovered ability to Print money for the creation of *real world* assets — The Basic Human Right to have an Economic System that provides for Everyone

And

6) For all of Escosse's People to be the Custodians of the Planet. To make sure that the unique set of qualities of human beings — such as representational rationality, scientific endeavour, engineering skills and the ability to work together even in large numbers for the common good — are brought into the service of the Biosphere and for the Planet Earth as a Whole.

With this Manifesto the Young Escosse's People Party (YEPP) have a winner on their hands — for none can disagree with it.

The Celebration is for a future filled with potential for all Species of the Biosphere. And there is only one thing to say to that, and that is: Amen!

*

I think it would be worth visiting each of these Manifesto commitments to check-up on their veracity and practicality. Young people, after all, often get carried away with their idealism.

Take 1) 'Free Health Care For Ever'. Free here is in the context of the UK's National Health Service (NHS); free at the point of entry. But unless there are benevolent Gods, Health Care can hardly be Free. The NHS, which employed millions of people and millions of pieces of technology was funded by taxation. But this is not what the Manifesto's commitment is proposing. YEPP have classified 'Health Care' as a *real world* asset. And as such it is possible to Print money to fund this Health Care commitment (see 5).

Take 2) 'Free Education for Life'. It makes perfect sense to make Education a Basic Human Right as not only does the individual benefit but society as a whole benefits as well. And, as Education can be classified as a *real world* asset in the same manner as 'Health Care', then providing the money for Education is just a matter of turning on the Printing press (see 5).

Take 3) "Freedom from dictatorship of any kind". Why should anyone have to put up with someone else telling them what to do. It is obvious — axiomatic, a self-evident truth — and as such it should also be considered to be a Basic Human Right.

Take 4) 'Free to choose whatever life one wants to live as long as it doesn't conflict with the other freedoms and the Custodians' responsibilities'. Surely this is common sense. Isn't it what we all want — to act with Agency and live the life we imagine for ourselves. As such it also has to be considered a Basic Human Right.

Take 5) 'A new economic system that provides for everyone to achieve their full potential.' This is of course built upon the ability to Print money to create *real world* assets. How this ability has come about is well worth the telling as it gives the justification for the new economic system that YEPP are proposing. If anyone had bothered to look at what money is instead of letting economists define this subject. They would have realized that money is just a 'medium of exchange'. And a 'medium of exchange' has no intrinsic value of its own and as such you can Print as much as you like without causing inflation. It is only when economists aligned this 'medium of exchange' with gold and other so-called

valuable metals did the problem with inflation arise. But miracles beyond miracles do arise and one such miracle was when a brilliant man became President of the USA who realized this connection between 'precious' metals and the 'medium of exchange' was holding the world back from a time of unprecedented wealth. His name was 'Tricky-Dicky' Nixon. And he took the US Dollar off the gold standard freeing the 'medium of exchange' of the shackles of precious metals. Unfortunately, 'Tricky-Dicky' was too clever for his own good and he was caught lying to the American people, and even worse, he was caught swearing. His great innovation of freeing the 'medium of exchange' from its association with precious metals lost all credibility along with his own credibility when it was realized that he was just a vulgar egotist.

But now, free from the past, this ability to create *real world* assets by Printing money is set to usher in, not just a new economic order, but also a new world order for the benefit of everyone. And not only for humankind but also for all the species that make-up the Biosphere. (see Appendix 4 — Printed Money as only a 'medium of Exchange')

So this is not just a Basic Human Right but a Basic Biosphere Right 't'boot'.

Take 6) 'For all of Escosse's People to be the Custodians of the Planet'. What a remarkable turnaround for humankind. Once the scourge of the Biosphere, and now its protector and facilitator for the welfare of all species that make up the Biosphere. As a writer I have visited this concept before in a book I wrote called 'Rain Dance'. (see Appendix 2 — 'Rain Dance')

Whoever wrote this Manifesto deserves the gratitude of the entire planet.

*

Chapter 0

The Rapture

The Unfettered Mind is just Another name
For Agency.
The Unfettered Mind is Evolution's Answer
To Progress:
Freedom to Think, Feel, Live and Love

The Evolutionary Process has Produced
Two Events – The Annihilation of Unfettered
Reproduction by Wayward Species.
And, the Experiential Experience of 'Full
Enlightenment' for those that are Worthy.

When Individuals Arrive at the
Moment of Transcendence it is called:
'Full Enlightenment'
When 'Full Enlightenment' Arrives en mass
It is Called:
 'The Rapture'

– Wild-man Willy

From Anita Cassidy's Record of 'The Rapture'

*

The Pronouncement

The definition of 'The Rapture' must be totally removed from religious meaning. The meaning of the term 'The Rapture' is understood by all Alien Species that have undergone Evolution's Enlightenment Process in their respective Biospheres. It has nothing to do with religious beliefs of any kind; which are always a mark that individuals, even Individual Species, are not Evolutionary ready for Full Enlightenment.

Full Enlightenment is the Experiential Experience of the Entire Universe as an Holistic Whole. And is accompanied by knowledge that transcends all previous knowledge acquired along the Evolutionary Path.

The Rapture marks the Experiential Experience of what has gone BEFORE
 The Rapture marks the Experiential Experience of what happens DURING
 The Rapture marks the Experiential Experience of what will happen AFTER
 — As seen from the perspective of the Endless Nowness of Being.

The Rapture is the Experiential Experience of the Unformed Block
 — As seen from the perspective of Full Enlightenment.

Before

Anita wants me in my guise of Wild-man Willy, to accompany her and go along with the Captain and the Alien crew to meet up with other members of the Elfin-kind Aliens in the search for Olly and his abductor. I, however, am in a strange frame of mind. I feel the need to sort out my mind before the fast approaching event of the era descends upon us like a deadly thunderstorm.

The greatest Evolutionary moment in the 3.5 billion year history of the Biosphere is almost upon us but my mind doesn't feel it is ready to experience the moment of transcendental transition to Full Enlightenment. My mind is all over the place — Anita insists this is normal.

*

The confusion has me traverse between the 3 identities that I exist in — Writer, Commentator and Character.

*

This confusion is echoed in the random direction of my progress. I wander. Aimless.

Passing through my mind are these words, “I wandered lonely as a cloud.” Then I can’t remember the words that comes next, so I blunder on, “When all at once I see a host of golden pubic hairs.” I have made myself laugh which lightens my mood somewhat.

Eventually, I (which I, you need to chose) ends up at the ruin that is Urquhart Castle. The main tower is still intact and I am pleased to find the way in, and up, open. I climb to the top and look out onto The Enchanted Lake. The moon springs out from behind clouds and transforms the vista into the spectacular then beyond delivering a glimpse of what Einstein called the ‘Wonderful Mysterious’. (see Appendix 5 — Factor X)

I am only released from this beauteous vision when the moon’s light is switched off as it disappears behind clouds.

“Ooooooh.” The female voice says it all in descending tones.

I turn to see that I am, indeed, not alone.

She turns towards me, searching me out in the gloom, “Hi, I’m Radio Ga-Ga.” This is accompanied by joyful laughter.

“Hi, and I’m Wild-man Willy.” Retorting in the same vein, “What brings you here at this precise moment?”

“Oh, the usual. My boyfriend is obnoxiously drunk and wants to flirt with whatever pretty girl he comes across.” Radio says this in a way that suggests boredom. But for me it looks like a way back to some kind of ‘normality’.

*

It, however, casts me (which me, you need to chose) back to when I was young and stupid and acted in the same manner.

It casts me back to that fateful love I had with Helen that lasted 11 1/2 years, 11 1/2 years of pain and conflict for us both.

I was ‘in-love’ with her — that is: unconditionally. But she was never ‘in-love’ with me. Oh yes, she loved me alright but there is a big difference between conditional love and unconditional love. I always felt in an inferior position in our relationship because of it.

The reason why she was unable to love me unconditionally was because she had that love for a baby that she had aborted. Whether this is true I’ll never know. I do know it screwed her up having an abortion; an abortion she had when she was 14.

Such are the complexities of human relationships.

After 11 1/2 years I had, had enough and broke the relationship up. That in itself was traumatic. Then what followed was, to say the least, a great folly. I tried every other kind of relationship except the being ‘in-love’ variety — I was fully spent in that regard. I had relationships that lasted from 4 1/2 years down to one night stands. None of which came even close to that one fateful one that I had with Helen. Until, now, that is.

Anita Cassidy is wonderful beyond words. She is also an Alien. The depth of her emotions is staggering. That this emotion she has for me is almost miraculous. If it's possible this love I feel for her is beyond 'in-loveness'. And we have achieved this in just a couple of days.

It's enough to make you believe in ... Destiny.

*

"Memories catching up with you?" Ga-Ga breaks my reverie.

"I'm afraid so. Sorry, but I can't help you. I have just recently fallen 'in-love' with someone. The first time since I was young. Just remember this: you might have to wait half a life time to find the right partner but they are out there somewhere."

"Yes, that just about sums it up. I'm with the wrong man. I've known it for some time but have chosen to ignore it. If this is a new era we are entering then I should be ... canny ... and get myself a new boyfriend for the occasion."

"Sounds about right. And not just for you. But, for everyone."

"I should get back and see that useless piece of dog's wallop and tell him its over. And then I should get right on out there and find myself a new partner."

"Do you want some company on the walk back?"

"Why not."

We set off after a last look at the vista over Lock Ness — the moon rides out to bless us and, everything its beams touch, and, in its way, blesses all that gaze on The Enchanted Lake's beauty.

*

Along the road Wild-man considers the future according to these young people as written in their manifesto that Radio kindly hands to him. He particularly likes the last commitment. Being Custodians of the biosphere is something close to his heart. He, that's either Me, Him or I, has actually written a short story on this called Rain Dance — (see Appendix n)."

*

"It makes perfect sense ..."

Wild-man finishes her train of thought, "If we had only been educated to realize we humans are just part of the biosphere ..."

“Which most education systems throughout the world have not. And then there’s all these religions still peddling God ...” Radio delivers this in annoyance

“Gods in the Image of Man.” Wild-man Willy is being eloquent.

“Yeah, I like that. Perhaps it’s the very reason why so many of the 7 billion dying are still praying to their various Gods. Their Image of God being human makes perfect sense to them; even if it is not a physical image, the mental image is definitely human.”

“Do you know how long it will take for the full 7 billion to die?” Wild-man asks matter-of-factly.

“Well, it won’t be long as the virus has spread everywhere but here. And once you have the virus it takes a couple of weeks for the first symptoms to show during which time you are highly contagious and then you’re dead inside a couple of days.”

“It’s remarkably efficient. You’d think it was designed for the purpose.” Says Willy with a sense of awe; even if it is just a lingual possibility and not a realistic one.

“Now don’t start that. There’s no need for a designer. 7 billion vectors for the virus to live in. 7 billion vectors for the virus to mutate in. It was only a matter of time for the perfect mutation to evolve and make its appearance.”

“The perfect mutation to wipe out the vast majority of human-kind.”

Radio squeezes it out in gloating glee, “Evolution, Black in the Maw of Rotting Death.”

After a reflective few moments Willy moves on from the frightening vision that Radio has created, “I suppose we’ll celebrate the event in years to come. Black Death Day, perhaps.”

“Crispy Death Day, more like. After the physiological state the human body takes on once it’s been ravaged by the virus.”

“It is all a bit gruesome. Don’t you think?”

Ga-Ga laughs, “Sorry. If I don’t laugh, I’d only cry.”

“And that will never do.” Wild-man Willy joins Radio Ga Ga in loud manic laughter.

*

Then they dance like mad things along the ‘yellowing’ road. ‘Yellowing’ under the moon’s artful light. Arm in arm. Like a scene from ‘The Wizard of Oz’; Dorothy and the ...”

*

They part when they enter the village of Drumnadrochit. Radio continues into the crowds on the village green. Wild-man avoids the huge gathering around the stage and seeks out a deserted bench seat on the periphery. This seat is protected by a curved area full of

daffodils — deserted because people want to avoid standing on what is a magnificent display.

But then Wild-man realises there is one young woman there already.

“Hi. Do you mind if I join you?” Willy is already alert to the fact that he recognises the young woman. He recognises her from the campsite, “Hi, I’m Wild-man Willy, Lilly’s friend. But I’m afraid I don’t know your name.”

“Caledonia.” She gives Willy a sweet smile which is in sharp contrast, in terms of juxtaposition, to what she now says, “I’m lost. But not in the conventional sense. I’ve just suddenly realized that I don’t know where I am in regard to the universe. And for some reason it suddenly seems terribly important.”

“It probably seems very important because we are very close to The Rapture — Full Enlightenment. Where everything will be revealed as we enter a new world order. And we must have this knowledge to live in this new world.”

Cal twists her body around to face him while crossing her legs under her, “Can’t yer not give me something more tangible to grasp onto.”

Willy can hear a growing desperation in her voice, so is forced into delivering her something less abstract and more mundane, “It is difficult, I must admit. And that’s for a very good reason.” He points up to a group of stars that can be seen through a gap in the clouds, “See those stars? Well ... they’re not there. And that’s because of the speed of light. It takes different times for the light to get here from where those stars were. And while the light was travelling to our planet Earth, the stars have moved on just like our planet has moved on. So all of that up there is just an illusion. You simply can’t tell where you are by looking at the universe. The only way to get to grips with the problem is to adopt a speed map. Let me explain what a simple speed map is.” He can see that Caledonia is confused and so quickly presses on, “Just follow what I say and it will become clear. As we sit here on our planet we are travelling at a 1000 kilometres per hour around the the planet’s axis. And the planet is moving around our star at roughly 100,000 kilometres per hour. Our star orbits around the centre of our Milky Way galaxy at about 220 kilometres per second. And our galaxy glides through the universe at about Mach 1000 or 800,000 kilometres per hour relative to the microwave background — which is the radiation left over from the ‘Big Bang’, so you see we can see where we are in relation to where the ‘Big Bang’ was 13.8 billion years ago. And that’s about as close as we can get to understanding where we are in relation to the universe.”

Willy brings out his wallet and takes out a picture that’s folded up inside and shows it to Cal, “This is a photograph of the microwave background taken by the WMAP space telescope (see image n). As you can see it has all sorts of structures in an overall structure. This photograph is unique to where we are in relation to the rest of the universe. Taken from anywhere else the microwave background would look different.” Wild-man smiles benevolently at Caledonia, “You can keep that so you will always know where you are.”

“But don’t you need it?” She asks with genuine concern.

“Don’t worry about it. I have a really big one stuck on my living-room wall back home. And it’s even better than this one as it was taken by the latest space telescope, the Planck, which was just launched in 2009 and started taking photographs in 2010.”

“Oh, I see.” She says this after a long time examining the photo, “Let me get this right. The ‘Big Bang’ is like the name of a city. And we are travelling along a street whose name is the Milky Way galaxy, and entering a house that is named the planet Earth.”

“Not bad. Not bad at all. For a metaphor, that is.”

“It’s a funny thing about metaphors that they work by similarity — similarity in some aspect of whatever it is. And yet have no relationship in any other aspects.”

“True. But they are only used as a method for learning.”

“A tool for understanding, I guess.”

“That’s the ticket. So those drawings on your body, are they symbolic representations of the universe — symbolic metaphors?”

Caledonia quickly stands up and drops the straps of her dress off her shoulders leaving herself stark naked. She isn’t even wearing nickers. Not only has she revealed the full extent of the drawings but also the fact that she has a lovely body.

The lines around her breasts join up near her breast-bone forming a Celtic Knot of some intricacy but the other ends circle her neck and slide down her back in what looks like dragons whose tails end up intertwined and seem to enter the cleavage between her buttocks. These re-emerge from her slit and circle her legs like ivy climbing a tree.

Willy is fascinated and gets close up circling Cal as he descends all the way down to where the drawings disappear into her boots, “Who did this exceptional drawing?”

“My boyfriend. Naturally, he’s a Pict like myself. But the images are from stone carvings that the Picts were very fond of leaving all over the northern part of Scotland. Or Pict-land as it should be really known as. The trouble was that the Picts didn’t have a language — at least not a written one — and so lost out in terms of ownership of what is now Scotland.”

“There by hangs a tale. One repeated all over the world by lots of other indigenous people who didn’t have a written language.”

“Like the North American Indians.”

“Precisely.” He says, taking a step back, while appreciating the wonderful drawings on her wonderful body.

“So what is this: an art appreciation class or a study class for a life drawing?” Anita doesn’t sound too happy.

Having just appeared behind Cal she has shocked our poor Pict, “Where the hell did yer come from.”

“Oh she’s very good at doing that. Sneaking up on people unannounced.” Then without missing a beat, “Caledonia meet my girl friend Anita. Anita meet our young Pictish friend, Caledonia.”

Cal pulls up her dress without any sign of embarrassment. While Wild-man descends on Anita and there then ensues lots of hugging and kissing followed by lots of kissing and hugging. Cal quickly gets the message and she slinks off in the direction of the stage, without even a look back.

“Did she tell you that she understands the meaning of those symbols painted on her body?”

“We never got that far.” I chime in.

“Too busy appreciating the aesthetics I suppose.” Anita can hardly contain a smile to match my own. “Pity. Because there is deep knowledge wrapt up in the overall design that links all of the parts. What she has on her body is what is called ‘a great mystery’. It speaks of a special sense that enlightened beings, humans as well as Aliens, possess, that can detect a hidden — for want of a better word: world. To sense that behind anything that can be experienced there is something that our minds cannot grasp and whose beauty and sublimity reaches us only indirectly and as a feeble reflection.”

“Wow. I have forgotten that I knew that.” Willy is overcome as tears well up in his eyes, “Thanks for reminding me. Didn’t Einstein say something similar.”

“Indeed he did, but then he was a very Enlightened human being.”

We, that’s me (you chose which one) and Anita cling onto each other happy in the knowledge of our shared Enlightenment.

“Now listen. Little Olly and his fairy godmother are definitely here. But even banding together we Aliens have been unable to locate them. The general consensus is that she must be stopped from taking him ‘off world’. Because the universe is a very big place for such a little boy.” Anita can feel Wild-man’s discomfort over his behaviour with Caledonia and reassures him, “It’s probably down to the fact that the Rapture is very close. Just remember not to fight it when it comes.”

“You will be with me when it does?” I plead.

“I’ll make sure. I wouldn’t miss this for a whole packet of jelly babies all named Olly.” She grins at me like her Cheshire Cat who’s name just so happens to be Schrodinger.

We kiss and part. Leaving me with a massive black-hole in what I should now be doing. I know she has given me a direction for constructing a Koan around the subject of ‘a great mystery’. But — and this is typical of Einstein — his quote is perfect the way it is.

*

Perfection.

*

Now there's a subject suitable for a Koan but only in the sense that there is no such thing. Which makes it too obvious.

At least, since my last contact with Anita, I can now tell that my mind is wandering and should, therefore, avoid any further situations like the one with Caledonia. No matter how innocent on my part. Although I suspect not so innocent on Caledonia's part and should concentrate, therefore, on the problem at hand: Finding baby Olly.

*

This insightful thought is quickly replaced by Lelia holding Little Olly. She's looking out across the green but Olly is looking at me.

His feelings are there in my head and if he could express himself in words this is what he is saying, "Can't stop long. We are barely able to keep one step in front of them. And we have to because The Rapture is almost upon us but not quite yet. Lelia is planning to sacrifice herself so that I can return to my mother after I have played my role in triggering the Mass Enlightenment that is The Rapture. But it's alright. Even though she won't be with us as an individual anymore, she will be part of us all for ever."

"How wonderful." My own words stick in my throat. I'm definitely getting more sentimental the older I get.

Then he and Lelia are gone in the twinkling of my moist eye.

*

"It is you." A voice from behind has me twisting to see who it is. Recognition comes slowly then in a rush, "Oh My Great Aunt Gertrude, Olly. You're back from Africa. Have you seen Ali?"

"No. But I take it she's here."

"Yes. Somewhere. But in all of these crowds I couldn't say where."

"Never mind." Big Olly sits down beside me, "At least you can fill me in without all the emotional emphasis, if it was Ali that was trying to bring me up to speed."

"Of course." It strikes me, "You don't know anything."

"Like what?"

"Oh My Conspicuous Cousin Celia. Like ... everything."

Olly gives a nervous Laugh, "She hasn't decided to give me the big 'heave-ho'."

It takes a moment to compute, "Asking her to marry you did take her back a bit. You know how she likes her independence. But she is actually giving it serious consideration; but only after a two year period of living together — being a starter for 10."

“I can handle that. So is that it?”

It is now my turn to laugh nervously, “You must be joking ... Oh My Unmarried Uncle Ulrich ... I don’t know where to start.”

“Try starting at the beginning. Then work your way through to the end. Then stop.”

“Sound advice if I knew where the beginning was.” What I suddenly realize is: that I can’t do it here; the crowds, the music; too many distractions, “Listen Olly, can we go for a walk. It will help me compose my thoughts.”

“That’s fine by me. I fancy some exercise.”

“Excellent.” I get up and head for the southern part of the village to where a minor road leads past The Lock Ness Inn; filled to overflowing with merry revellers.

It doesn’t take long before the road, more a lane, starts to climb up the hill. We get to the first bend and I turn to Olly, “I’ve got a new girlfriend. Which is a novelty in itself. But when you consider she’s an Alien it takes it past the novelty category and takes it into ‘bonkers’ territory.”

“You mean she’s Scottish.”

“Sort of.” I laugh with genuine humour, “What I’m now going to tell you can be verified by Ali next time you see her. She’s an Alien from another part of the galaxy — my girlfriend, that is — and in her Alien form she’s green with pointy ears. She is, of course, in disguise and she achieves this by having a human form.”

“And very sensible too. You’re not very likely to get many invites to social occasions if she was wandering around as a little green man from the planet Zog.”

“That’s the spirit. Humour me. I’m sure that once you get to know her you’ll really like her. Even Gran has taken a liking to her. Of course Gran has changed beyond recognition since the last time you saw her.”

“Oh no, don’t tell me, Gran’s covered in fur and squeaks a lot.”

“Excellent. This is working out better than I could possibly have hoped for.”

“Where exactly are we going?” Olly stops and looks about.

“To the Divach Falls; a local beauty spot.”

“Local to this part of the galaxy?”

I laugh with abandon, “I’m glad you’re entering into the spirit of the times. Soon, you’ll be as bonkers as I am.”

Olly gives himself up to it and laughs with only a trace of nervousness, “So why are these Aliens here?”

“That ... is the right question.”

Just then the music back at the village green turns a distinct shade of reggae.

"Is This Love by Bob Marley and the Wailers."

"I wanna love you and treat you right
 I wanna love you every day and every night
 We'll be together with a roof right over our heads
 We'll share the shelter of my single bed
 We'll share the same room, yeah! - for Jah provide the bread
 Is this love - is this love - is this love
 Is this love that I'm feelin'?
 Is this love - is this love - is this love
 Is this love that I'm feelin'?
 I wanna know - wanna know - wanna know now!
 I got to know - got to know - got to know now!

I-I-I-I-I-I-I-I - I'm willing and able,
 So I throw my cards on your table!
 I wanna love you - I wanna love and treat - love and treat you right
 I wanna love you every day and every night
 We'll be together, yeah! - with a roof right over our heads
 We'll share the shelter, yeah, oh now! - of my single bed
 We'll share the same room, yeah! - for Jah provide the bread

Is this love - is this love - is this love
 Is this love that I'm feelin'?
 Is this love - is this love - is this love
 Is this love that I'm feelin'?
 Wo-o-o-oah! Oh yes, I know; yes, I know - yes, I know now!
 Oh yes, I know; yes, I know - yes, I know now!"

I sing along until I see Olly watching me with curiosity. My voice trails off.

“Was Bob Marley an Alien? And all those deadlocks, were they antennae?”

“Dreadlocks. And I guess they could be. I have wondered why Bob is so popular amongst the folks here about. I’ll ask Anita the next time I see her.”

“And not only here. He’s still popular wherever you go in Africa.”

“He’s one of the few genuine international musicians. And a big favourite of the little green men, t’boot.”

“Not so much as an international star as intergalactic one, you might say.” Olly laughs with genuine emotion and I join him.

We continue up the hill listening to Bob and joining in and finding a common love for a particular song:

"Buffalo Soldier"

“Buffalo Soldier, Dreadlocked Rasta
 There was a Buffalo Soldier in the heart of America
 Stolen from Africa, brought to America
 Fighting on arrival, fighting for survival

I mean it, when I analyze the stench -
 To me it makes a lot of sense
 How the Dreadlocked Rasta was a Buffalo Soldier
 And he was taken from Africa, brought to America
 Fighting on arrival, fighting for survival

Said it was a Buffalo Soldier, Dreadlocked Rasta -
 Buffalo Soldier in the heart of America

If you know your history
 Then you would know where you're coming from
 Then you wouldn't have to ask me
 Who the heck do I think I am

I'm just a Buffalo Soldier in the heart of America
 Stolen from Africa, brought to America
 Said he was fighting on arrival, fighting for survival
 Said he was a Buffalo Soldier win the war for America”

We both stop, turn and sing at the top of our voices to an invisible audience:

“Said he, woy yoy yoy, woy yoy-yoy yoy,
 Woy yoy yoy yoy, yoy yoy-yoy yoy!
 Woy yoy yoy, woy yoy-yoy yoy,
 Woy yoy yoy yoy, yoy yoy-yoy yoy!”

Singing, woy yoy yoy, woy yoy-yoy yoy,
 Woy yoy yoy yoy, yoy yoy-yoy yoy!
 Woy yoy yoy, woy yoy-yoy yoy,
 Woy yoy yoy yoy, yoy yoy-yoy yoy!”

A magic moment of Quantum Entanglement.

A couple of middle-aged white men brought together by a young black Jamaican — are we really that different.

Bob is finally drowned out by the rushing hiss of the water fall.

“Now, where was I.” I look at Big Olly then past Big Olly, directing his attention to Anita Cassidy that has just appeared behind him, “Meet my girlfriend.”

“Where in heaven’s name did you come from?” Olly is more shocked than surprised. Then more staggered than shocked as Anita presents her Alien self — green pointy ears and all.

“Wild-man will explain the detail.” She addresses this to Olly then to me as she changes back into her human form, “It’s easier to show them than to try and explain.” Then she’s gone.

“Where did she go?”

“A question easily asked but impossible to answer.” I deliver before getting back to my original statement, “Now, where was I.”

Olly is too stunned to contribute so I continue, “Ah yes. The Quantum bases for all of this. I remember talking to you once before, how all Quantum Entities like human beings produce a Quantum Field. And, how it is possible to entangle your Quantum Field with mine or with anyone else. I think we were talking about this in regard to Little Olly and how, when you entangle Quantum Fields with children, this is often called bonding. Well, that is only the beginning of the wonders of Quantum Fields.”

Olly involuntarily sits down on a hummock of grass.

“That’s a good strategy — you can’t fall down if you are already sitting down. You see Olly, our Biosphere is a Quantum Entity in its own right. And it produces a massive Quantum Field that we humans are all part of. The only trouble is that the vast majority of human beings don’t understand this. They don’t see that we have evolved as part of the Biosphere. These morons — they are called ‘red-necks’ in America, Islamic Fundamentalists in the Middle-east, Born Again Christians in South America, Hindu Nationalists in India and lots of other ignorant groupings from all over the World — think we are somehow separate from the rest of the Natural World. And that is why they treat the rest of the Natural World with such disdain. They exploit it. They kill millions of species and trillions of individuals without a single thought. So it is hardly surprising that the Biosphere — acting as a free agent; albeit billions of years ago — has decided to remove these morons and other ones just like them — from itself. A simple virus is laying waste to human beings as we speak. By the time it has finished we’ll be lucky if there are 100 million of us left. And that’s about the number our Biosphere can tolerate. And then, only, if we become Custodians of the Biosphere. When seen from this perspective 7 billion dead is just an historical statistical fact.”

“What about their children and families?”

“Well fortunately, they’ll all be dead as well. Which leaves us with only one thing to do — and that is ... to move on.”

*

Wild-man, that’s me, in my Character Form, can see that Olly is struggling with this and I try a different tack.

*

The Evolutionary Paradigm, “3.5 billion years of Evolution on this planet and the Biosphere finally produces a species that is capable of representational rationality. Yes, that’s us. And just look what we’ve done with it. Exploitation and destruction. Mass murder in the greatest mass extinction since the end of the Cambrian. When ... when we

should be acting in concert with all of the other species to ensure the success of the Biosphere that we are all part of.”

“But to kill 7 billion.”

“Then we should have taken notice and acted when Covid 19 was fired across our bows. But, oh no, it was soon back to normal. No change in the organisation of society. No change in our attitude to the exploitation of the Natural World. And no change to our greed and selfishness and stupidity. What Evolution didn’t give us was foresight. And now all we are left with is hindsight — time to move on.”

After a while Olly asks, “Is that it? Is it only a numbers game? ... Many years ago I read this poem written during the First World War by a soldier living in the trenches.” He composes himself as he remembers, “The Numbers Game:

He originally had two arms and two legs,
 Now he has no legs and only one arm.
 Originally he had two eyes and two ears,
 Now he has no eyes and only one ear.
 His mouth is just a gaping hole in a
 Head split in two.
 Can you hear what he says?
 They’re just numbers and not
 Enough to make a life.

Is that it?” Olly pleads through tears.

*

But of course it isn’t.

*

“The Evolutionary process has produced something quite wonderful — Quantum Enlightenment. It runs hand in hand with the Evolutionary Paradigm. Its mirror image. The Beauty to the Evolutionary Paradigm’s Beast.

Those of us that are left after the Pandemic has taken its toll. Those of us who are Enlightened to the Evolutionary Process operating in the Biosphere, are to be gifted Full Enlightenment via the Processes ultimate resolution known as ‘The Rapture’ — its ultimate purpose.

As such, WE THE FULLY ENLIGHTENED, will walk amongst the Gods as equals. To stride the universe at the speed of thought. To blend and meld with all entities in a single act of Agency. To sleep in the Mystic ... to transcend ...”

my voice trails off and is lost in the sound of the waterfall of eternity

“But now you must bring it all together.” Anita Cassidy’s voice is filled with urgency.

“But how?” I, Me, We ask.

“You must get them all into a single frame — a single frame of reference.”

“You mean, like in an old school photo.”

“That will do very nicely.” Anita sounds much relieved, “But you must start with baby Olly as he is the catalyst. So put him at the centre.”

This is easier done (see illustration) than said:

There he is standing on his mother’s left leg as she sits on a chair facing her daughter Lilly sitting to her right. Ali holds onto Olly with her left hand while squeezing her daughter’s left hand with her right. Lilly’s right arm comes across her mother’s body and her right hand gently grips Olly’s left leg. Olly has both his arms raised and his face turned up to the sky that is made of Lelia’s face.

Ambrose has his left arm around Lilly’s shoulders while he looks to what baby Olly is looking at. His right arm encircles Lilly’s waist. Little Richard sits next to his mother with his left hand on Olly’s back. Hannah is draped over Little Richard and looking up in the same direction as baby Olly. As is Little Richard, Ambrose and Lilly.

Big Richard and Gran stand behind Ali with Richard’s right hand stretching across Ali’s back and with Gran’s left hand doing the same but in the opposite direction. While both are looking at baby Olly. Squeak-Squeak and her children scattered around Gran’s clothes and hair gaze up into Lelia’s face.

Big Olly sits crosslegged on the ground at Ali’s feet. He’s twisted around holding one of Little Olly’s feet while looking at his son’s face.

There are now ghostly figures filling in for this story’s other characters. All looking up in a state of grace.

“But where am I?” Asks Anita suddenly perplexed.

“Where you should be — next to me. For I’m the one that’s taking this photo with my mind’s eye.”

Well that should be It — Look Out — Here it Comes — In the Form of The Perfect

wAVEwAVEwAVEwAVEwAVEw

* * *

During

The Endless Nowness of Being Exists on the Plane
Of Consciousness Not as a Straight Line but
Zig-Zagging like a Zebra's Stripes.
Here, in 'The Rapture', The Endless Nowness of Being
Exists as the Unformed Block —
Experientially Experienced Holistically.

In Other Words:
Full Enlightenment!



"The first thing that 'The Rapture' created was the Pen.
And 'The Rapture' said, "Write".
The Pen said, "What should I write?"
"The Rapture' said, "Write down everything that is going to happen."
So at that moment flowed everything that would happen
Until the next Perfect Wave of Full Enlightenment.

At this "The Rapture' was asked whether the Actions We
Do are New Actions, or, are Actions that have been
Decreed Already.
'The Rapture' replied, " But they are already Decreed in
The Unformed Block along with Everything Else.
But,
Not in The Endless Nowness of Being where
Agency reigns supreme!"

And the Result:
Full Enlightenment!



My Now is Different from your Now —
This is the Very Special Relativity

Of 'The Rapture'.

Your Time and My Time are the Same
Just as Long as We are Unaware of It —
This is the Very General Relativity
Of 'The Rapture'.

These Events Exist Independent of Our
Knowledge,

But

Are They True?

Yes, In The Unformed Block when the
Perfect Wave of 'The Rapture'

Passes Through, Revealing:

The Consciousness of:

Full Enlightenment!

*

The 'Sum of All Histories' Gives the Probability —
The One that is Remembered when 'The Rapture'
Passes Through on the Perfect Wave.

Remembering is a Conscious Act of Agency —
Making Consciousness and Agency the Two
Central Concepts in both Quantum Mechanics
And 'The Rapture'.

And

Remember This:

Knowing the Concept,
One can forget the Words.

Even Thou,

One needs the Words to Describe Both
Quantum Mechanics and 'The Rapture'.

But you don't Need Concepts or Words
To Experience:

Full Enlightenment!

*

The Superposition just grows to Encompass
More and More in the Expanding Volume of
'The Rapture'.

Thus the World Splits into Many Worlds
Where the One We know is the One We
Experience in 'The Rapture'.

The Chain of Connection is Infinite
Both in the Classical And Quantum Worlds
Where it makes up the Expanding Volume
In 'The Rapture'.

And,
Where it Splits into Many Worlds there is
Only 'The Rapture' We Experience.
There is No Other It can Be!

Except in the Perfect Wave
Where WE Experientially Experience it as:
Full Enlightenment!

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What is Known is the Same As
What Cannot be Known,
Depending on Entanglement
Within 'The Rapture'.

Thus,
It Does Not Provide a Definite
Answer to Any Question —
Wittgenstein would laugh from
Inside 'The Rapture'.

It was, After all, What HE was
Looking For:
Full Enlightenment!



Decisions, Decisions, Decisions,
Are easy when they are Just the Outcome
Of Rules.

Thus,

The Decider is Wise Even if the
Decision is Not.

Thus,

We feel we are at the Top of an
Hierarchy of Thought in a Beautifully
Working System that is Invisible Until
'The Rapture' Passes Through in
The form of the Perfect Wave.

Then WE can see the truth of the matter —
Self-organisation makes sanity out of
Chaos in the Wonderful World of
'The Rapture'.

Is a Baby not the very stuff of:
Full Enlightenment!



"All Change!" Shouts the Porter On
The Platform of Life.

"Change Here for All Destinations on Route
To Enlightenment!" Shouts the Shakyamuni
Buddha.

"All Cancelations are Cancelled!" Shouts
Wild-man Willy,
Reading From the Time Table of
'The Raptures'.

Which, of course, leaves only:
Full Enlightenment!

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Order Exists Because Reality is Infinite.
Order is Created when a System Is
Forced by Agency — a Conscious Act —
To chose Between an Infinite Number of
Possibilities.

Consciousness, Agency and Infinity —
Nothing Else is needed
For Full Enlightenment!

Except ...

... The Rapture

* * *

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After

“Will you stop squirming about. You are going to wear these dungarees if I have to take up country and western singing.” Lilly threatens her misbehaving brother with a curse so foul that he actually stops. But only long enough for her to fasten the final fastener. Then, he’s off. As quick as a wink he sees the door opening and he flies out over the head of Gran.

“Have you seen 3 of the children — Flopsy, Dopsy and Curly Tail?” Gran enquires to Lilly’s howl of comedic rage, “Gran, you’ve let him out.” Then a moment of thought, “Was the front door closed?”

Just then, in the distance, the front door can be heard opening.

Lilly pushes past Gran, down the baronial staircase and into the arms of Wild-man Willy who picks her up and swings her around, “There’s no point. He’s gone. And you know only too well where he’s gone.”

Lilly uses the momentum to drag Willy outside. The view is so spectacular and so relatively new that it pulls her up sharp.

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The view of The Enchanted Lake from the MacBowden’s country estate is a thing of wonder. Even one of awe. The Lock stretches out in front with no visible end giving the impression that it simply goes on for ever. Then there’s this feeling that wherever you are on the estate that you are just a part of the vista. A part of the landscape.

It was this view rather than the turreted grandeur of the castle that had disposed Anita Cassidy to select this particular place of abode for the ‘Laired’. That’s Little Olly to commoners, such as you and I, and people who are common by nature.

His perfect enactment of his role as catalyst in ‘The Rapture’ — where he allowed himself to amplify the Enlightenment Experiential Experience by the power of his purity and thus filled the Quantum Field of the Biosphere with a melding force of truly exceptional proportions that brought Enlightenment, to one and all, of those left after the Great Cull.

This act of Agency — so essential for a successful RAPTURE — was to be richly rewarded by presenting him with this ‘old pile’ as his new ancestral home. It had belonged to some English ‘robber baron’ who had perished with his entire family during the Covid 25 pandemic. And was, therefore, up for allocation to some ‘deserving soul’ who just so happened to be homeless. Little Olly MacBowden — name changed for bureaucratic historical reasons, which would soon be lost in the mists of time — fitted the bill, perfectly.

The rest of his family were a shew-in and quickly took to the new life-style with remarkable ease.

Big Richard and Gran took over the entire west wing. Little Richard and Hannah took over the east wing. Ali, Big Olly, Lilly and the 'Laired', took over the main central hall and adjoining rooms. It should be mentioned here that Lilly has what is considered the best room in the entire castle as it protrudes out in elegant curved style above the main doors and is enormous as it covers the area beneath that comprises the central hall and reception rooms. Once Lilly realized it was up for grabs she clung onto it with the fierce determination of some ancient tribal leader fighting for the last haggis in the pot. It was hers by right — the right of the first come first served. And no one was or is going to contest that right. And no one ever did or ever will.

There is, however, one disturbing factor in this near perfect domestic arrangement. And that is, at that very moment, about to make its presence felt.

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“Oh darling. Sweetness of the golden gardens of delight. When are you coming back to bed.”

This sickly address sends Lilly's eyes rolling and she turns to Willy with a shrug of the shoulders, “Oh curly headed wonder of wankers anonymous, I'll be with you directly I get a life. But at the moment I'm engaged in Olly hunting as the wee beastie has escaped and taken to the air as is his want.”

“Oh forget him. We can pick him up later after we indulge in more ... robust ... horizontal pursuits.” Ambrose, for it is no other, is leaning out of Lilly's bedroom window, naked, with no thought for his manly disposition.

“I'm afraid, darling-boy, you will have to exercise your sexual desires by yourself, and which, I may say, you have had much practice. For I am away into the vista and cannot return until after the 'Laired' has had his sup.” And with this Lilly runs full-tilt into the landscape becoming one with it.

“You'd be better off joining her. Olly is more cunning than any single person can trap, restrain or capture. It is all that fairy milk and Lelia's unbridled cunning that she brought to bear on their journey to freedom and our Enlightenment.” Wild-man strains his neck to address Ambrose, face to face as it were, so as to make his point more pointed.

All that can be heard is Ambrose moaning as he dashes inside best to dress himself then go in pursuit of his great love.

Wild-man, the character, laughs softly to himself before turning his attention to more important things — like the coming World Eisteddfod. A gathering of people from throughout the World. People that have survived the Covid 25 pandemic and have a view to organising the world along Custodian lines.

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Dear Readers, you should know that Escosse had been chosen for this venue as it was a fully functioning state of 5.5 million people. And the only one out of 70 million people scattered across the world who were desperate to get things right in terms of a world state. Escosse was given the opportunity to place itself in the position of leader and had

been granted the first attempt at a World Government. This had been skilfully arranged by the Aliens to impress the surviving peoples of the world by organising the World Eisteddfod where various subjects were to be discussed. By giving the surviving peoples of the world the sense that they were valued and their views were, to be not only taken into account, but were to make-up the majority structure of the world organisation, convinced these survivors that this was an altogether perfect solution.

And so it was that a Committee was formed to organise the World Eisteddfod. This was to be populated by representatives from every region of the world with the only stipulation that all members of the Committee should speak English.

Anita Cassidy had been appointed to the Committee by the Elfin-kind Assembly and she in turn had added Wild-man Willy's name. And it should also be noted: without his specific consent. Which he would have almost certainly not given as he considered himself as a Man Without Qualities.

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And so it was that I became a member of the Committee without having being asked.

A Committee that was all powerful but that seemed to be totally benign.

My position on the Committee seemed to satisfy the other members in that it could be seen that I had been drafted in — a sort of forced volunteer.

And it was true that I reluctantly joined the Committee being a man who professed to having none of the qualities that such a position demanded.

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Anita Cassidy, you have to understand, has more cunning than a fox with two tails and has engineered all of this without anyone being suspicious.

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And now, as a member of the Committee, I am expected to come up with ideas, concepts and perspectives to bring to the Eisteddfod for discussion, analysis and consideration.

My mind is, of course, blank.

*

Which, of course, further satisfied the other members of the Committee that I was indeed a genuine innocent abroad like the rest of them. Accepting, of course, the innocent presence of the two tailed fox.

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She, however, makes little of it as she is expected to have a clear picture of the direction of travel, as Escosse's main representative.

‘So it has ever been: the meek shall inherit the world and the shrewdies will take it away from them.’

Except, here, it isn’t been taken away from them. They are just being subtly directed in positive directions that ensure humankind will from this point on will take on responsibility for the Biosphere and the Planet as a whole.

The regional representatives on the Committee are Custodians to a woman. A remarkable achievement until it is known that two-tailed Elfin-kind machinations are behind this excellent state of affairs.

Indeed, the Committee members are amiable and knowledgable in equal measure making them a joy to work with. They are also most informative.

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They all reported on the viruses peculiarities; in particular the virus’ ability to desiccate its human host. Leaving behind just a dusty form that soon disintegrated into powder that was quickly dispersed by the wind. This turned out to be a most efficacious fertiliser so after the second year of the end of the pandemic in 2027 the green world put on a growth spurt never seen before. ‘Crispy Cadaver Fertiliser’ was the triumph of the pandemic — you would think it had been designed for this very purpose if you didn’t know better.

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Anita expects me to contribute to the Eisteddfod in some unique and creative way. And that is exactly what I am contemplating when Ambrose dashes past and into the landscape.

“Can I come.” I beg in a quiet voice. Knowing it will never happen. Then a thought strikes me. A thought full of hairy potential like the caterpillar in the classic 17 syllable Haiku poem: The short night is through on the hairy caterpillar small beads of dew.

What I should do is visit Nessie — he’s bound to have ‘small beads of dew’ in abundance .

He’s bound to have millions of ideas ready for exploitation. Perhaps exploitation is not the best word in this context — development, perhaps.

It is now my turn to turn vista by visiting the landscape. A simple enough task for a fully Enlightened being.

I was just in time to see Little Olly, Lilly and Ambrose disappear beneath the Enchanted Lake upon the back of Nessie cocooned in an air-bubble.

“We’ve got just enough time for a quickie.” Anita whispers in my ear.

I’ve noticed that Anita’s sense of time becomes distorted while engaged in the sexual act.

And so it is that an hour has past for a quickie but at least The Idea has come fully formed at the end of it: A Custodian that will lead like a Conductor; lead the World's Democratic Symphonically Adjusted Orchestra of our fellow human beings.

It is then only a matter of choosing the Conductor, a task which can easily be allotted to the Eisteddfod Committee.

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If life on our Blue Planet can be so easily organised it makes you wonder why it has never been done before.

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To facilitate the choice of Conductor, I make a suggestion. Perhaps a poem should be solicited from candidates to make the choice obvious.

'A Custodian's life for me
 No point in barking up the wrong tree.
 Each species in harmonies with the next
 To avoid conflict and rude clashing of the perplexed.
 My name is Wild-man Willy
 So is it, I twill The Conductor be?
 Don't be sill-y.'

It took several minutes for Anita and Me to come up with this little ditty.

And now let us compare it with the one best loved by Custodians everywhere on Our Blue Planet and in Our Very Own Biosphere.

It is called = An Ode to the Custodian's Calling, or some such Title

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Sorry about this. The truth of the matter is that I am no poet. And having admitted to this rather embarrassing deficit in this Writers Qualities, it at least affords me the opportunity to present the opportunity for any of You Readers out there to have a go.

The poem can be of any length and be about any subject related to Human-kind's Custodian's Role.

Please do have a go and the winner will have it published in the Second Edition of 'The Enchanted Lake' along with a nice fat check.

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THE END