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ARUNDLE & KIN
5. Council of the Menora

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Prelude:
Devoted to one single instant
You may feel the eternal force.
Since I once looked into your eyes
And thought that I was sinking in.
Your soul's drawing me into the blue –
I felt like being drowned.

1.The Colloquium

„Do things change, while known? Does knowledge influence the course of things?“ Grisella asked her questions into the open, so to speak. Each and everyone could feel addressed or nobody at the same time.

“I think” Arundle answered after some time elapsed “it’s like occult glass moving. As everybody knows or suggests, what could be right in their sense. He or she gives his or her finger an unknown drive. While everybody is doing this, the result turns out to be marvelous or even strange. The outcome doesn’t meet anyone’s intention – neither the unconscious nor the conscious...”

“That’s kind of queer, I didn’t look at it that way. They all cheat and he who cheats hardest wins” Pooty exclaimed. Billy-Joe just shrugged. In Arundle’s reply he couldn’t see any connection to Grisella’s questions. But he was too polite to bust out with that.

Grisella was also not happy with what was said. “Let’s take an example, then things might become clearer. Do you have any idea?”

All were wondering badly, but nobody opened his or her mouth. It wasn’t easy to find something that happened and that was known to those involved. At first, the participants of the colloquium thought of forces in nature. A thunderstorm for example. Everybody, who experienced a

thunderstorm, knew what was going on. Of course not in detail with reference to direction and impact of the atmospheric unloading and if the course was kept once taken, or might change direction, which was of course unlikely. Storm and clouds would follow their paths. It would thunder and flash and the detonations would come done just like that. You knew all that, but couldn't change. Your knowledge wouldn't alter the ongoing event.

'Was this meant?' - Arundle asked herself in a general air of empathy which ascertained her that everybody was thinking of a thunderstorm, just as she did.

"Then you know what you have" she said therefore aloud. "...and know it not. A while ago four golfers fled into a cabin and were hit by a flash of lighting. They surely wouldn't have done so, if they had known, what was going to happen to them. They might have stayed away if they had known that there was no lightning conductor installed. With that, I'd like to say, that you may know what is going on, but you don't know how far it is of your concern. This is the only way a herd of zebras may approach a drinking well without panic, in order to still their thirst. And the mother of a just born deer can leave its fawn in order to graze, who might be fetched by the fox, while the roe is away..."

"I think, the deer approach the water source one way or the other" Billy-Joe acknowledged Arundle's explanation. "The thirst and the herd instinct keep them together. Because alone and thirsty they are no less surely determined to die..." – and Pooty added "no, - in fact more definite, that's for sure..."

"Yes, and the mother roe runs out of milk without proper nutrition", Billy-Joe went on. "It's everywhere a match of life and death. Animals live with that basic decision. Still, such knowledge doesn't change their behavior or the course of things. They live exposed flank with death."

"Like tin soldiers" thus it came to Arundle's mind – "those who stubbornly march into the battle with pipes and drums, and march on into showers of bullets until they meet their aim..."

"...and those who survive several of such attacks, believe in a wonder and feel immortal soon."

"...and then they meet death..."

Grisella eventually had the big questions of historical dimensions in mind. Populist decisions, requiring the agreement of the masses, in order to become valid. Things like genocides or war entry – and the like.

“Everything is getting worse if people know what’s going on – everything is done with more consequence, if people know what’s going on...”

“Or the other way round...”

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Grisella’s colloquium had been shrinking considerably. Could one reason be the way she had it run? There were only Arundle and Billy-Joe left, as well as Pooty with the Magic Stone, who had never been in fact real candidates. And of course the Magic Bow shouldn’t be forgotten, who held the same status.

More for nostalgic reasons they met weekly at the same time. And sometimes, if things turned out that way, also Flory and Cory joined them. While Grisella still insisted on an open event. But this week Cory was away with her deep-sea-laboratory and Flory accompanied Professor Hare to some excavations. While Tibor took care of Susamee’s Island, who used to participate otherwise more or less frequently. And Tika joined him when ever she could, that wasn’t often the case, because she accompanied Shamaness Susamee meanwhile regularly.

The training of Susamee’s two disciples was soon coming to an end. In fact, you couldn’t take a regular exam, at the site where they had been studying. They did learn by heart from their Shamaness and depended much on her feelings. Sometimes she certified Tibor the highest level, but then she attested him lack of empathy in general and in specific. Thus Tika had to console him at best she could, who had yet won Susamee’s heart ever since.

Susamee didn’t like Tibor enough, so it seemed. She liked him somehow, but that was not the same as if you loved somebody, and saw in her the ideal daughter you had always wished to have whole-heartedly, as was the case with Tika.

Tibor seriously considered to look for a male master. And without Tika he would have done – at least he thought he would have.

He never doubted his talents. He thought himself highly gifted, and that was perhaps his major mistake.

In Grisella's colloquium, he managed very well. The Professor would have highly appreciated it, if he had applied for a doctorate, and so had Moschus Mogoleya, his former dean. But Tibor was stubborn. He had in mind to become Shaman together with Tika, and to share a Shaman's life with her.

That was absolutely clear to him. He was meanwhile in his twenties, and his brothers at home in Mongolia were married for a long time already and had loads of children.

On Tika's side in the Australian outback, things were quite similar. And this was what both knew. Therefore, they delayed their exams artificially because afterwards there would have been no reason for them to ignore the demands of their nature, which would have liked to gain the lead.

After all – why were you Shamaness, Tika said to herself.

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When Tibor was overwhelmed by such notions, he forgot about the self induced horse headed violin, and what it meant for him. He forgot about the audience that came together every month. Even the phoenix abandoned the flames in order to listen to him, and learn for its own amiable singing.

He then said he might manage alike in the steppe as well. And his own Shaman would be available there, and wouldn't abandon him for a girl's sake – definitely not for a girl like Tika, no matter how dear she was to him.

But so he only thought, when he was really fed up with everything, and frustrated because of the set-backs he had to suffer from the Shamaness. Tika was there to smoothen such strain, and more than once did so very well.

Tika had become the pivot in his life. And sometimes he asked himself if such dependence was perhaps a big mistake, but then love overcame him and he pushed such contemptuous ideas aside.

**

Had Tibor been here today, he would have answered Grisella's question with a clear yes.

“Yes, things do change when known. Knowledge influences the course of things. If you know what’s going on, then your influence is definitely growing, you may even alter the course they are taking...”

Perhaps he was too much of a Shaman already, to see things differently, and Billy-Joe had only forgotten about his Shaman heritage inside, when he didn’t realize such interdependence any more. Perhaps he had only been overrun by the question.

Of course it mattered of what concern such matters were. Such a little thunderstorm was of course easy to overlook and judge, and might well be influenced by force, and course, and time. Delays were only one method of influence.

Thunderstorms could be banned, for example behind the banks of a river. Not always, but once in a while... And the wind blew harder or weaker if you pleaded it rightly. You could ask such a jet-stream to take this way or that, have it go straight or around... And those animals at the water front weren’t handed over to the law of chance only. The dice had been thrown much earlier, long before the animals fell. And on the battle field with those tin soldiers the selection went on by determined principles, for what reasons ever.

He, who didn’t obey the might of fate, didn’t get very far, but found death under increased pain. Goodman Death did his job and when he was cheated by days or weeks or even years, the pain increased proportionally.

2. The Riot of the Trolls

Billy-Joe could feel Walter approaching. It was by paradox that Goodman Death made himself known when life was close to its summit, as if the highest awareness was connected with the deepest abyss. As if death and life were even closer interrelated. As if the one couldn’t do without the other.

He might be able to see Tibor alive and in person still, he hoped, and climbed off the helicopter, that had taken the Conversiors to Susamee’s Island, where they would stay for almost one week. Thus it was arranged and fulfilled since peace had come, and the dwarves protected the underground on both islands.

South-Michel took great care of that. The shock still set deep. The riot of the Trolls still wavered about the underground, or rummaged in the bowels of the earth, depending on the point of view.

With a strange prank things had started. Nobody could by now say anymore for certain, whose fault it had been, and where the accident took its pace. Fact was, that three young racketeers executed a prank in good old Troll fashion. Which wasn't really something outstanding, but filled each dwarf deep inside with secret pride. As he felt reminded of his own youth, which grabbed from the past way forward to fill him with sweet memories or imaginations of things that could have been done then likewise, but weren't for what reasons ever.

He may even feel envy, but it was good envy, envy of the kind that made you smile, not the yellow burning envy that dragged you down.

With such prank things had started, while the world under ground still had been in order. Because shortly after, tranquility returned. The construction sites boomed, the buildings got ready. Susamee's Island received another floor, because the island was similarly shallow as was the Isle of Wisdom-tooth and its twin.

As long as everybody was kept busy, everything went on smoothly. Where were the Trolls then? Now, no-one seemed to know anymore. Had they really disappeared into the deepest Troll-solitude? As their appointed lot, they had to endure, but didn't like it, and weren't liked for it either? What was a Troll supposed to do amongst his kind in the deepest darkness of the earth? Where was there fun that made a Troll to be himself?

Ah, yes, the vaccination! Trolls had become vaccinated, but only those who had been caught. As soon as the other Trolls realized what was going to happen, they disappeared. And since then, they were hiding in the inner earth, where it was deepest. There they sat waiting, to have such cup pass. And that was what was happening.

Nobody thought of the Trolls and their pranks anymore. All were busy building and didn't know what to do with all that workload. The days were too short and the weeks not long enough. The sun settled too early and the moon didn't stay long enough in the sky – depending on what they just were doing.

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The workload charged its toll. Tuberculosis was spreading and killed the old and the weaker ones soon. When the Trolls learned of their parents' and ancestors' fate, they came back from their hide, as they were needed suddenly, and couldn't grow up fast enough.

Soon each Troll, who was half ways sensible found himself in a responsible position. And the more Trolls thus sluiced in, the more were there to follow. Because each Troll, who had settled, cared for the coming up wave, and they were still wilder as they were closer related to the basic state of Troll-ness.

In the end, hardly tamed Trolls became teachers at school, or even policemen. Thus, the fox was set to keep the geese, in a way.

If things like that happened a thousand fold, then a lot was suddenly happening, and you realized at once that a social revolution had taken place, and the take over of the Trolls. But then it was too late already. You couldn't reject the Trolls any more. And you couldn't keep on hoping that they would calm down as still more Trolls were there to follow, as all dwarves began their lives in such state.

Soon the saying spread: "Don't trust anyone over thirty" – the dwarves-state became a Trolls-state.

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South-Michel of Capricorn published a severe warning. As a consequence all construction work was prohibited, and where ever there was still constructive action, the security service stepped in. Even shutters were erected, separating the unknown areas from the publicly known ones. However, for those clever little ones there was no real obstacle. So Dorothea came about with her major weapon. She threatened to lift the secrecy and have the underground laid open before the eyes of the public and the media.

That meant of course some kind of suicidal manoeuvre, as the islands would be prostrated likewise, because the reporters would of course not differentiate between friend or foe. However, what should she do otherwise, in such a crucial circumstance? Before the islands would sink, as was threatening, if the destructive diggers weren't stopped, so it seemed – an outlook that might be totally wrong, however, not all that unlikely.

South-Michel's interference didn't meet open ears, or if, only a few, down there. The sensible dwarves suffered from burn-out or suffocation

and tuberculosis, because they had worked too hard. Many of them became depressive. Depression was the most widely spread chronically infested disease down there, because the dwarves lacked of sunshine.

Those, who had favoured the vaccination now doubted whether such measure had been the right one, because the Trolls had become alert and upset by that, and their wrath now exploded and led to the revolutionary consequences, now to be seen and experienced.

The Managing Board of the School of Inbetween and the adjacent Island-University considered seriously, whether or not to evacuate all premises, built by the dwarves, and have such areas sealed and closed for good – best with concrete and steel, so not the strongest dwarves could get through – if there was any material at all, that could resist dwarf-power. - Such hadn't yet been checked out.

Nobody had yet found out. Such an idea might be all in vain and of no value at all. What was such a measure worth while, if the Trolls were still rummaging about all over the place, as they had done before and couldn't be overlooked by any security service system?

Trolls weren't bad by heart. If you got in closer touch, you realized that. You could have fun with them. But they were spontaneous and incalculable, and had always something unexpected in mind. Therefore, living together with them was strenuous, and in a way exhaustive. All other affairs seemed less important, which might not be acceptable, as there was still a lot of very important teamwork required to bring about results and new approaches in the scientific investigation work, that was going on. The world was on the verge of apocalypse and was desperately in need of help. You couldn't accept some delicate Trolls spoiling all that.

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Dorothea decided to go on in a dual mode. First she installed a sanatorium for the tuberculosis patients and for the depressive dwarves. For that reason she gave up part of her hotel project, that was proceeding meanwhile rather mediocre, as the stream of tourists was meager, even more so as many weren't welcome, because of the lack of colour in specific, and the lack of sensibility and empathy in general.

The old people enjoyed the sun very much they had been missing for so long, for most it had been all their life. As the dwarves looked like little

people, the other hotel guests didn't realize their difference. They did however wonder why they weren't allowed to enter the area, that was declared as sanatorium, and was explained by danger of infection.

Tuberculosis was no deadly disease any more, but wasn't convenient either. And who was willing to become infected just like that?

By that venture the bad image of the School of Inbetween was bettered considerably among the dwarves. Since that Troll-phobia had been spreading about, the humans were regarded as stubborn, and ungrateful, as well as intolerant and egoistic. Modes of being the dwarves knew all too well from themselves, and were therefore quite capable of noticing them with others.

In addition, they lacked of humour and were unable of any acts of generosity, nor were the dwarves, because this was the price they had to pay for growing up. On the other hand, they were very busy. The dwarves laboured hard and were true and just friends, who did everything for their kin and friends, and surely gave their lives as well, if demanded. At least this said the ethos of the dwarves. But as always theory and practice only seldom match.

Since the Trolls weren't dumb, but knew very well where the train was destined, so to speak, they enjoyed the level of pranks only as long as they could tease adults with that. Being now in charge themselves, they gave up such notions soon. The hard reality of the day demanded a lot of sense of reality, no matter whether it looked so or not. Thus it appeared to the outsider, who looked at things and didn't know about the living conditions, but referred to the visible image, which was indeed shining of all that gold and jewels and what other materials the dwarves used for construction, like others did with bricks and tiles.

With that sanatorium, Dorothea managed to correct a little of the bad image the School of Inbetween had. Little by little she altered the view, as she didn't demand anything in return for what she did them good, but rejected consequently any such appeal. The sanatorium was intended to give back what the humans had received from the dwarves, she pointed out. Other than in former times, when the 'surfacers' exploited the dwarves more or less involuntarily, by never rejecting any of their offers.

Fact was, the 'surfacers' didn't understand the dwarves, and never rejected any of the offers they received. Had they better known the dwarves, they would have known that you couldn't take for granted what

was offered by them, because they always overdid, and had therefore always too much workload.

Finally Dorothea found out about that, and that was high time, she herself realized. But now they knew. She shared her findings with the other colleagues and gave them an discernment into a dwarf's soul, South-Michel wouldn't have been able to do any better.

“”Never take for granted what a dwarf says. Humans always see things anthropocentric and consider the state of the world that way. But the world doesn't run that way. Otherwise there would be no dwarves, but little humans. And they wouldn't dwell subsoil, but somewhere at the bottom of the sea or where ever...”

South-Michel only said that, because he was the idol of the mer-folk, while the dwarves had meanwhile chosen Tibor as their idol, after a long period without any idol at all, since he conversed into a self-induced horse-headed violin.

Very likely, the dwarves would have been able to live in the lands of the pygmies or in the African savanna. The pygmies thought them a kind of kin when once a little band appeared on the surface in the Kalahari. The dwarves on the other hand figured the pygmies as a kind of off-spring, who didn't manage to get subsoil in time when Atlantis was destructed. Perhaps they didn't notice anything in their desert from the destruction.

For the real dwarves this trauma was part of their genes. Therefore they would have never managed to stay for good on the surface, to make a living there. The lack of comfort – they said, was the main obstacle already, they would find there. This it how they argued.

The greed of the people from the surface they knew all too well. Vast parts of Africa were undermined by unscrupulous diamond-surfers and had become a dangerous area for dwarves, while those drillings were going on into incredible depths, where even clever dwarves were helpless and could hardly get away or hide.

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Thus, the revolution of the Trolls turned out to be an overdue liberation act of the dwarves against the greed of the human beings from the surface, who misunderstood the generosity of the dwarves as megalomania, and let them go on with what they boasted. They didn't mind how unlikely such intentions were.

“How can they have palaces built for them without offering anything in return?” – the Trolls asked their ancestors, who didn’t have an answer.

“This is the outcome now. You see what you have achieved with your tuberculosis, and your depression, and God knows what else.”

“Had you kept a little more of your Troll character, you wouldn’t have been trapped that way.”

The dwarves now accepted the criticism of their wild offspring. The more so as the latter weren’t naughty any more, now that they were responsible for the community, and ran the public affairs. They took great care for freedom and ‘Troll-ness’ – as they put it, because this was their prerequisite. And they managed very well with it. They didn’t mind when things went to pieces once in a while. Even collapsing tunnels proved prankish excesses – as long as no people were harmed seriously...

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The sanatorium turned out to be the first step into the right direction. After all, the human beings sacrificed some comfort and handed over the limited space available. This was what the dwarves realized at once – all of them, not only those of old age. They all knew, how precious suitable space was, because this had been the tremendous trouble since ages in the underground.

Very few types of soil, sediments and concrete were suitable for residence. In fact, such facilities had to be produced in hard toil and labour. This was far more complex than other necessities you could think of. From the dwarves point of view, it was the most challenging task ever. Those who were able to find a suitable location were hailed as heroes and were aware of the most obedient attention ever.

While courage declined with age, the Trolls were better off. More than once, it was their spirit that opened new horizons, so to speak.

The exploration of Susamee’s Island was such an undertaking. It turned out as a great success. Therefore the remaining little ones – mostly disabled people, had now to be brought over there as well. It was of vital importance to get away from the unhealthy grounds underneath the shelf, where water couldn’t be stopped from dripping, and poisonous hot fumes from the other side ruined the little breathable air that was still left.

Such disastrous living conditions had been the reason in the first place for the spearhead mission. It was a question of timing right now.

Were the preparatory works advanced enough to offer provisional shelter for a couple of thousand to come? That was the question, then. Neither was there an exact number, nor a proper means of transport yet.

For a new and good start, they needed help – mainly for the many disabled. The sanatorium was but one of the crucial aspects. Even South-Michel, who had taken the part of the people on the surface, so it seemed – changed his attitude, at last, and took their side again. He had been so busy with the merfolk and all their trouble, that he almost forgot about his own next of kin.

Megalomania was the least of his aspirations. He was one of them, after all, and when he accepted this fact, things began to better.

“Was such an exodus likely to succeed?” he wanted to know from Dorothea, the facility manager, on behalf of the dwarves.

“Some three thousand there might be, more or less. We do not count our heads...”

Dorothea asked for some time to do some calculations, and felt happy, as she was now able to give back at least something, after having received so much. She talked things over with her husband, who was the President of the University, and with Marsha Wiggles-Humperdijk, who was the Headmistress of the School of Inbetween. She did that, to be on the save side, because she was all too happy to get rid of the severe problems that had arisen, since the dwarves were involved more than it was good for them, instead of caring for their own well.

She could now ask for sound calculations by proper architects and engineers for the many dubious projects still under guard and responsibility of the little ones. She would thus get rid of the uncertainty, that hung over their heads since that accident, and hadn't been settle since then.

She could charter a ship, or could use the Nautilus, she reckoned.

While this was kind of unrealistic. She'd better think of a real ship. You had to disguise the little ones as Pygmy tribes, or a special kind of Aborigines, or so. She had to find out.

Perhaps she had a chance to get a ship without crew, or even buy one. Then the Skipper of the Submarine could become Captain and the crew could take over all other duties, while some of the elder students could become assistant seamen for the time being.

Susamee's Island was some hundred miles away only – reckoning the inclusion of the camouflage as well as the resulting deviation.

Something could surely be done. A vessel of their own would be no bad idea. When the transport had been done, there would be other ways of using it, as a swimming hotel or for excursions, and the like – Dorothea hadn't yet given up her idea of a hotel.

3. The Transfer on the Last Bounty

Dorothea checked with her connections all over the world. In almost any major harbour she asked for information. A not too big ship was she thinking of; not pricy though, but still in good shape, that could be taken over without many formalities. To be on the save side, she founded a shipping company, and was astonished how easy that was, when you had the money as well as warranties. You didn't even need a Captain's license.

All she had to do was to open an office in Sydney. She did that right next to the heliporter-port, where the copters started and landed for the Isle of Wisdom-tooth ever since, and had it manned with a trustworthy person. That is – with two, because Intellectus was all too pleased to accompany his father on that mission. Grisella would certainly be free to visit them at any time, she was informed, when they departed.

There was not much to do yet. The idea was, to enlist some trustworthy real seamen of all ranks. The Captain of the Nautilus, who had been asked to take over the Skipper's job, refused. His abilities wouldn't fit for such an occupation, he let his boss know. "That's no false timidity, neither this way nor that..." he said, without clarifying one way or the other.

"I wouldn't have a Skipper handling the affairs of my boat either..." he argued and thus the matter was dropped once and for all.

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"What about you, don't you give the wet element a trial?" Dorothea asked Arundle and Billy-Joe. The two looked at each other. They were guests with the Slyboots once more and were sitting in the garden. The sun was shining bright from a cloudless sky. Dorothea's remark made them cock up. Did Dorothea know what she was asking?

The two addressees of her assault spontaneously nodded, without any recheck. Such an adventure was just the right thing for them after the dry period they had just passed.

“And Zinfandor we take with us. He might even have a Skipper’s license. Its worth while asking him anyway...” Arundle hollered. She recalled their sea-adventure, when Zinfandor proved himself a very able seaman.

Zinfandor Leblanc indeed owed a Skipper’s license. He was registered in Montreal, Canada at the Naval Office there. His papers were sent to him on request without any trouble, as soon as he proved his identity.

A major obstacle was thus taken. They had an officer in command, that was a good start.

A ship was also found, and with it a little greasy factotum who was well acquainted with the ships interior and the heart of it - the engine. He loved the old girl of his more he could tell, and would have died without her, so he let the Skipper know. His name was Stanislaw Michiniewsky. He was from Gdansk on the shores of the Baltic Sea.

When the deal was done and the ship was sold, he was the most happy man you could think of, and Dorothea and her acquaintance were happy because of the clever deal. Dorothea was able to prove her abilities again.

The ship was rather small, just about 1000 G.R.T. (gross register tons) and had been shipping along the coasts of the Australian and the New Zealand’s seas, and was named Last Bounty.

So she had been doing until her last owner had been drinking himself to death. After months of idle waiting for any heirs in vain, the ship was then put up for public sale to cover the fees. Dorothea was the lucky one to make it, as there were almost no other auctioneers.

Old aged as the ship was, it was still in good shape. Especially the engine, as Stan was mentioning repeatedly in his Pidgin English: “German Craftsmanship, German Craftsmanship”...

In fact, the ship stemmed originally from the Hamburg ship-builder ‘Planten & Blomen’ - the little mechanic repeatedly mentioned, who held a piece of paper in Cyrillic language at hand and a certified translation, proving him to be indeed some kind of engineer.

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The two big hatches of the Last Bounty before the bridge were fitted with additional decks. For the time being, such attempt had to suffice. Thus, space for some five hundred or more of the little people was available. Theoretically, the transfer of the whole folk would be done in three or four journeys.

Under the guidance of dwarf-inspector Barnby the team of inspectors was flown over to Susamee's Island, because the radio-connection with the Trolls didn't suffice. The Trolls mistrusted any kind of technology other than their own. They suspected any device from the surface people.

Susamee was looking forward to the invasion. This was something, she would really enjoy. Healing alone became boring. Doing good to individuals was a fine thing - so far so good, but saving a whole people was something else. 'Being under pressure and looking for the blessed lands - what on earth could be more challenging, but dealing on God's behalf, and define, and mark the site where happiness was waiting?'

As it looked, they would seldom or hardly ever meet. The dwarves withdrew from the surface, as soon as they set foot on the ground, and would return only for special occasions, like the Trolls' pranks or some other duty and plight. So Susamee was all too glad to get in touch a little, and was looking forward to see them once in a while on special occasions, like when the horse-headed violin would be heard in the pale dim light of the full moon.

The solitude over here was something, she could hardly stand. Tibor and Tika helped a little, and so did the Watchdog Will Wiesle, and the Convertors, but there was still capacity available, so to speak.

The inspectors - there were four all in all, and Barnby was named one of them - were very happy with what they found on arrival. The area under the island was sustainable and fit for digging, and offered work for the next couple of years. The sea was not too deep. The bottom was also solid stone, not too hot and not too cold - just right for the maltreated folks, after their bad experience with their former dwelling.

The spearhead mission had done a good job. They never gave up hope that they were able to convince their fathers and mothers to come over here as well. Since they knew that the question of transport was

solved to a certain extent – while they knew of course, what their next of kin thought of a trip on the water...

The same people that had caused them so much trouble, might now turn out to becoming their saviours after all. No matter that they still didn't see the point, and took for granted what the little ones did for them, and the more they did, and the harder they laboured, the more critical the unthankful surfacers became, it was a real shame.

The inspectors just had to ignore such facts, because when they didn't, the Troll furor came over them, and they would have loved to place a real big thing. However, they were here on the wrong site, because there were no addressees and the ones there were, were entirely different, so it seemed.

The Shamaness was just great, and so was her disciple. Only the boy might be of the other type. After all, he lived in his palace in the underground, like a king of dwarves, and enjoyed the comfort and the splendour every day, while still missing the daylight, and ignored the little sunshine they managed to bring in through a system of mirrors. An unthankful being that was, what he was.

At that state, the inspectors didn't know of the self induced hotheaded violin. They didn't know, what was going on over here each month. They might even take their one obligation too serious over here, and were opposed by their own hands as well.

As soon as they noticed what was going on, they became a little more generous. "If someone's out for pranks, then its us" the workers hollered after the inspectors who went about in their special outfit, avoiding dirt at best they could.

"Have them come, and we'll see" they said. They had to move in and keep their powder dry, so to speak. The big move had but just started.

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Dwarves were terribly afraid of water. And now they had to go overseas for a couple of days. There was no real choice, because the airlift would take ages. Thus, a ship was the only realistic alternative. Air transport would have taken years or even decades. And the water would get at them in any case, that was dripping in already at the site where they came from, to an unacceptable extent.

The little folk was not yet on board. Through the air it was much easier. And magic would be an option either. Inspector Barnby knew of the secret forces some of the human beings on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth possessed, but they wouldn't share such with them. They treated their magic like a disease, nobody was allowed to get notice of.

And yet, the contact was caused by magic in the first place. Someone who was able to march to Atlantis was supposed to be trustworthy, thus was the logic of the former generation. As a consequence they laboured so hard, and thought of the nicest and most precious things. Tunnels they built and palaces – worth a king.

In return they were offered now that ship – an old outdated vessel, hardly fit for bad weather. – They had to accept, there was no choice, Inspector Barnby decided. The dwarves were too polite to argue and put in demands. They didn't rage or argue, but inside the turmoil was going on. And the question couldn't find an answer, why magic wasn't used. Magic, of which they officially didn't know, and wouldn't learn of, as long as the humans didn't openly use it for themselves, either.

To be fair, the Inspectors had to admit, that they didn't publish their own magic either, but also kept it in the hide.

Perhaps it worked this way in the world, and there was no magic able to transport a couple of thousand beings from one point to another, just like that. This was the one aspect, another was, that it had to be a real exodus – a noteworthy intersection into their lives – a voyage, with all kinds of hardships and perils, because in the end the promised land was waiting.

Inspector Barnby got tears into his eyes while he was imagining what things were really about. But a real Troll doesn't cry and so he pretended to have a grain of sand in the eye.

They hadn't been asked how they managed under the shelf, when living conditions changed from bad to worse and then even further from worse to worst, when they didn't have time to preserve their own needs, because all their power was used up for the labour the unthankful ones took for granted. Who only had their own targets in mind and didn't bother the toll the dwarves had to pay, when ruining their health. Any such sign was ignored, and there had been many. The dwarves were too proud to complain, but still hoped that their agony was noticed – and so it did in the end, while it was almost too late, at least for those, who had died already, and there were surely more to follow.

As long as everybody only saw his or her advantage, the world wouldn't turn to the better. No matter how hard individuals tried. There were exceptions, some of the students and scholars on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth showed at least some understanding. Otherwise the exodus wouldn't have been possible, that was now arranged in close cooperation.

Even Inspector Barnby had to admit that. They weren't all as bad as the mine proprietors down there in South Africa.

Thus were the facts, when it came to the exodus, as far as the dwarves were concerned, who didn't bother much about the crude realities of life either, like finding a proper Skipper, and a trustworthy crew, you could rely on. They didn't know about the worries Dorothea and her team were fighting with. Should they have faith in Zinfandor Leblanc, after all what happened? Or should they even do the trip without a real Captain?

Meanwhile, Zinfandor Leblanc's papers were carefully checked in Sydney, where they were sent from Montreal. They were complying with the Canadian standards, which weren't all that different from the Australian, because both countries belonged to the former British Commonwealth.

In fact, the Commonwealth didn't mean much any more, and was a kind of paper tiger meanwhile. However, in this field it still proved a livid consistency you could hardly find in any other branch of public affairs.

Zinfandor Leblanc received the necessary attention and was accepted basically, while still short of some time serving as an officer and navigator. His vita was carefully checked and rechecked, and in the end, Dorothea managed to straighten it out the way it should be.

In short, Zinfandor Leblanc finally looked back on a sound record, proving his qualification. Some ship-owners were pleased to help out, when asked by the attractive new colleague of theirs. Even the insurance company agreed, and accepted the alterations made in order to take over the amount of livestock, after the proper air-conditioning was installed as well.

Officially the Last Bounty was declared a livestock transporter, which wasn't too far away from reality. Because cattle needed most likely even more oxygen and fresh air than the dwarves, who were used to rough conditions in this respect.

Zinfandor Leblanc was thus made Captain and Skipper, while Stanislaw Michiniewsky became the Chief-Mechanic, certified by a

special permit. The sailors of the submarine became the decks crew and the submarine Captain was registerde as the First Officer, and so was the Second and so forth. This way, thing were settled orderly.

Billy-Joe became Steward and Cook and Arundle Communications Officer. She had to pass a crash-course on that in Sydney, to get acquainted with the necessary procedures.

Ten men and two women formed the crew, because the submarine cook was taken over as well, and might provide a helping hand to Billy-Joe, who didn't really like the idea at all.

Dorothea made sure that there was nothing missing, especially the nautical instruments and charts. The times of the morse telegraphy were gone, and the good old sextant as well. Navigation was done by a tricky three-point satellite navigational system, you could rely on far better than the former.

The first test-trip was the transfer from Sydney to the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, and was managed with bravura. The weather was fantastic, the sea was calm – so it wasn't really a proper test to find out about the crew's ability. Everybody was looking forward to the upcoming challenge, while responsibilities were shoven about from person to person, as far as responsibility was concerned.

The declaration of the cargo would become an insurmountable obstacle, when it came to any official investigation. But such matters, the dwarves didn't bother, who could only complain about the things they experienced, of being not the way they wanted them. They still would have liked to become beamed over unnoticed, while sleeping. But that was not the way things could be handled – not in this case anyway. Some stress and fever had to be. For a new world, they had to bear some hardship and find new routes and a new gate.

The queries began right with the boarding. There were no proper docks on the island and the ship had to anchor way out, where the water was deep enough, and the cargo had to be taken over by boat and barge.

Such a barge, as the name says, is a lofty shaky thing. The swell was high unfortunately on the day of boarding, and the low boats could hardly be tamed, even more so as the dwarves were scared to death and didn't dare to move, when asked to grab for the ladder to enter up. First attacks of seasickness occurred in addition.

You could some hundred people fit into such a barge, and the crew had hoped to transport one third on top of that, because the little ones were so small, thus, they would do in three turns.

When the crew asked their passengers to put the life jackets on, they were found far too big, while there were only some hundred children's vests, thus they had to be taken back for the following load. But the dwarves didn't want to give them back after they were safely on board, and couldn't be convinced either.

So the larger vests had to be made smaller, and Dorothea ordered some thousand children's life-jackets, which were flown in the next day already.

So the forlorn band had to stay overnight on board already. Nobody wanted to risk them return, after all the mess they had had to bring them there.

The dwarves' screaming and howling was heard all night long and strained the nerves of the crew and the helpers as well as of the left behinds who were waiting in the narrow drafty shed ashore.

The weather became fine the upcoming day. The safty-vests fitted properly, and the barges smoothly passed the distance in a couple of minutes. Even boarding turned out to be managable. And no cases of seasickness ocured either. The ventilation pushed fresh air into the decks, and the sea routine was thus picked up soon.

Down in the decks there were kitchens installed, and the crew reckoned the dwarves to cook for themselves. They couldn't possibly feed almost a thousand hungry mouths, besides, none of the crew knew about the dwarves' nutrition habits.

Part of the front hold was reserved for additional cargo, none the least for the dwarves' food supply. However, even machinery was put in there that was needed for further mining. All that had to be organized and planned and could hardly be done with those scatterbrains, who didn't even manage to straighten out the number of family members there were, who couldn't make up their minds, or decided to go with the last possible tour, while the previous ones were either fully booked already or needed special attention for what reason ever.

A census had never worked down there. Not only because of the mentality of the dwarves but because they were just unable to find out and count the heads in the clan.

They didn't see the need anyway. A barge was filled, when nobody stayed behind on the stage. The decks were filled, when nobody kept waiting for further entrance. While everybody was hurling about, and nobody could keep calm down there.

As soon as the barges were empty and were on their way back, the Skipper ordered the anchor to be weighed, and the Last Bounty took up speed and got out of the vicinity of the island and headed for Susamee's Island. The land soon disappeared. The left behinds waved until they weren't visible anymore, and water was all about the ship.

As there were no openings and windows, the dwarves didn't see what was going on outside, but stayed safely in the hide, and were only disturbed by the swell the ship had to pass. Where they stayed, the light was dim and only came through the skylights. The fans supplied good fresh air and did the elderly people well. Some very tough ones even tried a look from above and moved with their little chairs on deck. Nobody minded as long as the weather was fine and the crew still could manage to pass.

On the bridge the proud Skipper stood on his first authentic command of his own. But nobody knew. The Chief-Mechanic was in the same situation, but couldn't be seen, as he was sitting in the ships belly next to the roaring engine, where he stayed for good, day and night, to show only up on deck for some water or drink or food. While he showed up for the meals regularly as was his plight as an officer to present his brand-new uniform with the neat stripes on the sleeves.

While on board, the dwarves kept on wearing the fashionable safety jackets, which could be flattened and blown up automatically. You only had to pull a plug and the air was sucked in, or press it out, as you pleased.

They seemed to treat such vests as presents for good, so Dorothea ordered another two thousand, just to be on the safe side. They should be available soon, because the Skipper figured to be back in one weeks time for a second and even a third trip, either the same week or the following.

However, he couldn't know what was going to happen, when the next full moon was due.

For the time being he had other problems. On arrival the crew became aware of the fact that they didn't have enough boats to handle the embarkation properly. Instead of the barges they had to use the small safety boats, that could take only some twenty passengers at a time.

The sea was quiet, and even the most scared ones dared the hop on board from the ladder. Unfortunately the little ones were too small to handle the oars, so the job had to be done by the crew as well. They had only a short distance to overcome but it still took a whole day until the last passenger was safely landed. They were lucky that the ship could get so close here.

The Captain had an argument with the dwarves about the safty-jackets, as he didn't yet know that there were more to come soon. But finally gave up. Billy-Joe and Arundle tried to mediate but in vain. So the little ones kept their acquired property, and the crew had to return without live-safer jackets.

Arundle sent the appropriate message to the home base and after the confirmation that the new supply was ordered, and would be waiting together with the next load of passengers, the crew relaxed as well, and even the Skipper calmed down, noticing that there were plenty of the large sized vests still available for the crew.

“You cannot go back tonight” Susamee decided, and even the Skipper obeyed. The helicopter was landing and the Conversiors came, because the full moon was on the verge.

At nightfall all dwarves were safely landed. The crew was fatigue to tears after the rowing all day long, because the little ones had been too small for that. Heavy enough they would have been. And if you go such a distance some ten of more times, you know what you have done.

For soothing, the tired men experienced a very nice surprise, and for those who didn't know yet, it became unforgettable.

4. Tibor, the Idol

The Conversiors converted and the moon rosed. The Phoenix sprang into the open kitchen fire, burnt and was reborn again out of the flames. The self-induced horse-headed violin played and the stones sobbed. All about in the darkness you could see orange spots in the dark of the forest and underbrush. Hundreds of little beings hurried about and whispered, and listened. Several began to sob like the stones, and even the tough guys, just escaped the Troll-phase were affected as well.

What they heard, went beyond limits. The marvalous tunes made the Phoenix rising, who tuned in right away as soon as he was reborn. Tika was howling sweeter than ever, and sounded almost divine. She had had a training meanwhile, and her performance was recorded every time by Watchdog Will Wiesle, in order to record her improvements. Tibor had initiated such recordings, who wanted to improve on the violin as well.

When playing music, Tibor knew again why he was here and wouldn't give up such way of life, even if the chairmanship in the Empire of Ghosts would have been offered to him.

Where would he ever find such an audience? Had there been hundreds before, there were now thousands, because the dwarves didn't need an extra invitation. None of them remained in the hide. They didn't retire before the day was dawning, and the Conversiors disappeared into the shade of wood and underbrush, where they spent the day.

For the crew it became high time to leave. At home, another band was waiting, and this time things worked out much smoother, because they had experienced by now, and handled their passengers with ease and patience. That was most important. The dwarves had to be kept in good mood. They needed the feeling of being important and liked in order to be sociable.

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Had any one ever thought of the dwarves' habitation? What did they eat? What were they living on? Where did they sleep? How did they raise their offspring? Were there schools, an administration, governmental authorities?

Those weren't curious questions, but should be answered if you wanted. to help someone who you didn't understand, and who you knew hardly anything about? The infrastructure alone was a miracle. Where did they put their garbage? Did they solemnly live on mushrooms? Did rats eat their left-behinds? As the horror story went.

When the Last Bounty put to sea again, the crew members wondered in any case, why there was no rat to be found on board. The cook noticed it, because the cat came to the kitchen and pleaded desperately for food, which wasn't her way of behaviour, confirmed Stan, who had to know, because he was already some fifteen years on board, he roughly reckoned.

Tired as they were after a long and sleepless night, the blubber of the self-induced horse-headed violin still clung at them like morning mist over the mount of the river Thames in far England.

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When the Convertors had left, the technicians came and built at last the camouflage system, following the plans of the congenial inventor Hans Henny Henne, because Susamee's Island was no ordinary place any more. That enchanted the dwarves, and slowly feelings of thankfulness and passion took over and conquered the hearts – even of the most repellent Trolls.

The people over here meant it well with them, no matter how unintelligible they remained. Just look at that funny present they received, when they started off for that journey, and that was asked back afterwards.

Such audacity and impudence even the oldest amongst them had never experienced. And those people didn't seem to mind. For them such a behaviour seemed absolutely normal and in order.

Tibor took great part in the change of mood, despite of such slash-back. His playing of the violin on the self-induced horse-headed instrument of his topped everything. And while he looked somewhat dwarfish despite of his humanness, - at least with regard to his behaviour – he immediately advanced to the saint of the new island. He fitted well into the appeal of awakening and uprising of the new time.

Such admiration and passion Tibor of course realized. He enjoyed the sudden honour, that came about him without any extra effort. While he had known that. With his gigs he touched the hearts of everyone who joined the audience, as soon as he started off for a performance. Where even the stones started sobbing, no-one resisted at length, no matter how rotten and stoned his or her mood was.

**

As soon as all passengers were on board, the Skipper ordered the barge to be taken over and had it fixed to the front hatch. That wasn't a big thing with the front crane. Thus, they had an additional solid cover, while turning the barge upside down and had it lowered carefully that way.

Once again Zinfandor Leblanc proved his abilities, as he didn't miss the chance to have this maneuver operated own-handed.

His new role as Captain fitted him well, and what he missed on experience he balanced by eagerness and punctuality. The submarine-captain was also satisfied, who had an eye on Leblanc, because of his dubious past.

The second journey already was joined by the ship-owner. And so it was by Penelope M'gamba. For her a berth was found in the Captain's cabin on the spacious stern deck.

The team of cooks was topped up, because the crew had noticed how poor the cooking abilities of their guests were. While they enjoyed good food, which was the reason for much a Troll's prank.

In the underground many things didn't grow, you needed to enjoy life. So the dwarves took over the one or other hint, and didn't mind the surface so much any more. On Susamee's Island a protected area was awaiting them, that was under special protection and couldn't be found by any-one, who didn't employ exceptional forces – that hadn't been working over here so far. Thus, they could feel relatively save outside their usual hide in the underground as well.

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As ship-owner Dorothea was even more impressive than as a Manager. The role fitted well, and thus, Scholasticus couldn't resist. He had to go as well. "For four days the university has to do without me" he said. "Besides, we are always in contact, thanks to the communications structures down here in the South Pacific."

In fact he referred to Arundle, who was in charge of the communication on board, but he didn't want to show too much of his admiration for her. His friends did understand him anyway.

When the full moon had passed, Billy-Joe returned with the Conversiors just in time to take up his duties as a ship steward. He was reminded of his days as porter, and didn't like the feelings that came up with that. Even more so as he had to wear one of these terrible uniforms again. He might think over his new career, while still all options were open.

The ship-owneress handed out the life jackets personally, that were available in sufficient number and size. The latest delivery had arrived just in time. And as she knew now about the dwarves expectations', she made the handing out of the jackets some kind of fuss.

The school band played, and all students and pupils gathered at the harbour where the barge left, and under strange tunes the life jackets were handed over. The weather was fine, and thus they all got on board with dry feet and even the fearful ones enjoyed the ceremony.

On the other side on Susamee's Island Tibor would have liked to welcome them, but it didn't work. Without full moon the self-induced horse-headed violin didn't work properly.

He tried anyway. And his tunes sounded alright for those who had no idea. His own ears didn't mind the loss of quality. However, thankfulness and joy weren't really offended.

Many a dwarf – mostly the elder ones – kissed the ground of the New World as soon as they set foot on. They sobbed and sobbed even more, as soon as they were met by Tibors music – which seemed to wave over the whole island. – A well hidden system of loudspeakers took care of that.

Susamee – covered up unwillingly by cloth, as nakedness was supposed to offend the dwarves, was sitting on her throne on her open porch. And she felt very sorry that she couldn't have the phoenix emerge from the flames. She tried with Shaman chants instead, that resounded not all that bad by the help of Tika, and offered a fair picture of welcome.

Thus, the arrival of the second contingent was no less pompous than the departure ceremony.

This was, what the dwarves had missed. A little attention, respect and admiration. Not deep inside the humans' hearts, but visible, audible and touchable. Had the humans acted the like before, they would have had the eagerest friends, and diggers, coming about with the most precious presents out of the depth of the earth.

In the thousands of years, as long as they were digging, they had gathered quite something. And often the elders didn't know themselves where their treasures were hidden.

In the aftermath they praised themselves for having arrange such a nice palace for their new Idol. Even more so as he did appreciate it, and showed it as well, which wasn't often the case with some other humans,

who could hardly stop complaining with all kinds of worries for what ever reason.

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The barge was just taken over and tied down on the front hatch, while the deckhands made everything clear for weighing the anchor. When the sky darkened. Right here, so close to the shore, it seemed unwise to endure a gale. The anchor might fail and they'd been thrown ashore and smashed to the rocks, just like that.

The other option was to leave as fast as possible and get away from the land into the open sea, where the wind even blew heftier but that the ship had to endure. Zinfandor figured the strength by five to six – still far away from a real gale or Typhoon. But that could change any minute down here where they were cruising.

There was only one save option, they had to head for a mainland port. Running back to the Isle of Wisdom-tooth would have postponed their trouble only, and wouldn't have changed anything, because there was no port either, and thus, they ran the same risk there.

On the other hand, there was still the last group of refugees waiting, and the ship-owneress wanted to get back as well, and so did her husband. In any case, they would have had to answer strange questions in any port they'd come in. The installations for the passengers had to be somehow hidden or even removed for the inspectors, who always came on board of any merchant sea-ship entering the harbour.

Dorothea and Penelope had a word with the Skipper about that. They concluded that it might be wiser to return to the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, even more so as the distance was almost the same.

It was too late to take over ballast, and thus Zinfandor flooded the surplus tanks astern and in the bow, to get a little more stability, as the old lady was a little unbalanced without any cargo.

Soon, the Last Bounty danced like a cork through the rough sea. The waves couldn't harm her yet, and the deckhands cared for the hatches and had them carefully covered and boarded.

Up on the bridge the ship-owner and all her company was soon gathered, and occupied the place, and worried the Skipper with their fear, until he sent them off.

Green around the noses the women then sat in the Captain's cabin and screamed with every blow the ship had to stand, as if that meant the end. And when the ship swayed one way or the other almost upside down, the ladies shrieked full of panic and wished they'd been away, or had better things to do, like Arundle, who was busy in the communicator's booth, who was listening to the weather reports and checked for the location of the gale centre, as well as the course it was taking.

What ever she found out she gave to the navigators who were bent over their charts and maps to alter the course accordingly. The idea was to keep away from the centre of the storm. Either run ahead of it or slip away sideways, always hoping that it kept its direction.

The old lady made her twelve to fourteen knots with that push from astern. That was not much, but much more than the old dame was used to. Definitely more than she had made in her best times on her own.

Chief-Mechanic Stan was delighted and scared at the same time. For how long could the old lady stand such speed?

He lowered the speed a little when he looked at the thermometer. The pipes and hoses were clapping all too alarming. That would be it if a cylinder cracked.

The grease-tin was always busy and Tibor Khan gave a helping hand down here, who was the most reliable, as to the chief.

**

Tibor was on his way back, once again. He wanted to meet old friends again, he let Susamee and Tika know. Besides, Watchdog Will Wiesle was on board too, as he was needed as a deck-hand urgently now.

Stan explained the most crucial points, they'd have to take care of down here. Without having the faintest idea, what he was actually doing, Tibor internalized the instructions and followed them, not minding what he was doing. However, he realized how much work it was to keep things going. Nothing goes on down here just like that, as those on the bridge were thinking. For them the engine ran as soon as their order was obeyed...

Running it was, but for what price! Not an instant of rest this monster spared. Definitely when you were alone with it. You sometimes wished to have three or four hands to still its thirst for oil and grease. And all that had to be performed in a sticky stench, while it was incredibly hot on top.

Thus was what the dwarves experienced with us humans, Tibor wondered, and got a little further towards the little folk. Human beings had no idea of what was going on in the depth of the earth, and what you had to endure down there.

Well, the diesel was running and running even after the storm had passed by and the good old Last Bounty was left alone after all. Far astray, she kept up soon, and found back on the original course, even before the day was dawning.

A half day late the Last Bounty reached the roadstead of the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, where loads of little ones were waiting impatiently already.

Many astonishingly young faces were among them. “This is supposed to be the rest” Inspector Barnby, the coordinator and addressee for the resettlement project confirmed. Nobody stayed behind – “well, not in the accessible areas anyway.”

Nobody knew what it looked like a little further and deeper. Barnby didn’t know either. But thing could be arranged that way. A note was left and a message was laid down in any case, for those who came late – giving information about the exodus and the tribes’ where-about.

**

The Troll-punks did what all punks do, they made music, when they didn’t do pranks. They hammered and smashed on everything about that made noise and shrieked or hummed monosyllabic texts. In most cases hatred against the upper world or malice tales of pranks. Thus, the last journey was extremely strenuous for the crew. However, it was the last one and therefore the crew didn’t mind that much, and closed eyes and ears, and let them do what they did. In the long run, Tibor had to deal with them. But he stayed behind and intended to come back only with the next load of Convertors that was supposed to be coming soon. Therefore he didn’t trouble himself now, and could keep his straight and upright mood towards the little folk. Besides, he needed them as audience for his performance on the self-induced horse-headed violin.

5. Freighter or Passenger Liner?

What could be done with the Last Bounty after the exodus was over? She did her best and so did the crew, first of all the Skipper and the Chief Mechanic. Selling was no option, and for a luxury liner she didn't suit either. Too much had to be altered, and wasn't worth while.

Such a vessel had just about one or two feet freeboard when fully loaded, so additional portholes you could forget. And without you couldn't attract tourists, who were spoilt these days, no matter what appeal they claimed.

Dorothea had such plans published, just to be on the safe side, and to calm Zinfandor down, who cared for his future. His papers didn't suffice for passenger services, and he doubted very much whether he would be allowed to extend his license so soon.

On the other hand he got used to his new role, and didn't want to give it up again. Nobody, who had a feeling heart in the breast, would take away from him what he just had achieved. After all that malice and misfortune in life he deserved a second chance.

Except Moschus Mogoleya all agreed on such point of view, and Moschus Mogoleya was not the proper scale for that, who envied a fly for the sugar, or the wind for its game – when he was in bad mood, which was often the case. Despite his improved reputation as Dean of the Sublimations.

Meanwhile his subject section appeared him too small. This was purposely done he assumed, and was intended to keep his role small. While he didn't do any better as his predecessors, when touring for new clientele. There were only very few of them scattered all over the world, who were as hard to find as to convince them, to join the School of Inbetween.

This was why his subject section remained small. His new basic course of the other way of seeing was manned by only five new students. Two of which were doubtful candidates, when it came to the other way of seeing or dancing with the wind. The only green that came through them resulted in sea- or airsickness – this was no positive sign what so ever.

He had them train daily for two hours minimum at the SLOMES. Nobody knew why, and what this was going to alter or settle their problems. Except the fact that they became younger and probably even more immature than they already were.

It might indeed have to do with maturity, or the lack of it – or they just lacked the ability as such, and couldn't be helped. "You cannot enforce talent" said the iron rule and law you couldn't ignore.

**

A solution had to be found for the Last Bounty. There was not even a place where to rest. As long as she wanted to stay at the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, she had to be kept on roadstead, because the landing stage was far too small and fitted only for boats. If the weather was fine, things worked out alright, but in case of bad weather, the ship and the crew risked to be smashed to the steep rocks of the upright rim of the island.

There weren't suitable ports either, nearby. Of course, the Last Bounty could have taken up the former job and carry cargo from port to port, which might be the wisest solution anyway, but that was no option for the ship-owner party.

"What would it be like if we opened up the sluice against shark-attacks between the islands or have them made movable? Then we could take the Last Bounty in the middle, between the two islands. We have a landing stage built as long as necessary, before it's getting too deep. That should suffice for a safe and secure base right here, immediately before our doorway. Would cost you hardly a dozen pontoons and would look rather picturesque. – And people might even live on board. There needn't be First Class cabins anyway..." Arundle suggested.

Dorothea was charmed by the idea, and ordered the sluice, and the landing stage to be built right away. Thus, it took less than two months, while the Last Bounty had to fight the weather outside on roadstead, until the pier was ready.

Accompanied by the rather unfitting tunes of the schoolband the Last Bounty passed the sluice and settled alongside of the new landing place, that turned out to be just long enough.

"Two or three breakwaters more would do even better" the scared Skipper complained, who was otherwise satisfied. From here, planning was comfortable, no matter what jobs were waiting in the future, cattle, cargo or excursionists – right here, they were safe and hidden. Nobody in the world would discover them here. Since that camouflage system of Hans Henny Henne based on a new encoding, and they were finally rid of the enigma, as they were on the safe side by now.

The pier consisted of solid concrete, that was carried by in big pieces and installed right here. In addition, several pillars were rammed into the ground, and gave the whole thing stability, as the quay ran out into the open. The entrance of the sluice was stabilized similarly and offered additional protection, while the new landing stage was located immediately behind. All in all, it was a solid and safe line of concrete, that could hardly be harmed by storm and waves.

Thus, the Last Bounty was put on rest. The crew was payed off and the assistants returned to their common obligations. Only Stan and Zinfandor stuck to their seats, so to speak. Zinfandor didn't want to miss his stripes, and Stan his engine. Such an old lady needed permanent care. And Zinfandor had also more than enough to do.

He worked through the maps, and cleared the lockers, and got acquainted with the navigational devices, that had to be up-dated and kept up to date.

Whenever possible Arundle helped him, and so did Billy-Joe who came along with her, who got also acquainted with the matter that way. Genuine seamanship was after all something else, but waving about with a clean cloth and pamper passengers, who seldom deserved it. Doing so, had been no good idea in the first place. How could he have been convinced to take over such disgracing occupation, anyway? – He didn't understand himself anymore now. Fact was, he hated this serving job and was fed up with it right from the start. How could he make such a fool of him all over again? – Things might have been different when he had been a young lad, but now, with guts and brain, he couldn't understand himself at all.

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Zinfandor was a different person since he wore those stripes. He was completely different, his friends noticed first of all Penelope. Working in the fresh sea air made him blossom. His weak health since his adventure on the sea ground seemed to be overcome. His steps were firm, his movements sure and relaxed. He didn't sneak about like a beaten dog but stepped like a man beside his Mistress, who he overdid by a head's length, and had her embraced with strong arms, and made her feel like a puppet, which she liked best.

This was the way she wanted her Zinfandor. Penelope blossomed in a new type of happiness and praised her fate that she hadn't given up hope.

Dorothea reckoned and calculated meanwhile how she got back the enormous costs of the reconstruction work. As a ship-owner she was entitled to carry on all kinds of business and have the appropriate transports done. With ten proper trips, so she calculated, she would have balanced the expenditures. But what sort of transport should she consider?

Cattle was of course very attractive because of the high return. On the other hand was cattle a fragile cargo with high risk in many ways. Storm, fire, diseases – there was almost nothing that was not endangering such transports.

On the other hand the cowboys joined the transports. They took care of the animals, fed and cleaned them and took care of the temperature and the fresh air supply. The engines had to run permanently, of course. The extra decks were installed already, after all...

However, once decided, there was no way back again. Such transports would mark the ship forever. You couldn't get rid of the stench again...

Even with the dwarves it would be all over then. While still some seemed to hide in the depth under the Isle of Wisdom-tooth. Strange noises at night did indicate that there was something still going on, that scared the little ones among the pupils to death who didn't know, what it was.

The specialists were called to recheck, but couldn't find anything abnormal, except for the forbidden area, where humans had no access and would never be allowed to enter for safety reasons, so the regulations said.

Meanwhile, Dorothea came to a decision, with which she hoped to cover all interests. She decided on the tourist version finally. Some additional bull-eyes, fitted and hatched, were erected up to the level of the stern. Thus she gained some twenty cabins of the premier class, while the ones below weren't all that bad either.

Darker it became in the lower decks where no daylight would reach.

All in all, there was space now for some sixty passengers, but then it became tight already. Because the dining room was limited to some twenty guests only, and thus joint dining became a bit of a problem, and had to be done in three of even four sittings, because the crew had to dine as well.

The additional crew had to manage in the lowest deck deep down in the belly of the Last Bounty, when they couldn't find room to rest in the regular crews' cabins under the bridge.

Thus almost one hundred people were pressed into narrow space – theoretically – because they would surely never reach this limit in reality.

Still, the Last Bounty didn't become a first rate liner, no matter how limited the amount of payload was. But this was of no intention anyway. Neither the crew nor the shipowner wanted to have her become a jetliner. The exploratory flair should remain. In order to stick to that flair, the Skipper hoisted sails in the tops, which gave her an adventurous appeal while reminding of the good old days down here in the deep South where still many of the old folks kept on roaming.

In order to keep up with such history, the male party amongst the passengers was invited to join for watch services, while the women for cleaning and caring services, to keep them busy, and made them forget the lack of space. Almost nobody was idle in the mornings, while appropriate work had to be found accordingly.

This programme was called 'Active Holydays' and was soon accepted and well liked. In addition some SLOMES were installed deep down in the lowest belly, where they didn't bother. They were used almost round the clock, and seemed to be very effective, more so, as they were installed by the inventors themselves.

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After a period of becoming acquainted, the crew got used to the new role. Even Stan succeeded among the guests, when he advertised the service down there in the engine-room, and attracted a few to join him there, once in a while. Although the service down there wasn't all that favorable.

Yon were doing a lot of strange things, while on active holidays, the people wondered. They peeled hundreds of potatoes without arguing, or cleaned toilets and bathrooms, made beds or even cleaned up in heavy weather what was left by their seasick fellow- beings, who couldn't stand the shaky planks of a ship in rough sea.

When the weather was bad, Skipper Zinfandor preferred to return to the home-base anyway, because there were attractions, you couldn't find elsewhere. The marvels of the dwarves down in the abyss of the paternoster tunnels, or the underground university, and the old hall with sea-view in the basement of the Isle of Wisdom-tooth.

But when the weather was fine, the Last Bounty was sent on cruising in the Southern archipelagos, and might even touch uninhabited islands, which could only be reached by raft and boat. There, the tourists were allowed to sleep in the open, and live of coconuts and palm-tree-leaves until they gave notice – just like former Robinson Crusoe.

Little extra personnel was required, and if, then they were found among the students who wanted to improve the pocket-money, while the standard crew got used to the job, and even preferred it to the service on board of the submarine.

Nobody was forced to serve – all were volunteers. There was toil enough. Thus, they enjoyed diversity and were looking forward to either job, no matter where it was, be it on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth or Susamee’s Island, or on board of the Nautilus and the Last Bounty.

**

Penelope M’gamba joined her mate on board of the Last Bounty whenever she could afford it. The more so as she never fully regained her conversational abilities. She felt attracted by the far distance. But didn’t mind, that roaming on the surface of the sea could hardly be compared with the distances offered by the sky, as long as it was distance at all.

Zinfandor was rid of the conversational trouble, since he suffered health-wise so badly after his return from the bottom of the sea. He was happy to be in one piece again and fit of body and soul.

Even his license the clever ship-owner managed to improve, that could have otherwise become a severe obstacle.

But the sea is wide and the world is big, and time covers things with the veil of forgiveness and forgetfulness. Pretty and flowery words easily appear on paper. One word gets to the other, and at last things meet your requirements, which weren’t sufficing before. While in the end only counts what someone’s able to perform, when it’s got to be done, and how he manages with King Alcohol, the secret master still – on all seven seas.

6. Doubts

In the end, Arundle had only summed up what belonged to them anyway, and Billy-Joe had done the same in his way, while his approach had been fundamentally opposite. For that, they received their doctors' degrees. That was unjust in a way. - Well, the others could have sat down in time and done likewise. But when you weren't familiar with writing (as was already Billy-Joe – in a way) and had to fight for each sensible sentence, you shouldn't be told such.

Did they get any further with what was intended? Arundle read her dissertation again with some distance. As soon as she was through, she took Billy-Joe's. After that she concluded that their writings didn't reach the level of Anonymous' book. While they eventually intended to do even better. In fact, they had just taken over the thoughts and ideas, sometimes without even noticing.

This negative way of looking at things came from the emptiness caused by the fact that they were through with the subject, which had kept them busy for such a long time. They just didn't know how life was going to go on from here.

That was why the challenge of the sea was just the right thing. But in the long run, they had to make up their minds of how to proceed in general. They envied Flory for her decisiveness, who became assistant of her father. Flory's heart was beating for Archeology since they discovered the lost Atlantis, just as Cory was fond of the deep-sea-biology, and didn't compete any longer as she had done for so many years, without purpose. This turned out to get clearer to the family under the new constellation.

Nobody wanted to admit such, most of all their mother, who was so fond of harmony. Still it was so, and had there not been the secret connection of the Somnions, all three were allied, the sisters might have drifted apart for good.

Flory was a case in itself. She didn't enjoy writing, and therefore had to go on writing. And the longer she did, the more she became frustrated. So she took any chance to get away from the desk in order to accompany her father. She did feel busy and challenged the proper way, while didn't get any further with her own project.

Her father, Professor Hare, sooner or later realized her dilemma, but didn't know the answer. The only thing he knew was that the Archeology, as he did it, didn't work under pressure of time. In fact, Flory had any time

in the world. Nobody pushed her, there was no such pressure in reality. The pressure existed only in her mind. Nobody else was pressing, no merits were waiting behind the horizon. Just the opposite, here and now opened the fields and multiple approaches, like never before or ever again in future. But Flory was infested by the virus of time-loss, and discovered approaches, no-one had ever seen under such paradigm, not even her father.

The phenomenon of time was not only diverse but also opaque. Nobody was able to escape. Everybody would become aware sooner or later, and be it in the form of etymology and linguistics, as time was more or less exactly limited, and you could measure when exactly the time became limited, and when the future, and the past began, and since when the presence was due. While such changes were expressed in any language historically.

Be it, that you returned deeper into the past, and searched the furthest corners of the world for life-forms, the common people didn't even dream of.

Only the latest Ethno-Linguistics brought about, which way many tribal cultures really functioned. Former researchers didn't take the chance, which was now done by the comparative language-research.

It was worth while to learn a language first of all, instead of teaching the so-called primitives in colonial manner the own – i.e. 'civilized' language, as had been done under the cover of charity.

This was why Flory didn't only care for relicts from the past, but also took interest in the living witnesses. And where ever she met such, her heart was beating higher, because there she was in touch with her friends, her sister and her mother. While her father preferred to deal with relicts in graves and settlements, he excavated, as were many to be seen these days, since the Americans had started to follow the rapist traces of Europeans, using airplanes and sonar and radar, and high definition photography. Thus disguising archaic sites, which had been hidden ever since.

**

Time had made the former friends to be drifting apart. Where were those days, when they marched with a gay song on their lips towards Atlantis, or approached the cloud-banks of Laptopia? Studying had destroyed all that, so it seemed to Flory. And she felt bitterness. Each of

them was engaged in his or her special field. They existed only in that ivory tower, in the scientific differentiation, where each was forced to produce stunning innovations.

As a matter of fact, all her friends should have been as sad as she sometimes was, when she thought of the good old days, that were gone for good.

Not even for dreaming there was a chance. Her nights in Egypt, where her father had been drawn to once more, didn't match with the nights of the others, and thus there was no chance of meeting that way, and there was definitely no other. Only Cory and her mother stuck to specific times and arranged something. Sometimes even via internet and telephone. There could always something be done, in case the will was there.

Did they lack of good will? Perhaps someone had to make the start. And that could well be Cory, who was in the area diving with her maritime institute.

**

The merfolk was – by the way – a species with an own language. Which was so complex, that it was impossible for human beings to learn it or express themselves in it.

“Etymologically spoken, this language is a kind of missing link”, Cory explained and looked rather meaningfully, so that Flory became envious again.

Well, you can't do two things at once, that was the reverse side of the medal. And why should their good old study group become involved in such a language, with all the confusion and implementations of all kind of non-human or even supra-human aspects? Which wouldn't be available just like that, or 'en passant'. Seen that way, Cory was very right, who criticized just this fact.

Judgments came far too fast, just like in former times in Laptopia or in Atlantis, where all were far too soon at hand with a judgment or an own point of view. Which hadn't been all that difficult then, in case of Atlantis.

**

Arundle didn't feel well either, in fact as bad as Flory did. They infested each other unknowingly. While Arundle wasn't able to express

her sentiments as precise as Flory. Perhaps she lacked the distance. She was definitely not happy with what was going on. Sea-faring only seemed to alter things. And you didn't notice the true whereabouts. Besides, Billy-Joe was always near, whether as steward or as navigator. And Zinfandor also gave her a homely feeling, no matter how strange he remained. In fact he was somewhat simply fabricated. But that as well was a matter in itself. Because Zinfandor remained a psychopath in a way. Despite the fact that he stood his man as Captain and Skipper. His fate reminded Arundle to the fate of Captain Ahab, who got lost in the in-flight with his enemy and didn't notice till the end, what he really did, and why he acted the way he did. While such might be the fate of every Captain, who has no-one above him but the Almighty.

**

What happened to Billy-Joe that he had himself put into a uniform – the hated uniform of a servant? Had it been only because he couldn't imagine to stay behind and let Arundle roam? Did he think he wasn't capable of more? And stay with her at about any price? In he weakest hours, when he felt absolutely honest with himself, then this seemed so. He took his lot because of Arundle. Like he had so much taken up on her behalf, and would surely take up a lot more in future.

She had introduced him very basically into the forms of the past and the future. Whereas he was living so present, so timeless and dreamtime-like – on the jump at any time. Because what had been, had not been as well. Not even Arundle was able to alter such fact. It would remain this way: their world meant to be additional, and their affairs were additional affairs. Because of this, he managed to become involved. He became a jumper between the worlds, and Arundle was pleased to let him enter her world.

**

Those who had been involved in the publiciations and inventions were well off. The anti-petrification-potion was worldwide handled as a medicine against depression. That meant for the inventors that the dividends were floating permanently. Dorothea cared about the financial matters anyway and did a perfect job that way. Tibor had his share

unknowingly and without being interested at all. He didn't even take notice of his financial status. Because this would only bother and disturb him.

Those who were not involved in the serum were covered by Anonymous's publication, and last but not least by the miraculous apparatus of the outstanding success of the SLOMES. As shareholders they entered into spheres of the super-riches. And those who stayed apart, or like Moschus Mogoleya for undefined reasons, was still flooded by the aura of wealth, because there was no way left via the School of Inbetween. Dorothea took care of this, who very well handled the time and money equivalents, after her bad experience with the attempts of the so-called 'Brotherhood of Infernalía' of ruining the project.

"I just had to" she always stressed, when her clever deal became known. – "I'm not at all fond of money-making. My passion traditionally is the spending..." she argued with a benign grin.

She wasn't quite that way. Little Sulamith however didn't miss anything. In fact, she almost drowned in the plenty since she came into this world.

"That might indeed be our problem" Arundle thought – "the problem of all of us. We are swimming in a world of wealth and what we wish to do, is often already done and recorded. Only what we research is our genuine own, and can save us and beware us.

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Oh yes, Corinia felt what was wrong with her and her sister and their joint friends and comrades. But what should she do? Should she give up what she had achieved, and what she believed in, and where she had the greatest possible discernment as well as possibilities of help and protection – at least she hoped. She noticed of course the contradiction. But was the view not tightening on all of them as soon as it became focused by the demands of the task and the pressure of circumstances of life?

As a matter of fact, those circumstances weren't dictated by the big questions, but remained as they used to – as parts of the trivial everyday remedies. And that meant after all to tidy the flat, and to clean up the dormitory. Or in terms of the sub-water world: to clear the inner habitation and have the streams of fresh water pull in, in order to get rid of the waste until the water became clear again.

How big was a city allowed to become? Were there natural limits with reference to the number of heads? And then the language problem. If you turned in on that. If you started learning the language. At once a new universe opened, and you could get lost easily. You might even forget why you entered it first of all.

Did you get lost or did you conquer this new universe? Nobody could tell you. It was not as if you knew that success was waiting for you here or there. When you began, you didn't know the outcome – you never did. Failure was likely, nothing was granted in fact. Definitely there, where the ice was as thin as this, as was the air for breathing. When the sight became clear and clearer, and you felt jubilant, although nobody could ever be certain, how far this was realistic or factitious, and why you had entered in the first place.

Boetie hadn't known before hand that she once became Prime Minister. She could have failed on each hurdle of the route towards the aim, and could of course fail each coming up day anew. And what the worst was: As Prime Minister she had lost many targets out of sight. She knew no more why she acted. She acted, because she had to, and because she didn't have the choice, and because there was no way back and no escape.

All labour and work only led further apart from the aim, which got lost that way, while it still remained seductive, the more it faded and the lesser it became.

With such paradoxa you could easily fiddle around. But where the hard reality was rubbing, you soon noticed, it might be better, when you stayed away from certain things, if you didn't want to risk severe harm.

Well, the watery walls weren't all that rough down here. Down here on the first level that opened up for the living beings. Or was it already the second or the so and so maniest level, because the dwarves shouldn't be forgotten either, no matter how little the surfacers cared for them?

For the dwarves, one single ray of the sun was often as precious as for a gambler was the triple bell. This jackpot others might exchange for a new liver or new lungs. Which wasn't out of range any more, while the dwarves weren't aware yet.

And then such an individual might think about it and ask timidly, if half of the jackpot wouldn't suffice.

Because, what was he doing with a new liver when there was nothing to digest for it? – you know what I mean!

Richness is no matter in itself or make sense only when you enjoy spending. And without health it's not worth it and not at all easy.

In any case, the dwarves kept access to the surface world. In fact there were no highways up there, but little narrow trespasses and hidden gateways, where they could sneak through. Such access they missed in a way on Susamee's Island, they realized. In fact, there was nothing to be seen up there, and this was the main reason. This was why they thanked their comrades who still remained at the old site, despite of the inclement conditions there. Foul surroundings that became all the more severe and insurmountable while they were alone and on their own now, separated from the common flock, so to speak.

On the other hand, they didn't have to fight about the last crumb of bread, but scooped out of the plentitude, and dry spots could also be found, free of charge, while no coughing clusters of the diseased fought for the seldom sun-rays. In the new premise they might even cure their disease in the sunny new health resort.

Doubtful however was, whether they would ever again become the old. Some of the brighter ones sometimes believed to have found an adequate attorney in Billy-Joe, others swore on Arundle, who was able to produce some sensibility despite of her liberal basic attitude, while the good-natured fundamentalist Billy-Joe, who soon cared too much about principles instead of the dwarf and his lot and obligation in his only world, as there was no other, and that was the point.

What happened to all those transplanted beings, who were put into the oversized cloaks of the dead white man, who now dwelled in the slums of the outskirts and had handed them over to alcohol and drugs? They became nothing, but lost everything, even the last bit of what once had been their identity, until they even became fed up with dreaming.

Down here they were lucky because Tibor was there and cared for them in the health resort, which was definitely no slum-like place on Susamee's Island – still...

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Not quite, the stubborn insisted, and mingled into the dreams by hushing with tripling feet through the dormitories, because in their dwellings underneath there were loopholes and hidden trespasses the lot.

Nobody had to drill with pain and dig. And those who loved their buildings most, learned to understand them – sometimes unwillingly and rather to their astonishment – still they understood. Not idle admiration for the splendor of precious stones and jewels, but the understanding between man and dwarf, because understanding is no one-way street. This was why even the impertinent picked up a lot, things, they didn't like, but a lot, which stunned them so they wished to adopt. Whether they succeeded or not, was another question. First of all, understanding was growing.

7. A Dwarves'-School of the Other Kind.

The reason why the housing area of the dwarves was so wet, was caused by the merfolk – that is, not directly by the mer-folks themselves, but by the fact that they lived in the hiding under the mainland socle, which interfered into the geostatic of the underground, and made the sediment there-under vulnerable and porous. The sediment became pressed and pushed and after some time showed little resistance.

As soon as the water had started trickling, there was no more way of preventing it from entering. The water was then flooding in smaller rivulets first, and then in streams later the underground habitat of the dwarves. By then it was high time for them to leave.

Above for the merfolk things looked quite different. In the neck of the islands and first of all in the many hundred yards wide base – that is to say the two bases, there was found solid hard volcano rock, more poured than formed and often out of one founding. Hard, solid and impermeable. Be it that someone drilled himself through it in hard toil. Even then however the hole could still be controlled. It didn't fringe, didn't enlarge on its own, or was following the surrounding structures, as they were no soft sediments but solid hard volcano rock.

This was why the craftsmen so easily worked down from above by following the given tunnels. The sea only spilled away what could be spilled away, and that was no granite from the inner earth. What remained, stood straight in solid pillars and granite fastness for eternity. Be it that another eruption from the inners of the earth would alter the outer shape of the globe once more.

Talking about their desperate situation forbade honour and pride and discretion anyway. Because dwarves didn't publish things like that. Not even to each other they told about the puddles of salty water under the bed and salt crusts under the plates. They not even mentioned the spoilt mushrooms or the hunger that gnawed in their bowels and couldn't be stilled. That was not their way of behaving. They preferred to carry on or stir the world around a little by pinching here a crumb and there a biscuit. Just as much, that it could hardly be noticed.

This was now all settled. The disgrace lay open, the main bulk of the little folk was gone – sent to a sanatorium to become cured in a hospice. Reservation – they called the idyllic island, only the best could be said about. Reservation the stubborn called it in deep disrespect, because this it was in their eyes.

A piece of land granted and provided by some kind of self-induced master-breed, who felt so superior, that they didn't even notice their shameful highbrow behaviour any more. They had been sent there, because they had become obstacles in the eyes of the surfacers (such went the saying among the little folk, who were all too easily caught by such nonsense, as was happening anywhere in the world, when demagogues stirred up primitive emotions who didn't know better, or didn't want to know better.)

Once more it worked fine. The preservationists became round and fat and recreated perfectly. They didn't suffer from asthma assaults any more, and the tuberculosis was beaten as well. For hours and days the recreationists lay lazy in the open plain sunshine without doing anything or shuffle the earth about as is dwarves' obligation.

No good could spring of that. For pranks there was no need either. The most valiant didn't know what to do with their fits of courage. The Trolls didn't know any more that they were eventually Trolls, but wondered about their aggressions, which they fed into psycho-social projects instead of living them out in order to become real dwarves.

Thus were the nightmarish stories being told about the brave new world, the land of promise - Susamee's Island, where milk and honey were flowing and to all dwellers the right of self-fulfillment would be granted.

Was it so, the dwarves did perform rather poor in the sense of their dwarf-hood. With the left behind misery also the drive had passed to overcome such agony.

(While it is in fact almost impossible to overcome any trouble if it had gone. The question was, what then could be done.)

As a matter of fact the polemic of the ones' left behind, wasn't all that miserable after all. All the more so, as they felt unwatched, and therefore began to occupy the level above the merfolk. There it was dry – well, at least dryer than underneath. And there the dwarves – and that might be the most thrilling challenge – secretly spied on the surfacers and their funny occupations they were after.

'University' the surfacers called what they did. Therefore they occupied rooms the heart-blood of the dwarves was adjacent, being worth a king. There they sat the whole day long. Some talked, other took notes. And every two hours a bell was ringing, and all jumped up, and rushed outside. Most went to the cafeteria. There they sat around again, while they were eating until a new sign of the bell made them rush back, and the same game started all over again.

Down here the walls had ears and eyes anyway. The dwarves had cared for that, when they worked over this part of the socle. – If you listened long enough and spied what was going on, the funny behaviour began to fill with sense. Had there not been the troublesome human language, which stood between them, they would have understood even better.

However, that much even the dullest realized, here people were learning and studying, and in the end something sensible came about. This was what the more clever ones managed to understand, the more they became acquainted with the mode of speech. If you tuned in on that, you step by step realized that the subjects weren't all that odd. While emotions and feelings played a vital role as well, and were as important as the words.

Telepathy was after all part of the basic set-up of a real dwarf. However, it had to be readable what was disguised that way. The confuse stuff the surfacers kept shovelling about in their brains could hardly be called thinking – at least not in the sense of the dwarves.

The idea began to settle: "We also want a university. Had we known, what we had been building... yes, had we only known..."

A few even raised. Perhaps it was high time to open at last? Much more couldn't become destroyed. The homeland was lost. The water came flooding in and the disabled were sitting in a sanatorium and listened to the tunes of a self-induced horse-headed violin, who made even stones sob and dwarves anyway.

This they knew from the secret spies, who went there each month when full moon came. They mingled under the flock of Convertors rushing towards Susamee's Island. So the contact never got lost.

'Sly little mouse
whispering round the house.'

Tibor, the Lord, presented himself. His call rushed ahead of him and while he met here mostly stubborn atheist ears, he found openings still. Because Tibor didn't care about divinity. Eventually he wanted to mediate that also the left-behinds could find access and open the paradise up for themselves as well. Would they once be here, he knew for sure, they wouldn't long away anymore, but would stay for good. (This might even be true. After all, the left-behinds knew from their spies, what was waiting for them.)

No Saint like Tibor knew everything after all, and knows about dialectics and what it meant, to expose what's inside. And if there is nothing, which comes out without teasing, or just too little, that the tickling might not be worth while, the cat might bite into its tail, so to speak.

The dwarves needed Professors as well, that was clear to the front-men. But they should stem from their own ranks. The most gifted, the cleverest and most experienced should they be. And they should teach the little folk all what was needed to run a future-bound life. There was practically nothing, that didn't fit into the scale, they decided after some thinking things over.

Sure enough they had to find arrangements with the surfacers. They had to become more acquainted with their way of thinking or they would become extinct like so many indogene peoples and races – this they knew already from Tibor, whom they thought able to become one of their teachers. Besides, he had this sacred flair. And when he called, they would all come.

The dwarves mixed something up with that universal call. But that didn't harm the affection. Main thing was, they got started. Tibor was

looking forward anyway, when the rat transmitted the news. The rat introduced itself as a trained rat, who was underway by order of the left behind dwarves, who wanted Tibor as their official teacher – granting him full freedom of research and teaching.

Had those stubborn pig-heads known what this meant, they would have better skipped such an appendix, because they knew quite well what they were going to let their comrades in the so-called paradise know.

Seen from this angle, it were the old values, and nothing new, definitely nothing revolutionary would be allowed to turn the old-time way of life upside down.

By that, some kind of auto-dynamic evolved. From Tibor came the suggestion to nominate Billy-Joe. And where he was, Arundle wasn't far either.

Susamee was eager to pass on her immense knowledge as well. She felt it better taken care of with the dwarves than with most of her own race.

“Herbology for the young dwarfess”,

“Birth-assistance for Shorties”,

“The dwarfess and her Home-pharmacy”

– such were the challenging titles of her curriculum, perhaps quite likely to the teaching of a peoples' university.

“Just to make sure, everybody knows what we are talking about.” She declared with a friendly smile.

While the two new doctors and the little sorcerer didn't do as easy, though. Had Tibor not had his horse-headed violin, which he managed to bring into account very efficiently, the masses would have dissembled quite as fast as they gathered. Thus however they streamed by and this was why he was getting cocky.

In the beginning the lectures were held in the premises of the Island-University with agreement of the president. However the dwarves didn't like that, some even hated the idea as such.

Others cared about the lost souls over there in the reservation, as they put it. And this was why the monthly flights to Susamee's Island became overbooked, until the helicopter crew protested and resisted to transport such “nasty bunch of impertinent little monsters” – as they put it. Not even one they'd transport in future.

A rat had gnawed the hose to the steering well and they almost crashed. No proof was ever found that the dwarves had to do with such an act of sabotage. No letter of confession was found either. Still a lot of rumour went about.

This was why the ship-owner was asked whether a transportation would be generally possible. First on a trial basis, of course. In the long run however, the idea was to set up a regular ferry service, either in bulk or by capita, as would please the crew. Because the owner figured quite something out of workload to be acquired that way. Thanks to Tibor's image and attraction. There might come up something really great.

Meanwhile the left-behind dwarves dug in their element. Their ambition was to come up with an own univeristy roomwise as well. A university with everything, not only structural but also material, with everything that belongs to such an institution – or what they thought to belong to anyway. While they didn't have the faintest idea of what belonged to a univeristy, at least not as far as the administrative side was concerned.

They built of course, in the dwarves' manner and for dwarves' needs. That meant low ceilings and tiny furniture. Besides, a campus should also go with it. This was the place where the students would sleep and spend their free time, they soon found out.

While they also could stay on board of the Last Bounty, not only for the time of the journey, but for their whole stay. That would have an advantage, and they hadn't to move so often.

Since that incident with the rat in the helicopter, the President of the University didn't see things as cool as he used to, and he minded a lot, whether or not the extensions were made on his grounds, and a new native tribal branch would be added.

At best Scholasticus had liked to have such orcus also expedited to the mainland socle under the mainland shelf, the more so, because Adrian was bothering him for months with his merfolk.

“What's good for the dwarves is also good for the merfolk”, Adrian exclaimed theatrically once in a while, when he returned disappointed from his sub-water trip, because the ignorance was huge down there. That

caused him to recite Berthold Brecht from whom was said to stem the saying: “Stupidity makes itself invisible by enlarging immeasurably.” –

This sentence could also come from either Adorno or Horkheimer. “It would fit quite well to those high-brow pals”, Arundle commented the saying, who liked it very much. However, the sentence intimidated quite a bit. Were they then already huge or were going astray in that forest, where you couldn’t distinguish the individual trees any more? As such erring would certainly go along with stupidity as well.

Arundle appeared only as the carrier of the magic bow, just as Billy-Joe, who was bearer of the magic stone. This was why the dwarves were very interested in these two as teachers, as neither the bow nor the stone could be booked without their carriers.

The spectacular sessions did obviously not pass unnoticed by the dwarves, the two had put on stage. Because the dwarves had their ears and eyes everywhere. This was the way they were. This was how they got along in this world. Of course they would have liked to have such spectacles started by themselves, where the energy was humming and flooding like the tickling water, they now were on the verge to get rid of at last.

‘What could have been done with the surfacers should work with the little folk as well’ could also be noticed otherwise, if you had an ear to hear the unsaid, anyway. The dwarves were kind of self-satisfied, even cheery in a way. They were very fond of what came to their minds, if it was of such kind.

“Trolls should certainly be taken care of – no doubt about that. Trolls represent our most innovative forces, they carry on the capital of our future” Inspector Barnby said repeatedly, who had installed himself on his own as there was no appropriate council to speak for the dwarves on Susamee’s Island, yet.

The former council had dissolved, when their members emigrated in majority. They took care now of their health and wellness, instead of dealing with the rough wind of politics.

“Right-o – what Robbin won’t learn will never dig Rob” such, or similar went the saying, the elder men recalled from their visits to the surface of former times. This was how someone had put it long time ago.

“Could have been so”, others nodded and looked affirmatively at each other, while having their little limbs covered in steaming mud, puffing clouds of smoke out of their long bent pipes.

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Captain Zinfandor Leblanc and Chief Stan, with the tongue twisting name, felt very happy. They didn't mind to go back and forth the same route. They enjoyed sea-faring so regularly when the weather was fine. It could be so for ever. The ship was equipped now - dwarves back and forth, and sometimes even Conversors joined them. It was like on a cruising tour, very romantic. The travelers were fed up with those bumpy helicopter trips, anyway. It was a change, and therefore nobody minded sparing a couple of days. The monthly adventure became adventurous again that way.

However, with the rest of the crew, the Skipper was in trouble. Only a few were free regularly. It had been different then – kind of exempt situation – which now turned out to become routine. This was why the shirt got closer to the submarine-men than the jacket. The jacket was in this case the Last Bounty. And this was why Captain Leblanc was left out in the cold more or less alone.

Troublesome he talked himself hoarse. In former times you shanghaied your crew just like that. The sea was wide those days and the nearest port far. And often enough the steam had puffed off and the waves quieted down, so to speak. The shanghaied man had become a nice neat sea-lord who was proud of his merits. Some even with a boats-man's or Officer's stripes on the sleeve of the marine-blue jacket.

Zinfandor himself had become a sailor that way, a long time ago. This didn't work these days anymore. Besides, there was the plight of secrecy – you weren't allowed to talk about your duty in public. And you couldn't look into a man's heart for that, whether a true heart was beating in his chest, you could trust in, and who deserved confidence.

The ship-owner was helpless, and the dwarves couldn't be argued with. For them it was a question of honour. It was bad enough that they had to ship back and forth, just like that. But if there then was even a foul apple sluiced in – you couldn't imagine what then would break loose, and what would happen if the secret was lost.

For them the whole ship should have been hidden under a magic hood and had traveled unseen that way. Some kind of camouflage craft perhaps – preferably not on the water, nor in the air.

First of all the crew had to become stocked up. “Less than six is a crime”, Zinfandor murmured – “had to be good men. No students, but true blokes, with spirit in the bones and a sailor’s mind...”

There was still the little ship-owner’s office next to the helicopterport in Sydney. There was little work, but a representation was advantageous in many ways. Be it for the irregularly showing up backpackers of the second generation, who had inherited the secret of the island from their parents, and who tried for traces now on their own. Not just a big number, but they were there, and for them the office was good enough.

Genuine seamen from the public sign-on office weren’t yet in the focus. Dorothea didn’t want to go that far. There she had had loads of offers, of course. Well, perhaps not masses, but an appropriate number. The unemployment rate down under was chronically high. That came from the mentality the sociologist argued, and because of the world economy in turmoil.

8. Debtors and Credits

Since the money-system was deprived – while money lacked in all governmental cashes, a time-value system had become appropriate, on the verge of replacement. With a diffuse lobby of interestees in the hide and loads of other secret interests connected with. It almost looked as if all the world agreed in a diffuse consense. Dealing with time-based credits became really fashionable. Without trouble you could buy, and the debtor was rid of his trouble by that, as soon as the redeem was due. You had no worries any more – not for the time of the repayment anyway. This was why more and more people ran into such trap, with astronomical debts, they wouldn’t be able to repay in two lifetimes, so this became and remained often the final stage in their life.

Could they get access to those desperados? The ship-owner asked herself. They had to be good seamen, of course. For this kind of a speak-easy job as was offered on the Last Bounty, the more experienced people were demanded. Their living was granted comfortably. So it was almost

like in the free life out there. With one difference, they couldn't sack, just like that, in fact, they were destined to remain for good.

Some Creditors had changed over to a system of loan-workers. They had just too many debtors under contract, and didn't know what to do with all the manpower.

This happened to the SLOMES-trust as well, since the demand of do-it-yourself-sets declined in order to avoid debts, or because the market became saturated.

Yes, there even were people who voluntarily stepped into the debt-trap with the SLOMES-trust. "Then you needn't worry any more", they argued, just like that. "Pick the rose before it fades" they repeated the company's slogan, that was persuading from the advertising screens everywhere.

This slogan might even be true.

Judith had the greatest scruples by then, and was on the verge of extracting from the family. Peter anyway, who was hit by mere horror, when imagining where he was involved.

One million debtors tinkered about their SLOMES daily – well, a lot of malfunction was among them. Still the production was appropriate to cover the need world-wide. Because the trust now had branch-offices on each continent. They all worked under the same principal.

In order to keep the power over a long period of time – many debtors were marked down with a hundred years – the workers remained voluntarily of course, in front of their binoculars of their own SLOMES. They did that for hours – hours they claimed to be the light in their sad lives. This was what was talked in rumours. Because all that sad, this life was not, compared to the lives of those on the so called free market.

In short, Dorothea swallowed the bitter pill, and asked for long-term-debtors in an appropriate firm, whose life-time would most likely end before their debts were repaid.

Seamen they had to be, real seamen, with a long life at sea. "With experience in the appropriate field, and of solid shape", as Zinfandor stressed all over again.

"With guts in the brain and strength in the bones". Preferably without relatives out there. Lonesome left-over – "old, strong and ambitious" – "Somewhat some kind of quadrature of the circle" – seen that way, Arundle commented, when she learned of that. She did so, just like that, because Dorothea knew the critical demands of her clientele all too well.

For them the development went the wrong way. They saw Laptopia appearing threateningly on the horizon of the future. And she herself remembered the thick fingers, and all the trouble, because of a bite to eat in that future trans-galactic gas-station.

So it was. Suddenly, things put up speed and went their track, and before you realized, you were involved in something, that was so much different from what you intended.

Was it all that bad, when she offered the stranded a last good resort? When they found a last spark of sense in their lives?

The shipping company offered a lot. More than any other, Dorothea was sure about that. Diversity, humanity, self-assurance –were the qualities you couldn't buy with money or life-time. As debtors the individuals concerned acquired the true pleasures of life – the world was paradox by now. Not everywhere and not always, but, so she hoped, often enough. Because not the humanity did decline. In the opposite, because the old inhumane money-system was de-constructed at last. Consequently humanness was on the march. While didn't yet show. But that would soon come.

Anyway, Zinfandor got some work to do. And while the chief-mechanic Stan, with the unspeakable name, was there, he became involved as well.

First tender strings of sympathy arose. So the Skipper asked the ship-owner to have Stan enter the captain's bridge, so to speak, to help out for coming to decisions.

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What a bunch of characters that was, - passing by. Like from a horror-cabinet or from an old peoples disabled inhabitants assortment. Poor forlorn creatures, pitiable, as they were, had to be examined anyway. Pleading with tears in their eyes for a last chance in life.

It was a hard job to stick to the criteria they had established, by all means! How much debris does life have pass by or even spill ashore.

The search stretched. Other agencies became involved, whose wretched candidates lived under even worse conditions. The two seamen suspected, that the candidates offered, weren't even real seamen. Most of them were vagabonds, legionnaires, hobos, dock-hands, yes, and also a

few months of seamanship in the widest sense. Perhaps they had even been to sea for some years. Quite a few might have been trained hairdressers, who had given up their occupation to become a greaser and get a chance to see the world that way.

At last the Skipper and his chief succeeded. The first candidate was found. A second followed some weeks later, and before the year was over, they had six names on the payroll. Six more or less hopeful pals who felt lucky while showing. They might even feel still the itch in the blood, and the longing for the far unseen beyond the horizon, while the bottle was in reach. – However, they were no drunkards, they kept on swearing by their mothers' souls.

The truth would be found out soon enough. A little discipline would do them good in any case, they all frankly admitted. For them the SLOMES was worse the effort. Judith was all too happy to donate one. She was still ashamed of her family, because they had collected uncountable wealth in a very short period of time. And found it now very difficult to give such wealth back, as was declared repeatedly by them. Sharing affluence was a heroic intention – the everyday practice looked different. Those, who ever had to distribute resources, knows how difficult a task that is. While throwing away was no solution either.

Blokes much alike Stan and Zinfandor were found, while the two didn't look comparable – in no way. It was the spirit that formed the string of likeliness. So the six new crew members were of different appearance, but of the same fabric, so to speak. A clever brain might have separated them into two categories. The ones he had called 'Stans' the others 'Zinfandors'. And might have met the point. It was that way.

But as it is in life, the most solid man showed greatest interest in the ship's engine. He was gifted, and had an open mind for technical stuff. This was a rare gift indeed, as Stan knew all too well. Such talent he only noticed on his own side. He had never met someone like him in his long life at sea.

On the other hand was Zinfandor pushed toward a tiny person, only half his own size, who qualified himself best as a navigator. This was why he became the First Officer, and the Skipper's right hand representative on the bridge. He was a very able navigator. He knew the world and was acquainted with all ends of the globe. He knew a lot about weather. He

knew what it meant when hot and cold jet-streams met from North and South . He even knew about monster waves, and how you could avoid or fly off them, as they all had their heralds. Only a few could read the message or recognized what was due.

“How shall we call him?” Stan and Zinfandor wondered. Because he was Indonesian, and his name was a tongue twister for the Europeans. Whether there was a nickname, they wanted to know, and the Navigator had an answer for that. Because he knew of the heavy tongues of the whites and of their heavy heads – most of them had. There were exemptions of course, but not here on board.

“Call me Ishmael” he shouted gaily and spread his arms wide as if he wanted to embrace the whole world. While he recited of a play he once had seen and helped to put on stage in a sailors’ home somewhere in Djakarta.

“A play of an insane whaler-skipper who fell in love with a whale, or something like that, and couldn’t leave him until the end.”

Stan was luckier. His Pole was named Pole, there was nothing to keep in mind, and that was after Stan’s liking. Pole was no real Pole but from Latvia. And the people there were also known for their funny long and tongue-twisting names...

Things were settle that way: The Navigator was called Ishmael, and the assistant-mechanic was called Pole. Both were put into smart uniforms with broad golden stripes on the sleeves the Navigator, and two smaller red ones The Pole, marking him as the second man in charge of the engine.

For those who still had trouble with their length of the name “The Pole” there was a second choice, and that surely would do, and that was ‘Wazlav’. This name was indeed very homely, and reminded Stan of his lost home, back in Poland. So Stan loved the long Latvian Pole for that, and called him by his artist’s name ‘Wazlav’ - and an artist he was with the engine, no matter his names or his original Latvian one, which was definitely unspeakable, even for a real Pole.

Wazlav and Ishmael were ‘Hundred-Enders’ – this was how the lifelong victims in bondage were called. They had no chance of ever getting rid of their debts. Just like Stan. They stranded ashore like a misled whale, and couldn’t be helped.

One day, Stan therefore decided never to leave the boat again. And he stayed on board. What he needed, he found here. And now the world was

showing up with him. What could he else wish? “Stay on board. There you know where you are, and what you have. Out there - there are only traps and snares awaiting you...”

Master Wazlav nodded then bleary-eyed and reminded his women-tales, which had caused his malaise and led him into bondage. While he couldn't refrain from boasting.

Master Ishmael went silent, when asked about his past. It was of no interest to no-one, was his final decision. Zinfandor accepted this, and felt as if he was talked over instead. And while he himself was no 'Hundred-Ender' he could have easily become one.

Their SLOMES the officers established in the officers' mess. There it stood small and secure between the board for the dishes and the narrow table, where you couldn't sit opposite each other but had to find a space for your knees aside.

The two giants on the one side didn't work at all, so each had to have a tiny one opposite. As a matter of fact, they hardly met anyway, because of the watches, and because the boatswain and the carpenter, who were exempted from the watches, joined them as well, and were expedited into petty-officers' ranks generously, whereas they preferred to match with the sailors before the mast. There was three times as much space, if those nasty tourists weren't swarming about which was the case of course, because this was the sense of their service. Those tourists had to be fed – same place – in three shifts then.

While the dwarves' food was sour fare, the buffet for the world-travelers was excellent. Even the Officers came over to join them, while the choice was left to the steward. As a matter of fact, you had to remain flexible, and avoid unnecessary conceit. Therefore, the 'parley' was 'nonchalant' and never arbitrary. They all were much too sensible for that, and had their bad experience with authorities of all kind. But you never spoke about that, and never started unnecessary questionings. With that you could easily get in trouble, stripes or not. But lucky them, things never went that far.

“Each got to keep his dignity” was Zinfandor's advice, he handed out every morning to his officers and crew members – a total number of four. More couldn't be found so far. This was why they sailed the slow way, but orderly, and clean, and proper as far as seamanship was concerned. Unexpected needs would have caused severe problems, indeed.

Two men were on the bridge, one in the engine-room, and that was it. Three were free of watch in their berths. In addition, there were the steward, the cook, and Boatswain, and the ship's Carpenter – and that was it.

More couldn't be found under the limitations, they had to obey. So it became tight, when maneuvering about in the port, or on roadstead, there they required an additional helping hand or two, which they might find amongst the passengers, if there were any. But Zinfandor didn't like the idea of depending on "those tourists", as he called them.

9. Hundred-Enders

The Skipper regretted to have accepted the Boatswain, and the Carpenter as well. What was the use of those watch-free fellows, who were dawdling about, fraternizing with the passengers, and pleasing the ladies like coquettish roosters?

"We can't move while on watch and afterwards you better go to sleep. Because in four hours time it says rise, rise, again..."

One of the two had bad eyes, and had no idea of navigation, the other had no idea of electricity, and couldn't even exchange a bulb. Things like that he didn't study, he said. He was definitely too old to change anything on this behalf. – so said the Carpenter – a man of the woods, as the name said, a man for the wood. This was his way of looking at things. And so he did with a malicious grin, knowing all too well that on a vessel like the Last Bounty everything was iron-made, except the sills of the hatches and the furniture in the messes and cabins.

As a matter of fact, Carpenter was just a definition of a petty officer in charge of almost everything that could break on such a ship. A sort of caretaker – no wood-worker, as might have been so in the beginning of sea-faring.

For the boatswain such loopholes didn't open. His superiors could well assume that he was the cleverest and best of all deckhands – able to show his inferiors what everything was about. In this case, however, things didn't work that way.

On the other hand, the boatswain was a nice guy, good-natured, humorous and affable, but work-shy. He was able to play the harmonica fine and bewitched his fellowmen as well as the tourists, all the same. For the music's sake they wouldn't have liked to miss him.

As a matter of fact, the crew lacked the youngsters, the ordinary seamen, such you would look for in vain amongst the Hundred-Enders, while a regular ship's mate could well be fifty years of age. Those, who didn't manage the sailor's exam by that age, would surely never succeed, and had to become a greaser or ship's-steward, or cook, if he didn't give up sea-faring at all.

There, another pot had to be opened up, and for that the secrecy stood in the way.

All crewmen of the Last Bounty were marked by a plain fact – they had no relatives. Nobody was waiting for them. Nobody wrote them or cared whether they existed. In fact, nobody even knew that they were alive.

This was how things stood. And they would have been the poorest and most wretched human beings of the world, when they hadn't met each other. This was why they overlooked little weaknesses, that life brought along. Each in his own way and ability. You wouldn't change a dull lame mare to become a fierce galloper, but might proceed well step by step.

With the men in charge on the bridge and in the engine-room, Mr. Ishmael and Mr. Wazlav, the crew had hit the jackpot, that is in fact two jackpots, which couldn't be said of the petty-officers and not of the deckhands either. Where they all just losers? You shouldn't go that far, that might be indecent, in fact, the sailors weren't all that bad. They did their job at the rudder and hardly missed the course as long as the weather was fine.

On deck they knew what had to be done. They knew how to remove the nasty rust, as well as to paint everything, made of steel and iron. The winches they handled so far alright, and the anchor chain wasn't yet broken, which could easily happen, when you let slip the anchor too fast.

Named they were simply 'Sailor one' and 'Sailor two', Boatswain, and Carpenter, for other names nobody cared, and weren't common anyway. Who knows for how long? – this was what the Skipper and the factotum, that is the Chief Mechanic Stan decided, and the second in command wholly agreed on that as well without own suggestions.

The search was still going on for additional crew members, and the ship-owner did her best. After all, she had to take care of her daughter, who needed the mother. With all that workload at the university and the stock investment business Dorothea was involved, there was hardly any time left to bother here as well.

Nephew Intellectus was back again on the island. His dad Amadeus had lost interest in taking care of the Sydney office at the helicopter-terminal, where now an aid was sitting again who had no idea of what was going on, then being polite, nice and friendly to the adventurers passing by in increasing number by the time, because the summer was approaching down under here. They tried for a passage on the Last Bounty and for a permit for the islands.

This meant of course additional turns for the Last Bounty, and not only the ten days passage with the Convertors back and forth during full moon over to Susamee's Island.

The dwarves took the chance and traveled back and forth as well. One group came, the other went. The ones looked for recreation in the sanatorium, while the other cared for studying at the new Dwarves' University, or were even nominated as teachers, and well pampered for their wide knowledge and prospects.

The latter had come out of the inner earth and from far times for that purpose. Now, that the call of a universal uprising was spread into the furthest ends of the dwarves' world. Such never had ever happened before indeed – well, definitely not for a very long time.

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Where did all the 'Hundred-Enders' come from? How did such an ungod development become started in the first place?

Ever more individuals gave themselves up. This development was alarming. Only since she had to deal with them, Dorothea realized what was all about with those poor beings. The people just gave themselves up, and fled into a modern form of slavery. Nothing could be palliated. The so-called time-work was for them but a form of slavery, as it meant lifelong total dependence.

'Hundred-Enders' didn't fit into the category of regular time-work, because of their amount of debt. For them, this situation was clearly the

final destination. They had nothing to lose anymore, and nothing to expect in life. Their lives were all over, often before they had really begun.

This was so for most of them. Because of the most severe mistakes, which they made, when they were young. When nobody was there to protect them from their greed. In fact, there was no limit – that was it. There were no limits what so ever. Each could run into debts as he pleased, and nobody did signal in time or protect him before himself. This couldn't work alright in the long run. People weren't yet so far, and it is doubtful that the great number ever would be. So much autonomy didn't suit them well, as could be seen.

In reality, you hadn't to deal with autonomy, but with persuasion of the advertising strategists, and their tricky manoeuvres which led right into the inner centre of the beings, where they lay helplessly prostrate to the manipulations. This was a form of structural force, so tricky and sly, you just couldn't help it, and nobody had a recipe against it, or how to get away unharmed.

Those with huge accounts didn't mind. Such individuals could shop as they liked. Somewhere the whole rubbish had to go. Very little of what was purchased served a meaningful purpose. Or if it so did, only a minor one, while the accessories formed the true value.

There was a SLOMES for example, with a diamond-embroidered binocular, and a handmade, golden steering unit. This was put on the market for enormous time-share-credits, of course. Such a prestige unit might require some twenty-thousand credits and would mean lifelong dependence of many human lives. While this price was charged somewhere else, but where the unit was delivered.

Such were the excesses Judith was fighting, and made her come across with her family clan. This was not agreed upon, as her brother maintained. He was the man in charge of the innovations' department right here in Sydney in the brain-trust of the company.

Well, in fact such exasperations weren't the rule either, but of course tried the company to prevent from shrinking which began after the first big rush, when the markets became saturated.

Everybody wanted to stay young, instead of becoming old and shaky and mentally limited. This would come anyway soon enough, however, definitely a lot of time later, than in the old days. And those, who stayed upright and had their accounts filled, could easily become one hundred and fifty years, spending their lives in splendid leisure.

Old became the dependant and ‘Hundred-enders’ as well, however they suffered, and the pain of the lost life-time gnawed on them, and led them eventually into a comparably early grave. A reason for that might be the fact that the time-sharing didn’t leave them enough leisure to regenerate orderly, and to spend a few hours daily in front of the SLOMES. Or they had only access to poor quality falsifications, which didn’t help in fact, but reflected wholly on the Placebo-effect. –

Tricky cheap plagiats out of the ominous depth of the Chinese Empire as the controllers suspected. Customs secured millions of such falsifications - being imported by dubious receiver organizations, who avoided the official channels and had their imports smuggled, - unnoticed by the authorities.

The ‘Hundred-Enders’ were in fact the true problem. That is – the problem became transparent on their behalf.

While the constructive forces of the human race were not the only ones at work. Next to the constructive dimension were destructive notions. And even the best guarded life by a SLOMES was not safe from this seduction. Life couldn’t be saved from destruction. The outworn organs had to become exchanged or had to become repaired by bionic means, there was no other option.

This branch of industry was very costly. For a ruined liver you had to spare at least five thousand credits. But the fewest drinkards owned that much. Their addiction had consumed in advance what became so urgently required.

Thus, a two class society established with fatal dynamics, when the have-nots increased dramatically in number. As a matter of fact, they were the most desperate clients in need of the organ transplantation and repair services.

Those who could achieve it, cared in time for a Clone-Account with his or her critical organs. This was ethically acceptable, because you didn’t deal with strange genetic material, but only with your own, you had replicated in time for future use. The replica were kept swimming in an organic liquid and had no access to consciousness or to any body, before being planted into the proprietor’s body. But then this was in order. The organs came to their naturally destined location automatically, so to speak.

By this way you could meanwhile not only replace the fast growing liver, but also kidneys, lungs, hearts, knees, and any bone that was ruined.

Even parts of the brain were replaced that way. While this form of transplantation was the most crucial. The Ethics Commissions of many states forbade the replication of brain parts – even those without cognitive functions.

What the transplantation medicine couldn't achieve was handled by means of bionic artifacts. Bionic repair was in a way the opposite of the transplantation medicine. While there were analogies in procedure. Instead of replanting bio-matter directly, you incorporated functional spare parts.

No matter which branch you favoured, the transplantation-tourism boomed – as you can imagine. Many a government was overthrown that way. In the long run, progress couldn't be stopped anyway. Such was the public opinion-to-be, around the world. Nobody, not even the dismissed, realized what happened with them. Many couldn't ask this question any longer, whether they still were human beings. They just didn't know anymore.

When you were put together by a variety of spare parts, you lost your identity at last. At the latest when you became sterile, because semen and matula-cells couldn't rely on an own base, but dried out. Then, at the latest, you might notice what had become of you.

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With a negative Credit Account the end of the flagstaff was soon reached anyway. Nobody would repair or handle your medical case. Surgeons denied treatment, they claimed workload and referred to long waiting lists, the aspirant might put his name on.

“Perhaps again in some 30 years, if you please...?”

For an accute cirrhosis this would mean the death sentence, of course, while no pre-arrangements had often been taken, and a time-lapse breeding couldn't be achieved in any case.

No-one was openly cynical or proved himself inhumane in public. But under the cover of decency, bad notions and dubious structures arose. The world became a dorado for the proprietors – and this was exactly what should have been avoided. Anonymous had warned in his book.

Legally, there could little be done. Democracy didn't hinder such development. The responsible asked themselves how this could have happened again, while everybody had been warned. Still they ran open eyed into destruction and were on the verge to stumble into agony.

The ‘Hundred-Enders’ demonstrated the weakness of the new system, as well as the limits of the credit system. If you couldn’t evoke new resources like attempts of converting, which certainly would be suspected of being counter-manipulative or even arbitrary – you were lost. And nothing of help was in sight.

The question was, how to help the ‘Hundred-Enders’ without revolving or ruining the whole social system, and open up for manipulative and arbitrary strategies. While arbitrariness was on the verge of rolling up its sleeves for poor tortured mankind. Such the hotheads should always keep in mind, when boasting about with short-reaching parley and unripe suggestions, who were climbing the pedestals and desks here and there, in order to stir up riots, as was quite common in certain areas of the world already, so rumors were spreading, while public news information sources withheld such.

10. The Intergalactic Council

Judith was so upset about her family, that she couldn’t carry on. Something had to be done. She also noticed how dangerous the situation was. One spark could ignite the powder keg and have them all blown up, so to speak. She therefore asked Arundle to forward an emergency request to the Advisor. She couldn’t think of anything else.

Personally she felt closer to South-Michel, but when it came to substantial demands, she felt more secure with the Advisor. Why that was so, she couldn’t answer. Arundle would know, what had to be done. Judith explained the situation in the company and what went wrong. She pointed out that there was a tremendous increase in ‘Hundred-Enders’. A problem, Arundle hadn’t yet hardly realized, were there not the troublesome search of a suitable crew for the Last Bounty.

So she could sing a song of the hard toil of dealing with people, who couldn’t care less, because there was no future perspective, no matter how long they would live on. While amongst them there were others as well, who were of another fabric. The term was kind of collective and inclusive. As there were also Two-Hundred-Enders and Three-Hundred-Enders amongst them, who had found a way of running into an even severer debt-

trap. Betting-debts, unserious manipulations of dubious circles, private debtors with tremendous interest-rates had been employed. There was a lot of criminal energy involved, cheating was only the milder form you could experience in this shabby sinister shade in society's niches.

No-one cared how someone could get rid of a debt of two hundred years. This was up to the debtor and nobody interfered. The least the state. While the state granted autonomy and the human right of liberty, while dignity was trampled to the ground, as was freedom as a consequence.

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This was why Judith contacted Arundle, who talked thing over with Billy-Joe, who had a word with Pooty, who asked the Magic Stone, whose keeper he was. Judith wanted to see the Advisor in person and had at best also taken the twins along. Dorothea should also go, because she felt strangled under too lot of workload. Something had to be done for her either.

Yes, and when Judith's twins Rachel and Aaron would go, Sulamith couldn't stay behind. Both mothers hoped for a divine light-shower for their offspring.

But first of all the unacceptable situation of the SLOMES-Cooperation, they were both involved, had to be mended. What was going on in there was grown on their soil. Warnings had there been a lot, but they weren't obeyed. The whole SLOMES affair had its beginning on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth.

Judith had built the prototype after the plans of Hans Henny Henne. While her brothers later founded the SLOMES-Corporation and sent out the construction-sets all over the world.

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What had to happen, happened. But why had Anonymous sacrificed himself? Were all efforts in vain? Why did they fight the heroic battle against the Brotherhood of Infernalía? Why did they fight for the liberty of the School of Inbetween and prevented its hostile take-over?

Things couldn't end now like that. What was going on in their names, nobody ever had intended. Still it happened, and they were responsible in a way. They alone. Something had to happen – "Advisor, we are coming!"

The Magic Bow understood, when Arundle explained the situation, and he managed to persuade the Magic Stone for this time, who had his objections against such a heavy payload.

“We’re gonna be overloaded” he predicted, and blushed in all his splendour. He shone in all colours of the rainbow. Judith and the twins were enchanted and were looking forward, as only three year olds can do. Sulamith was stunned and looked like her mother. As if she didn’t really know what she should think of that. She was coming into such difficult age, where you started to ask for the first time, whether there were people next to your parents who could mean really something for you.

The Magic Bow feared for the worst – perhaps an emergency landing on the moon or an endless waiting slope instead. However this failed by far. Just nothing happened. The Advisor was hiding behind his column, as he used to do. The Great Hall of Fame and Glory kept vibrating and rumanging with excessive energy. For the offspring the light sluice opened and covered them with light tender fingers: once to and once fro – and the twins kept singing – “round about the easy snout...”

Sulamith became big eyes, while her mother sobbed tears of happiness and even Arundle had to struggle with a clod in her throat. Judith was all too busy with her twins.

When they all came back to normal, the Advisor stepped forward from behind his column. But how did he look like? – that was no more their Advisor, Arundle noticed. That was not the common Advisor at all.

“Special occasions need special replies” the Advisor, who was no Advisor any more, whispered. He was no Advisor any more, but an Advisoress. “Special occasions ask for special replies” the being repeated coquettishly.

Arundle was not amused, but felt ashamed. Judith didn’t know the Advisor yet, and Dorothea had had little to do with him up to now. That would become quite something. ‘You want to save the world once more, and that that...’ she stutted to herself.

After all the Advisoress seemed to be informed at last. She said, she knew Judith and from Dorothea she had heard only the best. “Yes, that is the course of the world. This is the way it goes. Who ever try by heart...”

The Advisoress was by no means less strenuous but was irritating with that hi-pitched voice and effeminate gesturing. The Advisor was always good for a surprise, Arundle thought and caused a happy smile on the lips of him – that is – better - of her. For a moment Arundle felt like

looking back into the old known face of his, but she must have been wrong.

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Judith talked off all her frustration that was heavily laden on her maltreated soul. She was ashamed of being the cause of what was going on in a way. But the Advisoress only shook her head gently, and repeated her sermon of the course of the world, and of false objections and lack of timidity.

“What’s happening is happening, and what must be, must be” she said just like that.

Arundle mocked and Billy-Joe gently knocked into her ribs to have her come down, when the Advisoress continued:

“The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.” (Mt 13, 31)

All of them looked bewildered at each other. Judith had expected to become criticised, and Dorothea as well, because she knew how easily she lost her temper, when things weren’t running the way they’re supposed to do. Things didn’t really run badly, though. Had there not been those damn side-effects – small ones at first, and neglectable though, which became bigger and bigger however.

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‘Through the light they are after all, that’s the main thing...’ Judith noticed herself thinking, and was ashamed again. The world was upside down and it was her fault, and all she kept on thinking was the well-being of her offspring.

Dorothea was familiar with the ‘Hundred-Enders’. What, if they also...? But the Advisoress waved her off smilingly:

“Snow from yesterday, dear sisters. Snow from yesterday, snow from yesterday...”

She didn’t allow you to speak up, or turned your words in your mouth and the thoughts in your mind.

“Yes, the grain of mustard – that’s it – ...confusing, isn’t it. That’s the way it is with parables. Think of something else now:

‘Look at those sky-stormers,
not the fat and ugly wormers.
Jug, who’s gonna stay,
this is things do turn their way.
Fare well for now, I’ve got to hurry.
Must fly and flatter, I am sorry.’”

While reciting the Advisoress faded like mist in the morning sun. There they sat on their energy cushions and their bums were grumbling. It was high time for the return trip back home.

It was done, as said, and there they stood all of a sudden amidst their island. Shining the ones, advice-less the others, each as they deserved.

Sulamith recovered first. She was in the critical age, when you started to questioning your parents.

“Mom, I think the Advisoress troubled you a lot”, she therefore said and looked uncertain, and somehow pig-headed, expecting her mother’s rebuke.

“Do you really think so? Did you understand so much more than I did? I won’t send my ‘Hundred-Enders’ away, but grant them a convenient eve of life, no matter whether this will take another hundred years. You can be sure about that...” She looked now challenging back, and felt on one level with her daughter, and only hoped that Sulamith would not give in.

But there the light was in between. She knew that, by her own experience. The light made you feel very strong for the moment. You thought to understand everything, because everything lay prostrate before you, all open and transparent.

How nice she was. So unbelievably young and blossoming – on her way to open. Only the wings of the butterfly you had to imagine, and she would have gone up and away, so light and ethereal as she was for a loving mother’s eye.

“Yes, my angel” she whispered with a merry smile, that had her face shine up so noticeable in the mirror of the unreal reflection, that even the others took notice thereof.

The twins became uneasy. Sitting quiet for so long was against their age. Besides, they wondered how strange they were looking: like glow-worms – a bit frightening as well.

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Verbal denial didn't suffice, after all. It was high time to regain influence on the course of the company. This was what her husband told her all the time, she began to realize. She was the holder of the SLOMES patent. She had built the prototype. Well, only by following the blueprint. A masterpiece not even the inventor himself had been able to fulfill, who didn't trust his own calculations, or lacked of patience.

The scrambled message of the Advisoress made her uneasy, like all the others who had taken part in the space mission, but she didn't yet really understand.

What would Peter think of it? Would she be able to reconstruct the message? What did it say? Well, she could ask her fellow travellers.

When she contacted Dorothea for that, she realized that each of them had understood something else. Arundle also just recalled a model for world history, that suited her soul.

None did know precisely what she had heard. They were only sure, that it had nothing to do with the butterfly-wings Judith meant to have seen for an instant. They were sure about that. So Judith was back at the beginning, before it came to "The Assembly of the Intergalactic Counsel of the Light" (as Arundle baptised their little meeting) – while all agreed just like that, when they assembled for their aftermath rehearsal.

Judith by then knew again what had to be done, no matter what the others understood or had heard. The negative Credit System had to become rejected on a world-wide scale, without any question. Because with the NCA (Negative Credit Account)-System the trouble had begun. The system had been helpful in the beginning, in order to improve the sale. But then things went out of control, and nobody was able to steer the processes. A means of distribution had become a man-eater, swallowing everything and everybody on its way. While she was in charge.

She had to begin right at the offspring. Because the origin was her own company, the SLOMES-Corporation.

11. The NCA-System

"Let's put it that way, the Advisoress conveyed us the impression, that there is something wrong with the system, as if we didn't quite

understand the parameters, don't you see it that way as well?" Arundle opened the little aftermath meeting. This time without interruption by noisy kids, Sulamith proclaimed with her just about ten years, presenting herself as a real woman.

The twins lay in bed and enlightened the night while sleeping, and made her mother to peep and check frequently. But they kept on sleeping sound and merry.

Judith had asked for the meeting. She had eventually wanted Peter to participate as well, but there had been objections, because he was undoubtedly a man. So was Billy-Joe, but he had to be accepted as a necessary evil – well, if he could be addressed an evil. Because he transported Pooty and the Magic Stone, and was the bearer of the bagging giant kangaroo, which relieved him in a way to a certain extend.

A strange anti-male mood had come up with the sudden appearance of the Advisoress. Well, probably not really anti-male but definitely not in favour of males. A mood like 'men are disturbing' or 'men overrun women', or 'women are different, when men are present' – each could find the suitable cause for herself.

Billy-Joe handed the Medicine Pouch over to Arundle, claiming workload. Zinfandor, he said, had asked him to exercise a little navigation, as he had registered as assistant navigator on board of the Last Bounty. "... on a trial basis for the next three months. Gives us a chance to be together, though"... Because Arundle still held the position of a communications officer on board.

Among the 'Hundred-Enders' no replacement could have been found yet. – And now, while the regular trips had become necessary, because the dwarves had discovered studying, and because the University of the dwarves was located a few floors under the regular university. Therefore, the Last Bounty went back and forth to Susamee's Island once a month. This took her almost two weeks with all that loading and disembarking and embarking here and there.

During the stays in the home-port Navigator Billy-Joe was of course allowed to take leave. This was one of the options he had claimed, while the other crew made the maids for the dwarves while ashore. Because the dwarves had declared the Last Bounty as their campus over here as long as they studied in the depth.

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Judith had asked for that meeting and would have liked to have Peter, her husband, with her. But that was impossible. Instead the Advisoress honoured them with her presence. And this time there might come something reasonable from her side.

After all, they were here on earth, that is to say on sound grounds and didn't flatter about on semi-silky wings, as might be the Advisoress' intention.

Judith noticed the hidden aggression and silent anger lingering all about, most likely because of Peter, but also because she intended too much. She was afraid of being rejected again instead of the necessary support she needed in order to oppose her clan. And so it was.

"Far too radical – Rome was also not built in a day" – a more stupid saying could hardly be found.

Judith's idea was simple but workable. She had made up her mind for that. Her idea was reduction – simple as that. Reduce the debts and relieve the debtors. Not a simple remission of debt but a remission in square. Because her remission was not just a simple remission but the reversion.

All NCAs (Negative Credit Accounts) should be altered from minus to plus. As far as the existential accounts were concerned. Which was of course the case with all real NCAs. The accounts of the rich wouldn't be reached that way – of course not – that was clear to Judith as well, she was part of this world. Who ever would try that, would cause the last great world war and the final and ultimate destruction.

Judith had the human beings in mind – all those stranded beings between hopelessness and desperation. To help them back to a perspective life, and made them find gladness and gait again instead of permanent grief and misery in slavery.

"Would such a remission of debts be not totally unjust? What about all those eager savers who afforded theirs SLOMES by savings and kept on working busy day by day, managing just about to get along. They hardly ever went on a holiday and couldn't afford any extras..."

"Well, well" Judith interrupted Dorothea's intervention. She had had that in mind too.

"For those we grant an annual distribution of what we have overcharged in life-contingents, without knowing what to do with it. How else did those dubious time-sharing-companies start off in the first place? Only because we big companies didn't know what to do with our surplus.

‘We were happy to find someone who took over the surplus. And we received bionic equivalents in return. A win-win situation on the account of the helpless and the poor – what a shame. We executed the mentality of the money-sharks. It can’t go on like that. This was not meant by the change of paradigms. This is what my family has to realize, once and for all. We stand for the new time – so let’s really stand for it...’

There she stood, with glittering eyes and extended arms. Her prophetic eye shone with visionary power. Before all, the Advisoress applauded that the wooden desk echoed.

“...but we do not want to ruin the honourable company. For that it is far too dear and precious to us, isn’t it?” she added when the applause - which had been taken up by the others - faded.

“Everything has to be recalculated, while the question of justice isn’t yet settled either, but otherwise – Brava, Brava, Brava – three cheers, my dear, to put it your way. We can see great things on your pace to future...”

And off she went, as if she had seen and heard enough, and didn’t want to commit herself into affairs under liberty’s command. There were more than enough limitations in the world already.

Dorothea twinkled committingly at Judith, when the latter came back to her mind. She had gazed after the Advisoress in an air of confusion, stunned as she was.

“Calculations have become my passion” Dorothea stated “In earlier times I hated this stuff, but nowadays with all those computers, its so easy now.”

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Judith and Dorothea reviewed the balance-sheets of the previous years. And when they noticed that this was not enough, they took a representative average from the analysis of probability, that was annually achieved in order to project the expectations.

They could take the figures over ten, then even over twenty, in order to get as closely to reality as possible.

So they were feeding the computer and had it calculate. They reversed the prefix of the NCAs, as they had agreed upon, and fell into a huge minus. A fact they could have found out without computer as well. All depended on the proper accounts to be considered. That was the major problem.

They tried for a while, this way or another until they came about some sensible figures, Judith could present to her family. However, both women weren't happy, yet. Dorothea feared that they had overlooked something of great importance and Judith still thought their proceedings weren't radical enough.

While, in fact, they hadn't yet moved in reality up to now. They had only analyzed facts, and intended only to act accordingly.

They calculated and calculated back and forth. With a remission of debt every ten years, they could probably manage. That was all they could do. If they proceeded like that, they wouldn't gain any surplus any more, that had to be thrown on the market. A deeply immoral way, Judith reckoned, who was most embarrassed as the concerned originator.

"How can you dare to sell the human working time behind the backs of human beings? That mustn't be done, where does this lead us?"

Dorothea fully agreed and saw a point, where she could step in. But for now they tried to find out together how to clear their calculations and have them become sound. Which wasn't easy at all.

"We've got to ascertain that this can't go on. People must be asked, before their working time is sold. Because this is nothing but a modern form of slave trade. How can that be in a civilized world, that human working time is peddled and shoved about like cattle in the slaughterhouse? With each and every contingent is a human life connected, and the fate of a human being is decided. Someone gets caught and his life is sold on, and gets to a soul-peddler or a time merchant. Another might be lucky because he is allowed to work for the SLOMES corporation, and may even hope to be taken over, if he wants, after his debt is settled, and would go on – probably on his own will."

"Freedom against security – among the Hundred-Enders you may find many who'd have given up the idea of freedom for a piece of security, and would give their last bits and pieces... – It's a cruel and brutal world out there..."

Judith was shocked. What Dorothea revealed had been out of her horizon.

"...and you think we get along with that?" she asked somewhat rhetorical.

"If we do such debt-liquidations every ten years, and transform the accounts, then the SLOMES corporation needn't sell any contingents, but can utilize all surplus working time in their own facilities. That would

mean the end of all time-share-contractors. They would fade away in the long run, if no allotments would be thrown on the market, do I see that right?"

Dorothea nodded. "If my computer doesn't fail. But that you all can check internally. I do rely on the data you gave me, and your figures are supposed to be rather actual. Of course, I didn't consider the volunteers. They would come in addition to what's in the pot. And there are quite a few who go on after the plight with a regular contract."

"Yes, well, the SLOMES corporation is a social employer, that's for sure. 'Same wages for same work' is their oldfashioned slogan, which stems from the time of the trade union movement in the early 20th century. These days it's meant that all work is handled equally, whether voluntarily achieved or otherwise accomplished."

"And I see what's going on, on the worldwide market. We've got to go somewhere with our wealth. Each month shares in profits for our book and our patents are floating. I'm trying to get into one of those time-share contractors, to take over and then to liquidate them right away, or transform into agencies for voluntary work. That seems to be a good chance to spread about some confidence and vital spirit. Because those Hundred-Enders are so devastated and do not dare to tackle anything, while they aren't yet hardly over fifty, which is no age these days. Look at me. When I tell you, how old I am, you wouldn't believe it, anyway."

Dorothea enjoyed fiddling coquettishly about with her age. She still couldn't refrain from doing so. Judith knew of course, how phenomenally young Dorothea looked. She would surely go on for a long time to do so, because she invested a lot of time and energy, as well as the assistance of the surgeons. What the SLOMES couldn't achieve alone, she attended daily quite some time, would be solved on other ways and by other means.

Happiness was after all, a kind of fountain of youth.

If Sulamith was today about ten years old, and Dorothea delivered her in her late forties, then she was – yes – then she was indeed not all that young anymore.

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"...and we wouldn't write red figures, then?" Judith gasped inaudible, she shouldn't show, of course. After all she had to convince everybody in and out of the company and family, which was unfortunately almost the

same. Her position was a mighty one, but not all-mighty. That wouldn't work in such a big company.

Instead of giving a straight answer, she referred to the calculations of her company-staff and to the verifications of an independent analyst, who had come to similar results. "Besides, I do of course, rely on my own calculations, and they are clear and definite. If we go on as we discussed, then this will mean the end to that scandalous slave-trader mentality. Who are we, after all? What are we doing? We cannot seriously deal with human lives and fates, as if they were spare-parts. And that means – we cannot lose anything, but win everything.

Behind our backs ugly procedures sneaked in. I do not assume this was anyone's intention. However, it worked out this way. And now we have to do everything possible to stop such, and take care that never ever happens again, what has been done to human beings. Our image as a company suffers a lot. We cannot yet overlook the damage done in the long run. We are the SLOMES-corporation – the motor of the future – we promise a happy future. Long life, happiness and harmony inside and outside, with the whole world..."

Judith was standing with extended arms again, and shining eyes. But this time her audience was the shareholder assembly, who had come together for that extraordinary meeting, she had asked for.

Dr Judith Kornblum-Adams was already a legend while still alive, and that even more so, because of her domicile in the Southern Pacific, where she dwelled and researched, refraining the outer world and unreachable for anybody, the least the press, who took their chance now by shooting pictures, which might make a fortune on the market. Such an opportunity wouldn't come again so soon.

12. Tika's Marriage

With all that hustle back and forth Susamee's Island wasn't the quiet place any more, it used to be. Those concerts in the moonshine became real Open Air Festivals and attracted thousands of visitors. Especially in

the summer-nights, when the self induced horse-headed violin whimpered extraordinarily intense.

Susamee tuned then in, after the phoenix had erected back up from the ashes of the hearth fire where he had himself burnt up – as was the way things were set in a phoenix’s life.

Not only the dwarves, but the Conversiors were affected by the old lady named Last Bounty and were looking forward each month for that voyage over to Susamee’s Island. This was why the Last Bounty was underway half a month, all in all. Sometimes she rode at anchor, because Susamee’s Island had no proper port yet. In the uncertain and steep ground, this was kind of dangerous, especially when the sea was rough.

This was why the Island’s Council decided with agreement of Susamee, of course, to have a port built near the landing strip of the Helicopter. The water was deep enough there, but not too deep, so that the pillars, basing the pier, found solid grounds. Thus it became a rather attractive set up.

The Last Bounty came for a trial mooring, and a little improvement had to be fixed, because the ship was a little longer then estimated, and there had to be some space back and forth for maneuvering.

Otherwise the pier was perfect. The only disadvantage was, that the way to the underground entrance lay on the other side of the island, which meant an exhaustive foot-march for the dwarves. With their short legs they weren’t fit for such kind of convey. This was why a plastered road was built, where goat-driven chaises could be traveling as required.

One attempt attracted the next.

While it became quiet again on the front side, where the Shamaness and her disciples were dwelling. And even in the full moon you had to enter the inner island for a couple of hundred yards, in order to become involved into the turmoil.

Only the tender sobbing of the self-induced horse-headed violin could sometimes be heard, when this the westerly winds allowed. But that was no nuisance, quite the opposite.

This was why all were happy, and the dwarves could make up their minds one way or the other, and needn’t bother whether they disturbed anyone.

You couldn’t, of course, expect such considerations from the Conversiors. Because they didn’t know better and follwed their nature, and

because it happened the same with the originating dwellers, they didn't mind.

Only Will Wiesle, the lonesome guardian, remained, and became kind of anxious, all alone, with no real human being on the island. Therefore the Last Bounty was a relief for him, with all those characters on board.

Because she lay on the other side of the island. He also moved there as soon as the full moon was coming up. He built a solid hut, that became a kind of arrival and departure lounge for the travelers, as well.

There was always something to bother and claim, and when it was the weather, which Watchman Will Wiesle couldn't influence- - how could he?

Sometimes he regretted that he was not traveling any more as a deckhand on board of the Last Bounty, as he used to in the earlier days, while Hundred-Enders procured all vacancies now. Thus the provisional crew became replaced.

Will had enough to do anyway. He still carried his lot as a submariner on the Nautilus. He had his position there, which no Hundred-Ender could take away from him. What ever he decided, it would be his own decision anyway. He certainly didn't want to leave the scene on Susamee's Island all up to old Hans Henny Henne, who was wooing for Susamee just as bad as he did. The two men were both hopelessly addicted to that fading beauty. And so, the forced separations hurt, and affirmed his verdict to pay off officially.

Captain Leblanc regretted Will's decision very much and tried to attract him with all kinds of promises. However, the trips of the Last Bounty turned out to be too frequent - the traffic became just too heavy, and ascertained Will Wiesly that he had come to the appropriate decision.

And so it was definitely in the eyes of Susamee, who was very fond of his wooing, because Hans Henny Henne could become very strenuous, especially when he mixed up his bionic wirings in the brain, and did and talked a lot of nonsense as a consequence. Then she was all too happy to see him move on for his lectures, or in order to claim his doctorate of honour, over there, on the University-Island. After all, he was the original inventor of the SLOMES.

His absence was eagerly exploited by Will Wiesly, who wooed heftily for his adored grace. He seemingly did a good job, because his beloved let him carry on. Nobody is ever too old for love.

In his case, Susamee knew after all, that everything was genuine – well, almost everything, as things had changed in his case as well. New teeth he had already and next he would get a new liver. The organ was just being bred out of stable cells he had passed on in his youth. The liver would cost him some 200 credits. So he thought, but in fact the real costs would be 2000. However Dorothea skipped a zero in his favour. He had only to apply for it and could be almost sure that the boss would decide in his favour.

Whenever possible, then Tibor spent his time with Tika. And Tika in reverse, liked Tibor very much in return. While she was increasingly confused to a certain extent about that self-induced horse-headed violin of his. Something had gone astray, so it seemed.

Secretly she moaned about the times when a yellow huge dingo had been after her. However, it could as well be the unexpected fame, Tibor was gaining with his violin. After all, his violin became the door opener for a teaching position over there on University-Island.

Tika still sailed in her master's shade, so to speak, and that wouldn't change so soon. She didn't feel frustrated, quite the opposite. She felt comfortable and wouldn't have known where to look, in case a band of eager dwarves would have looked at her in expectation, or a mixed group had been sitting opposite.

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Susamee loved dwarves for being misfits. But also because they were related to her own nature. The age had covered a lot on her side. But she knew the fire of impatience, she could still feel burning inside.

And perhaps it was just that fire, that was eating Tika up now, because she didn't want to let it be. Tika wasn't fabricated so easily. However that was known only by Tibor meanwhile, who couldn't care less, so he hoped. He as well doubted his possibilities on this behalf and hoped for Susamee to tune Tika back by maternal passion.

So it happened, that the couple, who so heartily longed to be together, met only for a week or so each month. The rest of the time they went their separate ways, resulting from the duties they were obliged to.

Susamee could become rather impatient, when being kept waiting. Well, she did wait for one or two hours, but you shouldn't forget about her for good.

Although Tibor was not the favourite disciple of his mistress, he very successfully transformed his meager knowledge, and passed on his shamanian wisdom at the Island-University with one major advantage: He still held in petto his magic violin, which assured him the attention of the audience. Meanwhile he managed to play it even unconverted rather perfectly. Besides, he had a quick tongue and was not timid at all. He presented himself self-assured but in no way arrogantly. Little weaknesses of his, as there certainly were, he over-played by producing the green whirl of the Sublimations, if he found a gifted student amongst his audience. (He primarily attracted the female spectators, which caused Tika to wonder and worry not the least.)

Under such circumstances, what could become out of their relationship, the young woman asked herself, and that she also asked Tibor, who didn't know any answer. Best would perhaps be, if things remained as they were, was his dull suggestion.

"As if this would be so easy" Tika complaint, because she knew something she had to come about with, before she could talk it over.

In her mind she was hearing the cries of excitement, no matter whom she contacted. Any objective consideration of all facts and circumstances was in nobody's range, so it seemed. As a matter of fact, she had made up her mind anyway. Still, she would have preferred to have Tibor come about it on his own.

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Watchman Will Wiesly got his new liver first. He blossomed. The yellow sting in his face faded. "...needn't give up heavy drinking" he was told in hospital. "Well, perhaps a little more moderate..." the surgeon suggested after the operation, which had caused no problems. Therefore, Wiesly was very glad.

The wildest times lay behind him for almost a decade now. It had been his boss, who saved him then. You couldn't call it otherwise, what she did for him. Without her he would have passed away. To be more precise the devil would have caught him, because he would have also been a victim of those devilish Brothers of Infernalía.

**

Tika was expecting a baby. This was a great joy. Billy-Joe became uncle and Arundle some kind of aunt (they weren't married yet.) Arundle feared the martial rituals generally connected with the elementary events in life as was common amongst the tribe-members of Billy-Joe's acquaintance. She mistrusted Billy-Joe in this, who of course claimed to be miles away from such primordial customs. This he certainly was in his clear mind, but emotionally he wasn't free at all, but still stuck deep inside. She was almost sure that she knew him better, then he himself.

Arundle was devoted to physical completeness. She didn't even have holes for ear-rings. This was one of the rare things she was thankful for to her mother. Because mother had been rigorously against such things as tattoos, and piercing, in fact against permanent marks of any kind.

Thus, there were worlds clashing. And when Billy-Joe looked at Arundle's snow-white skin, he did understand. Ritual scars would have been some kind of sacrilege, she had to be protected against under all circumstances.

In his world something was always written on people's bodies, for what reason ever. Some things were of deeper sense, but most neither the marked individuals nor the performers of the marking understood, what was going on. Things just happened, because they had been done always this way. And were part of life, just like the air people were breathing and the enjoyment or the suffering, humans had to endure.

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In order to form a solid basis for their offspring, Susamee decided to have her two disciples married the proper way. And because she didn't want to offend any holy feelings, she informed herself about the rituals which were common where her disciples came from.

In fact, they came from very different parts of the world, that is, in fact from wholly different worlds without any connection what so ever.

In order to simplify things a bit, Susamee invited the old Shaman from the Inner Mongolia, who had been once here for a very unthankful occupation. She assumed him best to have an objective view, after all she

had learnt about him from Tibor. To have Tibor's father come over here didn't work. Definitely not the conventional way. And another one he was not allowed to take since he was grounded by the communist idea.

Other family members, on the other hand, were not allowed to do such trip without the head of the family. And a proper visum for Australia would have been out of range anyway.

As Tika had no proper relatives, not even a foster-family like Billy-Joe, things seemed to be fairly split. On the island there was family enough. In fact a very colorful one, however without ties of blood. But that didn't hinder love – just opposite.

So the two had a remarkable marriage, in which most guests could mirror themselves, because there was a bit of everything. After all, marriage-rituals aren't all that different anywhere in the world. While the robes, which were worn, conveyed a different impression, though.

As it was hot during the southern summer, the proper dressing was of minor importance. While nutrition caused slight irritations. But after the long stay in the School of Inbetween for almost all of them, they were accustomed to a general tolerance in this respect.

Still, clear offences against taboos, were of course, intolerable. So the one or other favourite had to be avoided, as far as reactions were known, or could be expected.

The marriage ritual was thus performed. In order to express their happiness, the wedded pair lifted up on the level of the Mongolian Shaman, who was not allowed to touch the ground, especially not the strange ground over here.

This then looked rather grateful, and was uplifting in the sense of the word, when the couple became wedded aloft and the Shaman spoke his strange sermon, not even Tibor understood.

Gladdest of all was Susamee. Because she would become now some kind of grandmother. While she had no children of her own, since she made this unforgivable mistake while still young. So she was all happy that Tika was not going to make the same mistake, but decided for life.

The wedding took place in the hotel named "The Hub of the World" which was located between the Isle of Wisdom-tooth and the University Island. There was a lot of space now, and the atmosphere was still somewhat stimulating as well.

The Last Bounty was lying at the pier and had flags and lights fitted all over the tops, which gave her a picturesque and very impressive appeal.

The ship housed a band of dwarves, sent over here for the wedding ceremonies.

Unfortunately the period of the full moon was not available for obvious reasons. This was why the party had to do without the stimulating play of the self-induced horse-headed violin. But a recording of the last great concert was softly playing in the background, which was of course, not the same, and gave only a weak impression of what was real. Stones wouldn't start sobbing – in fact, there were none available on the dry land.

While the party went on long after nightfall, a sudden and unexpected danger occurred. The drunken dwarves fell into the water and had to be rescued. Lucky enough the merfolk took care and threw the little ones back ashore as soon as they captured them. You could be almost sure that they didn't overlook anyone. Still it was some kind of excitement whenever a half-drowned was pushed back ashore. Nobody had reckoned that while planning.

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All had come. His old Dean Moschus Mogoleya had even tears in his eyes during the wedding ceremony. Although he pretended to suffer from some kind of allergic irritation.

Zinfandor, all dressed in navy-blue with four Captain's stripes on the sleeves, acted like a chevalier of the old days, what Penelope M'gamba enjoyed very much, who stayed close to him at his side, and didn't let go.

In fact all had come – down from the rail of the Last Bounty Stan kept on waving whenever someone looked up at him. He was also dressed in his neat new uniform and waved his cap, so he needn't have to wear it. He hadn't yet become acquainted with the stiff thing. He was used to his soft woolen cap.

Stan never left the ship or his engine for long alone, while for this night he dared to leave the engine-room for a little while.

Other 'Hundred-Enders' stood near by at the rail and watched the ongoing party ashore. Feasts of such kind were beyond their imagination, and made them feel intimidated and uneasy.

The collars of the midshipmen looked somewhat strange around their old necks and faces. But such was the order of the sea, ever since, and had to be followed on such occasions.

Dorothea had been able to purchase a large amount of very reasonable seamen's gear and cared now that it was worn on occasions of this kind.

Boatswain and carpenter were also clad in neat suits. The only difference was that they wore white trousers and had only small angles on the lower sleeve. So they were easily spotted.

Even the Stewart, who was normally kind of sloppy, had a clean white jacket on. He cared for the drinks, whenever glasses were empty.

When the music stopped at land the boatswain got his harmonica ready and the carpenter sang one shanty after the other. And when they came to a genuine reel, the deckhands hooked up and jumped like youngsters in a circle, howling and hissing the more they got drunk and time went by.

Down on the major pontoon, where the dance floor had been installed (Dorothea had established) – circles of young ones were built who did alike the seamen. If they didn't even rise from the ground when Tibor or his dean Moschus Mogoleya assisted, or other fresh blood joint. While their abilities were limited. The good old times of Patagonia, Tuzla and the Khan brothers were definitely over and gone.

Sandor didn't even manage to come to his brother's wedding. He was now Chieftain and first Khan of the Golden Cohort (which was rather a title of honour, but a military rank, as it used to be.)

While he could have accompanied the Shaman, what he indeed had intended, when something unexpected happened. The Shaman rejected him. He didn't want him to come along on the journey, but told him not why.

**

For huge green whirls you looked in vain. A faint green flicker here and there, was all. This didn't hinder the joy of dance, not for the grounded in their majority. There were the unmusical individuals like Hans Henny Henne who stood on each others feet as soon as they got close to dancing. Most likely the traumata from the early youth functioned that way, and now it was far too late to overcome. All the more so in case of Hans Henny Henne, the aged inventor of the SLOMES.

Strange enough how talents became bedded. The one is overthrown by melodies. He hears spherical tunes all over and needs to grab only into

the emptiness to catch for them. The other sees orders of little signs without effort. All he needs to do is write them down and try the outcome.

Of this kind was Hans Henny Henne, who couldn't see how far his talents moved him away from Susamee. Because, the further it might be, the deeper would the satisfaction become, when they met on the reverse side of reality. He also thought in circles and whirls. This was why Susamee couldn't slip away. Yes, there were common grounds.

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After all, they were here in the School of Inbetween, where alcohol was strictly prohibited. Nothing had changed in this respect since the early days. And all stuck to it, also the teachers – especially they, because they had to act as shining examples. So there were no secrecies. And because they liked their school and because they were upright people, they didn't let things go, but took great care.

Since the days of the 'Hotel to the Hub of the World' a loophole had opened. Teachers needn't fly all the way the Sydney in order to hit the ball. They could have a decent weekend in the hotel and could leave the school behind. Of course, you shouldn't publish, where they went.

Not all had the chances of Adrian Humperdijk. In fact, none – none of the old teachers, nevertheless. Therefore they took their chance. As a matter of fact the whole atmosphere was more relaxed, you could almost say freer since the extensions and the many reconstructions. Nobody had to flee from the claustrophobic narrowness of the islands to the mainland into the anonymity of the city.

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The rituals of this wedding were kind of tricky. Tika remembered a custom after the church, when the bride had to turn around to look back and threw her bunch of flowers backwards. One of the present young women tried to catch it, to become the next bride.

Tika found this custom so cute that she dearly wished to celebrate it, and that was what she did. When the whole party met the next morning by 10 o'clock in the little University chapel for the ceremony.

To make it short, it was Arundle who fetched the bunch of flowers – believe it or not. Was it because Tika purposely threw it in her direction,

and had she even eyes on the back of her head, as the Shamaness, she actually was? Who knows.

13. Honeymoon trip on the Last Bounty

Dorothea didn't give up, and finally she found proper seamen amongst the 'Hundred-Enders' – one real Navigator with the proper papers and two Midshipmen. Fate had handled them rough.

The pay-role filled nevertheless. And this was high time, because the trips to Susamee's Island became almost some sort of ferry service.

Judith managed to negotiate a real genuine liquidation of debts. However reversing the prefix seemed out of reach to the Board of Representatives of the Company.

This wouldn't be fair to all those brave orderly debtors, who paid their lot, credit by credit. Judith had to admit, the more so, as she knew from the Advisoress, that she played on the wrong grounds with her ideas. Nevertheless she asked herself, and so did the others in 'the Council of Menora' (as the ladies' circle was named for reasons to be explained soon), what the proper grounds would be like. And what the true whereabouts of such dubious remarks of the Advisoress would be.

Dorothea still went on with diminishing those time-share companies she had got hold of. Besides were there governmental initiatives on the way to wholly forbid such practices by law. And to stop the commerce with NCAs. While the UNO blamed the common NCA practice as violations of Human Rights. Failed however in the committee by the Veto of the US Representatives.

“What can you expect of a state who based its wealth on the bones of slaves” Arundle bitterly remarked. – The little group of women still used to meet more or less regularly. Their themes hadn't yet settled. Meanwhile the Advisoress managed to make herself a little clearer. Repeatedly she pointed out on the wonders of metamorphosis, that could be seen every spring to everybody's eyes, when all kinds of caterpillars – after a period of pupation – emerged as butterflies. With this image before the eyes you should get on the road you took. “It can't be of real help to extend the state of the caterpillar existence unnecessarily” the Advisoress pointed out.

Judith still wasn't sure whether she understood her rightly. Definitely not before she had had a word with Hans Henny Henne in this matter, who agreed with this allegory right away, when he learnt of it, because he felt reminded of his friend Anonymous, who now dwelled on under the impression that he himself had also passed through such a state. He pointed vaguely upwards, when he said that.

"Does that mean, we are on the wrong trail, when we focus further on the extension of the span of life?" Dorothea asked, who was in full agreement with the extended youth, especially with her own. "Imagine what we all overcame already" she said, "and what we still can overcome" she continued, thinking of her husband, dear old Scholasticus Slyboots, and what he carried with him in his brain. "Would be a pity if this was all in vain" she said and snipped with her fingers to show what she meant.

"There are certainly good reasons for a long life. Still, we have to ask ourselves whether this could be our final aim. Whether the wish for eternity doesn't bring other dimensions into the game, and a fulfillment of a wholly different kind." The Advisoress objected, who spoke very clearly this time.

"To understand the value of life-span doesn't mean necessarily that the time is the measure for everything" – said the Advisoress when she prepared for take-off, which she did the same way as every time by just dissolving.

"Give my dearest regards to my so maturely ripened bloke Anonymous, old hen", Hans Henny Henne disrespectfully boasted behind her. He wasn't sure whether she had heard him. And he was not in full agreement with what she had just left behind, to confuse the women and make them think.

Judith had pleaded for him to allow him in the women's circle - "just for once" as she pointed out. She thought him to be of great value, no matter of his rude manners. Besides, had he come for the wedding, and all that...

They might get further with him. Because somehow they felt lame and stuck in their intentions.

Again a feeling of frustration spread, regardless of the fact that the one or other idea had caught up with them, while they still couldn't see in what shape the consequences might emerge.

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Arundle didn't care for the flowers. She was the most surprised when she held the bunch in her hands all of a sudden. Well, she must have grabbed for it. She was definitely not superstitious, but once in a while she made an exception of the rule, and today obviously was such a day. The whole day was exceptional and so had been the day before.

Billy-Joe was now a real man, you couldn't doubt that, no matter how she treated him, and what he was willing to stand, because he loved her. Had she not known such fact, Tibor's and Tika's wedding would have shown her at last. What their little dear friend showed them, arose fancies of very different kinds – with both of them. For the first time Billy-Joe didn't suppress such, but committed to his deepest wishes of his heart.

Yes, he longed for a common child with her, more than everything else of the world. How he now envied his little sister, who showed them, what had to be done. He was convinced that she did the right thing.

With the idea of a child Arundle could live, but not with the wedding-hullabaloo, as she was just experiencing. No Sir, this was not her cup of tea, for sure not.

She didn't yet realize that a wedding was a feast for all the others. Quite similar to funerals and baptisms. Those primarily affected perceived little or no advantage. But for relatives and friends or acquaintances this was a most welcome opportunity to meet and exchange memories, and have old connections revived.

On the other hand it was Arundle's conviction that the raising up of children was the matter of both parents. This was why she mused inside and checked her femininity, whether such an opportunity would ever come again, where everything seemed to fit, whether she should let it pass, without taking advantage, right away, here and now.

So she booked a roundtrip to the South-sea-Islands, as was offered in a brochure she ordered from the Agency in Sydney. She booked the luxurious wedding suite for herself and for Billy-Joe. She did that so early, that she still had two months to go, and to think about her decision. While the suite as such was traitorously enough.

She was sure, that Billy-Joe would like it. And they wouldn't be all alone, because Penelope would join them in any case. This romantic journey on the traces of the old Bounty, they intended, she wouldn't let pass by unused.

When she thought about it, Arundle mused, they could become wedded by the Captain, who was allowed to do so after the old Law of the Sea.

Now she had only to find a good opportunity to invite Billy-Joe harmlessly. And while she was thinking of that, she could perhaps also invite her friends of the old childhood-days, if things didn't turn out to become too intimidating, as they probably didn't have any suitable acquaintance, but that could be found out.

So she extended her antennas in various directions, and ended up with a considerable little wedding-party. She booked the whole upper deck of twenty First Class Cabins on board of the Last Bounty.

Billy-Joe was all too happy to agree, when she finally made her proposals. The date as such was a bit of a problem, but finally he managed, as he should have done the trip as Navigator. While the new Second Navigator (one of the Hundred-Enders, lately registered) got the chance to prove his abilities.

Tika and Tibor couldn't join because of the baby. But Flory and Cory were all too happy and so was Mrs. Waldschmitt, who didn't know yet of the secret reason of her daughter. For her it was just one of these trips, her daughter arranged every year.

"I hope, your 'savage' will join us again?" She asked with a grin on the phone, when Arundle invited her, and Billy-Joe friendly waved in the background. They were phoning as usual via Internet and Camcorder.

Arundle was anxious to learn what mother would say when she learnt that he was destined to become the father of her baby. Most likely a storm about the cultural differences would break loose. That a marriage alone was difficult enough, but would be impossible under such weighty conditions. 'As if Arundle didn't have considered all that on her own, and surely, would Billy-Joe do the same on his behalf. Often enough they had talked about the differences, but of course, about the similarities as well. And these couldn't be talked away, after all.

The best would be not to overdo with the hurdles, and make no affair out of things. Arundle was no friend of insolvability nor of burnt in holes or in irremovable tattoos. Billy-Joe did agree, as far as she was concerned. Arundle's perfect skin should under no circumstances be hurt.

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There were so many positive replies on her invitation, that Arundle had their little crusade altered. Now the whole ship became chartered, and thus she got hold of the passenger registration list. This was no public journey any more, but an exclusive group tour.

The crew didn't mind. Quite the opposite, the less backpackers the better, as it would mean less trouble. The once established route however should be followed, as per Captain Leblanc.

"Well, well, Pitcairn will be on our way, for sure. What do you think, Billy-Joe? Is that a four weeks cruise?"

Billy-Joe felt snowed under – "you better ask your Navigator, Mr. Ishmael, or your second mate, now that you finally got him. Then, nothing could go wrong."

The island of the mutineers of the old Bounty was Arundle's favourite aim.

When Arundle checked her account, she started wondering. Instead of a remarkable negative booking, a sound amount had been credited to her life-time record.

"Might have to do with Judith's revolution, I'd daresay" Dorothea explained, when being asked. But of course, she had her fingers involved. A rumour had come to her ears, and that was why she couldn't do otherwise.

Accounting was not Arundle's stronghold. She let things go and took things as they came. Still, she was wondering a little.

The day of departure came nearer. Mrs. Waldschmitt gave notice from Sydney and wanted to be picked up there. Florinna and Corinia returned punctually as usual. The one from Egypt and the other from the depth of the ocean, were it is deepest.

The Slyboots confirmed their commitment and so did the Adams family. Nobody forgot about the date. All were prepared and ready to go, but didn't dare to announce things too loudly in order not to stir up and away the shy game.

The men twinkled at Billy-Joe in a secret manner, and the women smiled at Arundle with their most attractive smiles, whenever they met.

Somewhat strange it was. Much like in "Rosemary's baby" Florinna and Corinia agreed. They hoped however that Arundle wouldn't realize,

because then she would have closed up, for sure, and might even have the whole thing last minute cancelled.

Finally Penelope got the wedding-suite to have Zinfandor pamper her at best.

There was space enough, anyway.

Mrs. Waldschmitt keen on hearing, she always was, when Arundle was concerned. This wouldn't become just one of these cruises, no Sir...

So she occupied her luxurious cabin unscrupulously and enjoyed the comfort of space, she hadn't to share with anyone. Which was the most disgusting fact on cruises for single dames. Before she did that, she'd even prefer the mass accommodation between decks.

Why was there no solution for such a problem on a reasonable basis? You could of course book for two, when you really cared. You might even get a sound reduction for the food that wasn't eaten by the second person and for the service not used.

Well, such were the worries of a widow. Because this was the state she saw her in. The late escapees of her passed away husband she just ignored and had cancelled out of her life. It was better that way, and brought peace to her soul. Peace she dearly needed after all the turmoil. And best was after all, that she had been right in the long run. That he had been much better, than she had realized and experienced while he had been alive.

"When Arundle would become happy, then everything is alright with me", she whispered into her pillow and fell asleep right away as if she had been in Abraham's lap in her cosy soft berth. While the ship still lay ashore, savely moored.

This was alright with Mrs. Waldschmitt. Why staying two night ashore and move again? This way she had to unpack only once.

It turned out to be almost one whole week, because outside a typhoon passed by. Uncommon for the time of the year. The Captain wanted to have her pass. Mrs. Waldschmitt had some spare time before the return-flight. To be on the save side she could always change the booking.

Then the journey finally commenced. The boatswain played on his harmonica for the farewell, and the carpenter sang at best he could instead of caring for the gangway, which was made of wood and would therefore be in his responsibility.

The deckhands didn't hope on him. They knew what had to be done, and didn't mind.

The Last Bounty headed sharply East and had the Newsealandish coast in sight on starboard. The old lady made good speed, some fourteen knots with the wind from astern. Here, near the shore the swell was less hefty. The bad weather had moved on. Still, the Last Bounty kept rolling uncomfortably, and the first passengers were hanging green-faced over the railing. So the Captain altered the course a little and the rolling became less. Instead, the Last Bounty pushed her nose now into the mighty waves. A lessening of the speed did solve this new problem for a while. But then showers of foam came down on the passengers. So the Captain ordered them under deck and had them put on life-jackets.

All in all not an ideal start for the cruise. At least the old sea-lords stood steadfast. The big Captain's dinner had to be postponed for the time being and was delayed to a further date. The caboose remained cold – except for a pot of steaming hot punch. Who ever felt like it, got a bite to eat and a portion of the liquid with the Steward in the pantry, where you could find a quiet and dry seat along the two tables.

Not many of the passengers were found there. But the crew-members off duty helped themselves all the better. The boatswain fetched his harmonica and the carpenter accompanied him with some fancy shanties.

Arundle enjoyed the initiative, as the fuss about her person strained her nerves. Now, everybody had to care for himself.

“Come on, Billy-Joe, lets listen what's going on outside”, she said and made a vague gesture around. They entered the bridge, bade for permission to enter the operators booth, which was indeed devastated. The second mate was supposed to sit there, but he enjoyed himself with the crew.

“Well, well” Arundle thought and looked at Billy-Joe in a meaningful air.

Meanwhile Hans Henny Henne mixed with the crew. He wouldn't get seasick. But how did he get on board in the first place? Judith had invited him. “You don't mind, do you?”

Billy-Joe just shook his head. It was too late anyway. So he didn't utter objections, as Hans Henny Henne stood near-by. Might be not the worst idea anyway, Arundle thought. Her mother would find him an interesting mate at dinners, with an inexhaustible theme, her passed away former husband, of whom Hans Henny Henne had to report astounding things.

Outside in the sea around a lot was going on. A couple of faint calls further away, and far out of their reach bade for help. And a yacht nearby asked for rescue assistance as well. So Billy-Joe checked the position and informed the Captain to alter the course and run for help, which Captain Leblanc did right away. The Last Bounty headed straight towards the site of the emergency.

In such a bad weather the operator's booth shouldn't be left unmanned. This was almost criminal negligence. Only fishermen or yachts dared to do so, who then were the ones who needed help first.

Arundle tried to contact the yacht in emergency but didn't get an answer. Most likely the automatic emergency-sender had been started without human assistance and was now sending the SOS signals.

The boat in need couldn't be far away by now. The Last Bounty headed with full speed towards the marked position. The bow was manned with an outlook as well as both sides of the bridge. The sight wasn't all that poor, if the foam hadn't come over in large gushes.

Saving people in this rough sea wouldn't be easy. But first the boat had to be found. Temperature-wise the chances were not all that bad to survive for some time in the water.

Something white flashed on starboard by two o'clock, distance about one hundred yards.

"Lifeboat ready for action" the Captain ordered, while the crew was on deck already, with life-jackets on and spare ones at hand, as foreseen by the rescue-plan. The lifeboat came down on starboard orderly, and headed towards the rump of the yacht, rolling upside down in the wild sea. Two dark bodies were noticed and taken over immediately. The rescue operation was perfectly executed. Even the difficult task of being taken back over by the davits was done fine, and before the deckhands got aware, the boat resettled in the fittings on the boat-deck of the Last Bounty.

The two rescued people were covered in blankets and brought to the sick-bay, where they were sorrowly examined by Mr. Ishmael, the 1st Officer. They were alright so far except exhaustion and under-temperature, which was solved by a glass of hot grog, which made them revive right away.

Arundle reported the merry rescue operation to the coastguard headquarters, in order to inform other helpers, that no action was further required.

“Yacht Susanna, manned by two, rescued before the Newsealandish coast at Zero One Zero Two EAT, and taken over on board of MS Last Bounty heading for the South Sea.” – What a night!

14. The Monster Wave

The rescued men were taken over the next morning by the Newsealandish coastguard between the Northern and the Southern Island. The Captain of the Coastguard-boat praised the crew of the Last Bounty for an “efficient, fast and very successful action.”

“If he had known” Arundle wondered. The yacht had been detected by mere accident. Had she not follow her impulse to check what was going on outside on the waves. Who knows whether they had survived at all.

Arundle’s complaint was noticed by the Captain and passed on to the 2nd Officer, Mr. Melford, who promised to be more careful in future. And the ship-owner promised from her side to check for a final and valid replacement, in order to fill this vital gap on the payroll. Despite the fact that the law didn’t enforce a Communications Officer for ships of that specification, as long as there were no passengers involved.

The Last Bounty hardly met the size, nor the definition, as far as the tonnage was concerned. On the other hand there was no official limitation of the operational boundaries. So a regular Communications Officer would be advisable.

Being still a transporter for cattle, which wasn’t all that wrong, as far as the ship-owner was concerned, the Last Bounty took over dwarves in hundreds, who might be seen as a species between the borders, no real humans nor animals either, of course not. If their existence would be accepted in the first place, which wasn’t certain at all.

Arguing that way might help with a hardcore insurance agent, but was morally in no way acceptable. A Communication’s Officer was therefore the least that could be done. With him Dorothea might even succeed in extending the license again. Plans in this respect had been evaluated for several months anyway by the nautical authorities over there in Sydney.

If she succeeded, they might have to employ a nurse and even a naval surgeon. And with two mechanics they wouldn't do either any more, but had to add at least an electrician.

"This is all peanuts" the ship-owner argued. She wanted to take care of that personally as soon as they had come back. Some 'Hundred-Enders "with definite take-over under special conditions" as she put it, should be found.

Being in charge of the administration of the newly founded university, she had a lot to do. So it was high time to seriously share some of the workload. Husband and daughter claimed attention. And she was fed up with the fourteen hours day, beside the fact that she enjoyed managing.

Sharing workload would certainly mean to open up for negligence. There was no difference in the office or on board of a ship. She might do well by handing over her office job to others and concentrate on the stock market, the time-sharing companies, and the ship owner's business – well of course she shouldn't forget about the 'Council of the Menora', she was a member.

As a matter of fact, she realized, that she suffered on all fronts, a fact she really disliked. She had to change things as soon as possible.

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The day after next presented a sea as flat as a mirror and the Last Bounty took her trail with comfortable eleven knots, heading for the island of the mutiny – Arundle's favourite target.

Why she was heading for it this way, instead of just dreaming there, she couldn't tell. It had to do with the circumstances and with the people, it was about. She couldn't dream of that, definitely not for the purpose she had in mind.

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On board of the Last Bounty lively action developed amongst the passengers. The boundaries were tightly set, and so inventive spirit was demanded. Captain Leblanc had a funny looking cage watered astern, a construction of the chief mechanic. The cage was sized thirty by ten yards and was carried by colourful airbags on the corners. The wirings were solid steel and the edges erected higher than a shark ever could jump.

The cage drifted free of the propellers, of course and of the rudder. An ingenious construction of Chief Stan, who did think of everything. As the cage didn't affect the cruising speed much, the Captain had it in the water almost all day long, and the passengers enjoyed swimming and diving and all kinds of games. First of all Corinia, Adrian and little Intellectus, who wasn't so small any more, but exceeded the height of his dad and uncle by two inches.

"These are the genes of the Griselgreifs" Grisella commented on that, whenever possible, proud mother as she was.

From the Slyboots' side men tended to a firm trunk, while Intellectus inherited the slender limbs of the Griselgreifs.

Arundle needn't be begged twice either, and Billy-Joe even risked a jump from the highest tip of the stern. Making Captain Leblanc yell atrociously. He couldn't slip off the burden of responsibility, not even in the privacy of the water, where he intended to take relief, and enjoy his wife's company.

Swimming was no real option in the small cube. But it was a most welcome refresher and after a couple of minutes the comforters crawled up the Jacob's ladder hand over hand to take a rest in the deckchairs or had a round of bridge under the sun-sail, sipping cool drinks, read a book or chat lowly not to disturb anyone else.

Stan came up from the underground to have a look at his congenial construction on its maiden voyage, and was highly satisfied.

His Captain asked him to have a trial on his own, but he rejected with all signs of disgust. "A real seaman no swim never..." he yelled and slipped away down to where he belonged. "I'm watchman, savvy" – you could hear him sounding up from the depth.

His assistant Mr. Wazlav, who was also called the Pole, couldn't be seen on deck. Well, he might have a rest under deck, but that was unlikely on such a beautiful day.

Corinia shared her passion for the water with Intellectus, also in her human shape. They hushed like silver arrows from one end of the cage to the other. They needed no three strokes of their legs for a distance of some thirty yards.

Adrian retired as soon as he noticed how surplus he was. His wife, Marsha Wiggles-Humperdijk, was on stand by with a set of snow-white

towels to cover him up and protect his vulnerable skin against the rays of the sun.

Billy-Joe and Arundle were lying up on the highest deck, well hidden to the sights by anyone, and if they hadn't been so busy with each other, they might have noticed how everybody avoided contact. So they didn't wonder, how quiet and peaceful it was and enjoyed the solitude of the sea, the air and the sun, just as they were used to on the pontoon in the lagune at home on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth.

The Magic Bow had surrounded them in addition with a magic circle. He knew why, as he could hear the green grass grow, so to speak. What he heard or foreboded, sounded strange to him either. He couldn't make up his mind, and come to a conclusion. The magic circle he proceeded, to prevent people from stepping on Arundle by accident. The Magic Stone should take care of Billy-Joe, as applicable. Which the latter had done, of course, and not that alone...

Never again would Mr. Melford, the Second Officer, leave the Signal Officer's booth unattended. No matter, what the weather was like, whenever he was on watch on the bridge. He always had the loudspeakers of the booth switched on. "Just to be on the safe side" as he put it. He didn't want to risk a reprimand like on the other day. But nothing special could be heard this day except some peeping and howling.

All of a sudden the Captain popped up in the doorway, wet and almost naked, with a bewildered look in his eyes. Like an animal he scented his nose up in the air, and showed signs of terror.

Orders he yelled. The cage was pulled up, in a hurry and was stowed very carefully, as well as everything that was loose on deck. The passengers had to put on life-jackets, and had to hide under deck. There was no time for explanations.

And then Mr. Melford heard on the radio what his Captain had scented beforehand already. A monster wave was heading for the Newsealandish coast. Newsealand sounded as if it was, but it wasn't. If a whole ocean was stirred up, no shore would be left save.

Only in the waving shirt, which he had put on in the meantime, Zinfandor rushed towards the map-stand. Where was that monster wave exactly right now? Was it ahead or was it astern? Would it come from astern, or where they already on its back?

"How much speed do we make over ground?"

“Negative, Sir, negative. We make negative speed over ground” came the answer after a couple of torturing minutes.

“T’was about time, at last!” Zinfandor slipped into his trousers and sat down. He asked for a cup of coffee and enlit - rather relaxed - a cigar.

“with us on its back the monster can’t do us no harm. But we mustn’t come near land. But there are more than 500 miles of open sea astern. All we gained during the last days. We make a little negative drive. That means we move in the right direction. We swim down on its back. We can’t do more than wait, right now. All we can do is pray, that the second monster isn’t following right away. But normally they aren’t as fast. The sea got to inhale after all...”

Those around him didn’t understand much, as they stood around pale-faced and timid.

Arundle disappeared into the Signal Officer’s Booth, and Billy-Joe joined her. Both of them listened to the garbled mix of waves. Arundle turned the knobs a little, but she didn’t get far. She intended to commit a message to the Ilse of Wisdom-tooth, to warn those inhabitants who peopled still the facilities of the hotel of the hub of the world, and move towards the interior of the island.

There – she imagined – would be no acute danger of life, because the island exceeded the sea-level far to far, even for a monster wave. But not so the installations between the islands. They were the weak link. Without evacuation there would be lots of casualties to be expected, as sure as the amen in church.

Arundle got in touch with her bow, who signaled “Everything’s clear, hotel evacuated, warning got through.” how he made it, remained mysterious for Arundle, so she needn’t leave her position. She felt irreplaceable aboard, by now.

“To Pitcairn, Poseidon wouldn’t let us come, as it looks” she sighed thoughtfully. They still moved backwards. The suction of the Monster-wave, was still stronger than what the ship had to put up. At last they almost stood still. But didn’t move forward an inch.

The night fell down meanwhile. No-one thought of sleep or a meal. Again sandwiches and the favoured hot drink of the sailors was served. This time as a weak punch with a fine cent of rum, and a strong tea to keep all watchers awake, which was certainly demanded.

Again Arundle listened into the intervening noise in the operator's booth. Was there any notification of the second monster? About the first they knew a lot by now.

"Epicentre – near the Tongas – height of the wave – 120 feet – with declining tendency – heading almost precisely South-South-West-a-Quarter-West – speed twenty knots – decreasing."

Those dates were followed by a listing of all the endangered islands and coasts and the importance of protective measures. The Isle of Wisdom-tooth was not among such sights, as it wasn't at its true location and unknown.

Was the low speed of the monster wave a good or a bad sign? Zinfandor reckoned it a good sign. "The wave pressure of the explosion – (so was his opinion) – must have been incredible, most likely singular – we will see..."

He thanked Arundle very much for her help so far, but need her help still and any possible support. Even though, he reckoned to be an expert concerning monster waves, it was still helpful to become supported by the official media, the public air traffic and by telegraphy.

The night went by. Nothing unusual happened. And everybody sat back. Yawning was everywhere. The passengers trickled off and disappeared into their cabins and bunks, despite the fact that the emergency situation hasn't been lifted. And they were still requested to stay close to the rescue-boats, life west girdled and emergency pack round the waist.

Zinfandor realized, what was going on, but didn't say a word, because he didn't believe in the second monster wave. Arundle didn't hear anything on the radio, and the good old Last Bounty headed with two knots genuine speed over ground. As it looked, the monster wave was due to run idle.

What had happened along its course? Whole groups of islands had become evaporated. Individuals who could rescue themselves first, drowned a shore while later. Houses, boats – everything, what ever property there had been, was smashed or spilled off shore.

On the Isle of Wisdom-tooth all pontoons were damaged. The houseboats lay smashed in the shark-nets. The centre pontoon with the hotel building was sunk and had been pressed through the shark-net, that

had become torn under the weight. Only the devastated quay of the Last Bounty withstood the terrifying forces of nature. What would have happened, if the Last Bounty had been there?

From Susamee's island nothing was heard either, as this island didn't exist officially either. But hasn't been directly in the way of the monster wave anyway. Besides, there were no installations on sea-level, and the quay was located in the rear, anyway, and couldn't be reached by the highest tide. The island as such was located as a kind of protective wall, definitely higher than those 120 feet of the monster. If that wave was still so high and hadn't lost height already, running for hours by now.

With every obstacle it lost power. Until it finally reached the Antarctic coasts, not much of it would be left. Africa would hardly notice anything and Patagonia almost nothing.

Arundle sent Billy-Joe nevertheless, which was nothing by means of the magic stone. He was back in no time. "All clear, over there" he reported. "Tika is the happiest mother of a son. Emamus is he going to be called, Tibor let us know. He sends his regards and asks, how we are. Whether we became married and everything, as it's custom. I said that there was no time for that..."

Arundle blushed, but unnoticeable in the dark. She fiercely embraced Billy-Joe and blamed the monster wave. Would they ever find their way to Pitcairn?

15. On the Isle of the Mutineers

Mrs. Waldschmitt made friends with Hans Henny Henne, the constructor and inventor of the SLOMES, who bore his years well. Due to his many implantations in many parts of his body, he stood his ground, so to speak.

His friend in heaven would forgive him. While with Susamee he wasn't so sure. But she needn't necessarily get notice. As far as the shipmates were concerned, he hoped for discretion. Besides, they acted quite normal and hardly noticeable, they thought, when they hushed secretly through the gangways on the way to each other.

Hans Henry Henne's brain wasn't always properly wired at night, that was why one or another function failed or were limited in its mechanism, while was on the other hand excessively functional, and caused him to shout aloud or knock against the wrong doors.

Afterwards he didn't remember such malfunctions at all. While the other passengers did all the more so. Some might be reminded of a plate-warmer by such behaviour.

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"Call me Hilde" Mrs. Waldschmitt whispered during the Captain's dinner, that was due after the salvation. "What do such formalities mean?" Hans Henry Henne was not the man to let such opportunity pass in vain, as the chevalier of the old school, that he was. Thus a late amour fou started. While the dinner went still on, they exchanged first passionate kisses. And as they didn't stop after a few glasses, they didn't stop after a few kisses.

Since then things went that way, almost every night. Until Mrs. Waldschmitt stopped the disgracing situation by moving to Henne's cabin, and the mating noise in the narrow gangways came to an end. She was flattered to a certain extend – after all, was she the cause – but was at the same time distressed. Such in front of the child's ears...

But such child had to handle her own affairs, which differentiated only gradually from hers.

Somewhat strange and ridiculous such behaviour always seemed to outsiders, all the more so in the beginning of an affair.

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Dorothea would have liked to return immediately, when she learned of the destruction of the 'Hotel to the Hub of the World'. As ship-owner she had the power to do, no matter what the order of the charterer said. Besides, she could have arranged with Arundle. But Scholasticus was against it. "You desperately require some days of relaxation. You look so pale and exhausted."

By experience he knew that such a remark would impress his wife, more than all reasonable arguments. He ordered her strict bedtime and for himself as well. That was why the two didn't get out of their cabin any more.

Sulamith had fun with her cousin and with her aunt Grisella, who liked her niece a lot. So there was no lack of babysitting for the eleven year old girl.

Judith kept going as well, who felt like Dorothea. Basically everybody felt the same, because all their heartblood clung to the islands. In three or four weeks would there still be time to care. Things had to go on without them for now.

Such decision didn't hinder the busy exchange of information, on all possible ways and channels. The Somnions dreamt themselves home and the Animations undertook extensive soul-excursions. And the world-wide-web for normal beings did also exist, after all.

Without emergency the magic stone and the magic bow refused the request for transportation. "Repair-instructions can not be put under the category of emergency", the magic bow exclaimed. He would utter herewith also the opinion of the magic stone. Both were in compliance with that.

As the weather stayed on for a couple of days, the Captain had the swim-cages set up, and the busy far 'niente' put a golden veil over the whole ship.

"We wouldn't be too far from the destination" the Captain hollered. "Perhaps two days, more or less, so far, if nothing unexpected happens – Well, there is nothing of that kind in sight, but you never know..."

The Captain intended to add the lost days in the end. Mrs. Waldschmitt changed reservation for her return trip, just in case. "To be on the save side – nobody is expecting me on the other side", she added thoughtfully and looked bleary-eyed at 'Hansiman', as she adressed him intimately.

Arundle managed the rebooking via satellite from the operator's booth, by electronic ticketing. "This does not only save paper, but is also much safer. Because the travel-documents couldn't get lost.", she explained.

There would remain four weeks all in all, which had to suffice. Mrs. Waldschmitt had a valiant grin in the face. At home nothing held her, but habit, which she could give up easily – the sooner, the better, so to speak. For something worth while.

She felt a little like being raised into the feudal state. Things turned upside down. She got access to circles where the air was thin, it was said, but she felt more than well. "How great is life, when you fly from summit

to summit. How colourful and rich and manifold is the human being, who unfolds in love, when there is a proper chance...”

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Arundle had reached her target, but it wasn't the final aim, her own mother cared for that, yes, the own mother...

“After all, let's do the job” – Captain Leblanc committed his obligations. He didn't lack of witnesses. Mrs. Waldschmitt became Mrs. Henne. Not an advantageous change of names. On the other hand, should she have picked up her maiden name again? Only to keep up with changing habits?

Hans Henny Henne was the happiest man in the world, and arranged for a wedding, generations would recall. On the height of the festivities Arundle and Billy-Joe dismissed to the island of the mutineers. Close by the last Bounty had anchored. The two found themselves resting comfortably in the day-warm sand, dreaming dreams of valiant mutineers with exchanged roles. Billy-Joe felt so suitable in the sand, as if made for that. How could she stop hurting him? Why couldn't she just open up and cuddle in his arms. The impulse was there, but something stopped her from letting thing happen. Or when she did let go, which occurred once in a while, she viewed it as a weakness, that had to be made invalid.

Billy-Joe was so generous. It was not the age. He was just about two years older, that didn't grant such wisdom. It was his character, his, or the character of his folk. Something she would never get sorted out.

Perhaps this was what frightened her. She didn't want a tribal brother, she wanted an individual, just like herself. Perhaps she was only afraid of Billy-Joe's lack of individuality. With him you always came into the general, no matter what it was about. Somehow archetypical it was, when you entered his way of thinking. You became an archetype yourself. You could hear him think then in his head “Alas, that's the way whites are. After all they have other advantages...”

No wonder, when wrath overwhelmed her, when she argued and formed strongholds. Who was willing to be put into a drawer? Without noticing, or with noticing too late. And later it was too late. Its like a switch being turned and afterwards everything is too late. The train has left and you stay behind with empty hands and sad heart. And then it is said “You whites think too much.”

She didn't mind the truth so much. Well, it surely could be true, that the whites kept thinking too much. But she didn't think as a white, but as Arundle, and she didn't want to be discriminated for that. Not for something she wasn't responsible for.

"Teach me the way you like me to be, as I do with you, continuously. Otherwise there is but permanent harmony, and I'm afraid of that, because we both behave carelessly, and our aim is comfort. Then suddenly the big disappointment breaks out, because nothing comes over any more, and nothing between us is thrilling anymore, so it seemed. Because we are afraid, that our love has died."

"Just you look around, just once, Arundle, where are we? Where are we now? You are here. The sand has waited for you for two hundred years. Feel it, just feel it. Look at these stars, and look inside you at the same time – yes, do it at best at the same time..."

She did as was requested. Did anything melt? "Hold me tight, dear, hold me tight..." they lay there holding each other tight, desperately, as if it was for a long farewell.

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Mrs. Waldschmitt cancelled her flight, once and for all. She could fly later at any time. A lot could be arranged from down here. There wasn't too much to be arranged anyway, because she had given up her tax-consultant office a year ago.

'Hansiman' would perhaps even join her. "Not a bad idea, to see the homelands again", he uttered. He hadn't seen Germany since the Nazis took over. He was taught by his divine friend Roland now, and he believed again into mankind and that man could change – to the bad and to the good. Unfortunately mostly to the bad, but seldom enough also to the good.

And then he told her about her ex, that she became rather sad. She regretted not having experienced his swing.

"Yes, there was a Saulus really exchanged for a Paulus" he exclaimed, and Hilde couldn't stop the tears. She still enjoyed. It was something very special. Especially for him. Whether he understood her? She turned her eyes upwards. Hansiman pressed her tight and whispered at best he could with his hearing aid – "he'll understand, you can be sure of that. He is now in quite different regions. He has made a qualifying jump

upwards, and has absolved a heavenly carrier, we couldn't even dream of over here."

And then he told stunning Hilde, what her ex became. There were bits she knew already, Arundle had mentioned the one or other, but in the context things sounded even more unlikely. Unvoluntarily she had the picture of the man before her inner eye, who had left her to follow his nightmarish illusions, and that wasn't complying with the angel-like being, she learned of now.

"Are we talking about the same person?" she asked questioningly, when Hansiman overdid. "Sure enough, this is Roland, as he dwells and lives... well, dwelling might be the wrong provision, he doesn't dwell really any more... I had my turn half-ways, but was sent back. My time wasn't over yet. I had something to absolve, it said. Was about the SLOMES. Well, yes, you know, the thing they are all sitting in front of, and staring into the valve. Yes, and now I am famous, as I always wanted to be. But do you think, you notice anything of that? At best it's disgusting and clumsy. Alas, Hilde the heaven must be thanked that I found you. Yes, heaven be thanked..."

Overwhelmed by his own words Hansiman embraced Hilde und pressed her to his heart heartily, that she almost fainted. His bionic muscles worked more than perfect. Hilde sighed, so he loosened his grip.

"You can hardly breathe" she whispered and was pure devotion.

16. Reconstruction or New Start?

The Last Bounty was homeward bound. Pitcairn, the isle of the mutineers, lay astern. The passengers enjoyed the 'dolce far niente'. They knew what was waiting for them at home. Their thoughts were travelling ahead, but still didn't bother the atmosphere. Only Arundle and Billy-Joe weren't affected by the future. They remained in the presence and enjoyed the moments of eternity, they experienced.

Because of the reconstruction-works going on in the lagoon the Last Bounty could only take over fuel, while the passengers bound for the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, disembarked. A band of dwarves asked in a hurry to care for a home-trip. They mistrusted the reports from their new home. And wanted to have a look with their own eyes.

So Stan, the chief-mechanic, just ordered as much fuel as required for the new destination and back, from the spare barrels that had remained unharmed in the hurricane. Then the vessel took off again towards Susamee's Isle. Some Conversiors slipped aboard last minute, but just in time, because the helicopter had been damaged and couldn't take off. So they had been lucky, because the full moon was close.

Tibor was with them. He went back to home and wife and child, and of course to play the horse-headed violin.

Whenever mom and dad 'redressed' (as they put it) and even Granny Susamee took off, Emamus came to uncle Will and the seven she-dwarves, who were eagerly looking forward. But this he would realize much later, when he himself would begin to 'redress', as was likely with such a pair of parents. But that would be clearing in the due course of puberty.

With the diminishing Last Bounty also the board romance disappeared and everyday life took over. Hans Henny Henne and his newly wedded wife preferred to travel on, as soon as they noticed the chaos. "I have arranged for myself quite a nice home, where we go, you'll see", Henne explained and Hilde believed him all too willingly. She had to get used to her new name, the former Mrs. Waldschmitt realized. Every time the steward addressed her with her new name, she shrugged.

The two days turn was routine after all. Things went the proper way. The weather was fine and the first class belonged to them, as the dwarves preferred the dark lower decks, and neglected the daylight, especially when it was reflected by the water, as was the case. The Conversiors also cared for the solitude of the comfortable cabins, while the whole ship stood at their disposition. Just for the meals the people gathered in the dining room. But even there, the dwarves didn't like to show up or become involved in talking. Not even the food they wanted to share, but cooked in the lower decks, where they found it rather cosy and neatly arranged.

Alongside the ship's side double storeyed beds were fixed. Each equipped with a neat colourful curtain. In the middle there was a long table fixed to the floor, and little chairs, also fixed on both sides in comfortable height. Two kitchens, washrooms and sanitary installations were found left and right of the stairs. There was space for some hundred little passengers. But filled there was no comfort any more. Now it was quite different. The

hammocks above the table from one side to the other, weren't needed these days by night and therefore stowed away, so were the blankets and stuff.

The same installation was to be found in the lower deck underneath, where never a ray of light reached or appeared.

Thus some 600 little-ones could be carried. Exact figures however, you could hardly get. Until today no-one ever found out how many dwarves had left the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, or were travelling to and fro.

These days with the regular and bustling exchange, no counting was possible, neither way, and for what? Who cared? As long as the dwarves enjoyed the way they lived, the humans could be content. Still the people in charge never got rid of a feeling of uneasiness. They were thinking of things they could do them good. – At least they thought they did, and what they were thinking of, was supposed to be at best for the dwarves.

This was the margin they followed and behaved. There was no real communication. You could see that right at the time being. The humans shied away from the dwarves. (Although they never committed.) And the dwarves stayed away from the humans even more. Flash-like they hushed down the gangways and eyed round corners. here a cap and there a bit. Almost nothing could be seen or noticed from the little-ones. Only when everything was quiet, as quiet as it can be on board of a motor-ship, you could hear sometimes low hammering and singing out of the ships deep belly. As if they were at work with something. Yes, they were extremely busy, the humans knew. That wasn't much, but about all, they knew about dwarves.

Tibor was probably the only human being, who managed to stay in a room with dwarves for a lengthier period of time. After all, he gave seminars and lectures for them, and also invited his own kind.

As long as everybody followed his lectures, everything was alright. The trouble began as soon as they started discussions. Most of the dwarves hushed away then. They didn't care for exchanging arguments. Which didn't hinder them from adoring a once dedicated idol. They allowed the idol to address very openly to them, whether they believed or not, but always listened, what he had to say. They did care for what he said. Otherwise there would have been not so many who came over here from Susamee's Island. While it was so much nicer over there, for studying purposes. Well, things weren't all that bad over here for them anymore. They occupied the second under-floor of the University-Isle, warm and dry as it was there, after all.

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The debris on the lagoon between the islands was still there, just as the monster-wave had left behind. Evacuation had been just in time, lucky enough, and no casualties had to be claimed. Some minor injuries had there been in the rush of the flight. But the wave as such didn't catch any one.

The high rocks on both island had withstood the flood, and cut it apart, so it passed by rather ineffectively, while the damage in between, in the lagoon, was all the more heftily.

As they weren't the only victims, they found it very difficult to find craftsmen and material in the area. They of course were not the only affected in the region. Requests from everywhere fell upon the brave workers to the furthest end of the continent and Southern islands.

Even her NCA-debtors were asked by Judith for experts. She promised prompting conditions and guaranteed amortisation of loans for twenty years or even more.

When the helicopter was operating again, the first craftsmen were to come, and went straight away at work. What was reusable, was piled up neatly ashore.

Dorothea developed meanwhile a structural plan and a reconstruction blueprint together with the architects, who were still the same who built and planned the university on the neighbouring island. Because those people worked reliable, and they kept with them where and for whom they were working in secrecy.

The basic concept of a shark-protected inner basin, was still regarded as the best possible solution, and couldn't be overridden by any other model. So this part of the reconstruction was already in due course. The old net and sluice with the mighty doors were to be put back into operation, as far and as soon as possible. Things to be replaced were replaced of course. Soon the barrier between the islands was erected and connected what belonged together again.

At the time when the project had begun, Dorothea had lined up residential boats alongside up the artificial barrier. Which later became replaced by pontoons, on which picturesque sheds and cabins were built, giving the hotel a kind of hula-appeal.

Unfortunately the cabins and pontoons were all gone by the flood. No one could foresee such a mighty monster wave, which was certainly very unlikely to repeat in future. Still there were typhoons under way occasionally and were to come every season. They could also harm such fragile facilities. So it might be wise to go back to the caravan-boats. They might be safer, and surely were - statistically seen.

For the same reason the lobby of the hotel wouldn't be reconstructed in wood, on the central pontoon, but would be erected on mighty stone-pillars and solid underground on the pier, which was widened for this purpose. Unfortunately the nice symbol of the hub of the world was somehow out of balance by that move ashore. But this had been just fun anyway, you noticed for a couple of seconds while approaching by air, and then never again. From the ground you never and nowhere could get a glimpse of that hub.

The Last Bounty was kept busy. She transported labourers together with material that could be stowed in the front holds. While the rest of their belly was redesigned for passenger travel. Nobody considered it worth while to alter the set-up.

Among the volunteers from the SLOMES-Company, the desperately needed operator was finally found and registered as regular crew-member. That made everybody of concern happy at last, as the pay-role was completed that way, at length after all.

Well, a proper cook was still needed, and one or two deckboys wouldn't be wrong either. Really content with the crew a caring Second Officer in charge would never be. So it was here too. Mr Ishmael, the navigator, couldn't be happy either, as he was responsible for the consignment and completeness, next to the Captain himself.

17. The Maroons

Not all the NCA-debtors shouldered their debts, so to speak. The number of flying NCA-debtors was growing, as a matter of fact. So was the social police-forces at the same time. Such forces had nothing else to do but to stir up those refugees where ever they were found. In the

beginning, most of them tried to hide in the city-slums, mainly in the Northern capitals, where things were somewhat favourable for them, because of the epidemic pan-diseases. They carried on illegally somehow, at best they could, and that was not much. While the forces became aware of that of course, and many were caught.

Therefore, new modes of escaping came up. This time the hail wasn't searched in the unanimous crowd of the city but ways led out into the open countryside. Professional sluicers took over and proved to be more effective. A worldwide operating organisation of sluicers soon built up. They had their basis in the so-called red zones – devastated rural areas, far away in deserts, mountains, moors, and left behind open pit mining areas.

There the Maroons (as they were called, referring to the former slaves in the old days) – gathered and formed social communities. But in the eyes of the authorities and the distorted public they were regarded as criminals, who pilfered small towns and villages, or built up a might means of exchange by cultivating drugs.

Drug consumption raised noticeable - especially in the slums of the mega-cities in a kind of 'cirulus vitiosus' (devil's circle).

Those who were sitting in the debtor's trap, became soon victims of drugs. As soon as they became addicts, they didn't bother anymore - first of all about the blooming system which brought them that far.

Such tendencies (they were as yet tendencies) met Judith's ears rather rank, and also alarmed those in charge of politics and welfare, like churches, trade unions and social services. Justice became the major topic, more than ever, and the basic question of dramatic cuts of obligations to a reasonable level never ended. Regular procedures were desperately needed. Things couldn't go on the way they went. If things went on unregulated, anarchy of the worst kind threatened society. The dangers were realistic. The Maroons were but the spearhead of a threat arising. Action was desperately required.

There were surely other opinions. And thus society was split once more in conservatives and liberals. The latter regarded the mode of self-organisation in principal helpful and some even saw the Maroons as part of the solution, and not part of the trouble for the future. Which was probably a dangerous and naive position, and had little to do with realities, as was seen and experienced by those, who had suffered under the cruel acts of the Maroon-bands, or just said to have suffered, for what ever reasons –

being stirred up by opinion-leaders of a foul and backwards heading status quo.

The situation wasn't easy and clear, and the range of action was very narrow. A private initiative, like Judith's, and be it as powerful and mighty as could be, had a better stand, and was therefore well accepted from most sides. The competitors hoped for bankruptcy, and the governmental authorities enjoyed the peasing effects. While the sufferers enjoyed at last, when they were much better off afterwards, because they were no longer pressed aside and risked to diminish at the edge of society.

While the organisers and sluicers didn't either like such initiatives at all, because they attracted their power base. They were interested in continuous supply of victims from the cities. Only masses move the world finally.

The rioters didn't care whether or not the masses were organized and had fair aims. The rioters didn't care for aims. They mainly cared for riot. This was their view. And this was worth thinking twice. You would never be able to bring those misled masses back to normal, even the naiivest had to accept this. Those who had missed the train, had no chance to get back on, but another world had to be created for them. – Form them, and by them!!

The way back was definitely blocked for ever – i.e. for a very long time. The underdogs and parias and outcasts and desperados developed their own identity, their own pride and their own values, they lived after. and such contradicted the valid values considerably. Particularly when it came to violence and honour and pride.

Such weren't negotiable for the outcasts. And this was why those of good will failed. Those who favoured the state's monopoly of power certainly shyed away from revolutionary power. Their major mistake was, that they didn't realize in what a turmoil mankind was. And that the aim only could be to give impulses towards a future, worth living. But what were the true impulses towards a life worth living? That of course was the problem. No one could look into the future, if not assisted by magic means, and if so, he couldn't be sure that what he got to be seeing, was a true image of the whole, or just a tiny bit. Nobody could say if the forces competing were heading towards doom or heaven. Success was relative in any case. The fate might look favourable, but the status quo remained untouched, or was blocked by those in the way, no matter how much

heartblood they gave for their course, if they were honest to themselves. (While artifacts didn't owe blood.)

Thus a tendency pressed into being, while nobody knew whether it was good or right, or both, or neither good nor right. The lesser the authorities committed in the chase of the outcasts, and the less noticeable those behaved, the lesser became the friction on the surface. The police became more reluctant and the authorities were all too happy, when they could ignore the whole subject.

As soon as news spread about assaults and hold-ups, and of pilferages of arms' depots, and the like, the switch was tuned back to alert and counter-action. Especially when bank robbery or blackmailing was involved. As soon as the underdogs got aware of that, and stopped such activities, and thought of other ways of self-keeping – things soon turned back to ignorance.

Non-violent forms of self-keeping were looked for and taken over by the Maroons, and became in the long run rather challenging. Maroons developed independent and self-sufficient structures. They referred back to long forgotten old forms of tribal modes of being. The more so, when they met tribes and left-behind descendents, as were found in Australia, in the rain forests of Brazil, Peru or Ecuador. – Or even in the devastated Tundra of Asia, on solitary long forgotten islands, and where ever tribal life had survived or was refounded. Such a self-sufficient life in accordance with mother nature then became an impulse and the basis of hope, for all humans devoted to their artifacts.

Thus, the settlements of the outcasts were almost forgotten. An unseen world in the world emerged – undetected, unnoticed, secret and challenging. In small numbers the drop-outs disappeared and found solitary paths on their search for freedom and happiness. They were heartily welcome in most cases, and joined the tribe, sooner or later. While on the way to that aim, old dangers lured. And once more robbing bands drew the attention on such growling thickets of the unknown.

Less and less became the talk of the social borders in the centre of power. While those responsible knew that something uncontrollable went on out there, but they didn't look too close, as long as there was no alarming need.

With those maroons the main stream society had similar problems than the saturated dwellers of the Isle of Wisdom-tooth had with the dwarves on the neighbouring island. They were there and they were so

different. And that was about almost all what both sides knew from each other.

Basically it wasn't much different than things had been always with forgotten minorities. The difference was perhaps that society had begun to produce such minorities systematically. In a way all humans could be regarded as minority, when it came to artifacts, must be said frankly. Voluntarily or involuntarily without declared intention. That was about all the difference.

Because systematically didn't mean that there was someone who planned or produced the new savages or the switch of master and servant. The victims were there. They seemed to be unavoidable. They formed the magnet and nucleus of those who had fallen through the grids of society, and therefore had to become sorted out. So with their flights, they did exactly what they were expected to do. They disappeared.

Like this, or similar to this, the situation was found by the analysts and scientists, who, if they defined themselves as progressive, at least specified such loss as dramatic and sad. Because the fermentive power, the initiative, the imagination and goodwill, which was available here, was lost. Society actually lacked of such means, or had them handed over to the robotic artifacts.

The mainstreamers didn't even notice what happened to them, how they lost their autonomy and integrity, bit by bit.

Life became long and longer. A hundred years of age was nothing special. Everybody could get so far, if you behaved and kept yourself properly, at good health, thanks to the regular sittings before the SLOMES and the regenerative bionic medicine, who could do all this and even more. Artifacts proved quite often as the better surgeons. Artifacts overlooked the breeding of the spare organs – better, more punctual and more precise than any human, and were therefore chosen. Who wanted his kidney being ruined by a careless apprentice - being somewhere else in his or her mind while tending the stock. He was perhaps dreaming of the girl next door or vice versa of the boy from last night's stand? Things like that couldn't happen with artifacts. They never day-dreamed, you could rely on them one hundred percent.

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All this happened in secrecy behind the backs of the people and was still in 'statu nascendi', that is, it was going to be. It was scarcely more but a trend. Those SLOMES determined life for quite some time. And God knew what was going on in the laboratories and hospitals. Those who worked there hardly understood, what the neighbour next door did.

The institutions were by far too big and fell apart into so many separations and sections, that nobody ever achieved an overall view, as long as involved in person. Even that was not so certain any more. The robot artifacts began to overrun the humans and displaced them. They were faster, more effective, and worked harder and stabler.

No talk about birth-control was necessary, and all the emotional fuss. Birth-control was regular reality. Nobody missed those fat-bellied women in the streets. And when one did appear, people looked aside disgusted, as if that woman was suffering from an infectious disease. They were seen only a short while, then disappeared.

The more civilised the humans became the less interested were they in such borderline experience, like the act of birth or death. Happenings of that kind were regarded as unfair interruptions in the flow of life, you had to stay away from, at best you could. Children were regarded as the number one risk for poverty and misery.

You were indeed able to forget that you also were born, when you were in the due course of becoming and celebrating your one hundred and twenty-fourth birthday with a big party. If you were still able to let the popsy-wopsies dance, so to speak. What did such a person care for the future and the coming generations?

Fresh flesh and rounded forms were no longer natural privileges but had become the standard equipment of any woman who cared, and that were all of them, more or less, who could afford.

And all those, who didn't obey this law-like habits, who wanted to give birth to a baby, sank into the gutter, where she belonged to in mainstreamers' eyes. They disappeared, and weren't seen anymore in dark channels. If they were lucky, they found access somewhere in the desert, where a tribe of Maroons lived. Not seldom they suffered on the limit, and were hardly able to keep going by the means nature provided, and that wasn't much in many cases. Freedom meant permanent search for food, water and shelter against cold, rain, sun, wind, and threatening wild animals or marauding bands.

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Judith came up with this topic in the Council of the Menora. Such was as yet a peculiar, uneasy and unnecessary problem. A little like the occurrence of mental diseases, and neuroses and the like, as was common in the 'fin de siecle' at the end of the 19th century. Misfortunes like that always existed, so it seemed, and this one had opened up a new outlet, one of the worst kind, and as disgusting as unnecessary, so the many of mainstreamers believed and uttered.

You could hardly differentiate between fact and polemic twist, or even frank lie and false evidence. While the development was just in the beginning. Things looked in a way as if the eager press had something found to thrill the mainstream society, and make it stick together. Something threatening, that was indignant, wild, anarchic, and dangerous, something that was accompanied by unlimited pregnancy and uncontrolled fertility on the most primitive level.

Reporters, who claimed to have been at the sites outside in the wilderness, presented faint photos accompanying their reports. showing topless women with hanging breasts and wild hair-bush. Big-bellied children, men, drinking goat-blood, or groping inside a piece of cattle, eating bowels. Poor miserable creatures they were. This was the fate those drop-outs were heading for, so the message was.

Such a fate was threatening all, who wouldn't adopt and accept the mainstream way of life. This was the clear message. And such a fate nobody wanted to suffer. So pity arose for the poor beings, who – although by own fault – had been brought into such a state.

However, pluralistic as things were handled in a society with democratic principles the reporters also had an ear for the drop-outs, and gave them a voice too. And they didn't hesitate to produce quite different reports. They also claimed for authenticity and the reporters in favour also claimed to have been at the scene just like the others. Perhaps at a different site and with other Maroons – well, that must have been it, and could be the answer.

They wrote about idyllic sites and produced quite different pictures, no less authentic than the ugly photos of the others. Their beings looked happy, healthy and gay. The children were but ideal and their mothers beautiful. They were placed next to broad-shouldered Tarzan-like fellows. While the reports accompanying such pictures sounded rather different as

well. There was no talk of savagisms or falling back into stone age and barbarism. The opposite – by their advanced knowledge which they brought with them, those Maroons produced fantastic progress with those tribes they joined. But they didn't fight and rape nature, but acted in accordance with the 'Mother of all Life', as was said. 'That way civilisation also works', was their credo. Health was also a resort of life, and guaranteed a long life, no less. Thus was the critics' approach.

Who ever came across his life, could now make his choice, whether he believed the panickers or the enthusiastic followers of the new way of life. While both sides were certainly cheating, more or less. The one side confirmed the mainstreamers in their prejudices, while the other stimulated the doubters, and might help with the decisive final step.

The Council of the Menora, i.e. first of all Arundle, saw through such polemic ado. Still they had to agree with both sides partly to a certain extend.

Conditions of life weren't at all easy outside. So, Arundle and the sisters Florinna and Corinia headed towards such sites in their dreams to find out and see with their own eyes. Because regarded from outside, the mainstream critics seemed to have a more realistic view.

Conditions of life in basic exchange with nature was all but easy. The adopted cultural techniques helped far less than they promised. However, when the first steps of adaptation had been successfully done, and the state of nature handling, which proceeded the guest-society was reached, then – all of a sudden – abilities arose, which had been unimportant before, and showed astonishing new ways out of miserable conditions of life.

Often they were little and all practical improvements. The use of a lever, or of water-power, simple operational techniques, thanks to the knowledge of the location of organs. Things, that had been in the dark future on the stone-age level.

By the new brothers and sisters you accepted advice which the missionaries offered in vain long before.

Instead of fleeing the draught, and leave the fields alone, in order to find a more fertile soil, they now started digging for fountains and wells.

The stock of cattle and other domestic animals were increased, and first indicators pointed towards a certain welfare, not yet hairdryers and washing machines, or elevators and the like, but bricks and shingles for stable and warmer housing. Sails on the water, rudders but paddles, blocks and spires and the like, to become more flexible on the water.

Improvement of such kind didn't question the whole way of life. The newcomers often realized that they only confirmed, what the Maroons had had in mind anyway, without actually practicing it, as some improvement seemed to point the wrong way, and had to be severely discussed or even rejected. There were surely very effective ways of killing of men and beast. What terrible traps the white man had founded, in order to catch precious fur, or fish by means of explosives – also a terrible and disastrous way of hunting, as soon as gunpowder was invented, and the ingredience were found in the open. Things and practices the like weren't practiced, and the systematic way of the White Man was definitely no option.

Most and best advice came from the rejecters, who had turned away from the hated system very clearly, and started fighting it. By subversion, and, as it didn't work otherwise, by flying and by inventing a defined counter-culture.

Where such individuals took part in the game, very positive and stimulating outlook could be achieved. The results here were definitely no fake but alternative fact of the best kind.

People like Billy-Joe, well educated isolationists with know-how pulled the strings. Instead of scarcity and deficiency, an alternative way of life was realized by means of intelligent strategies. This was no self-destructive denial, but a better and truer life.

With such leaders the drop-outs became the ferment and the spearhead of hope and future. The Christian view of the last who became first, was realized in a miraculous way, while the change of values assisted such development.

Such ideas, brought to conclusion, meant a change of paradigm and by consequence it was, what the alternatives already had started to live. That was why the reaction was as hysterical as it was, as soon as the public got aware. That was the reason for the conservative press to publish fake news at best they could, and tried to put things upside down. They feared the non-violent, unrepressive society and mobilized the dark forces. Being certain that the old elites would only give way by the loss of their lives.

This could only be dried out. Only by a radical change of values was it possible to break the power of the old leading culture. But the political new force was far away from such change. As the alternatives could easily be outnumbered, as they were still small in number, while the mainstreamers counted billions. Not even the old Maroons had yet been activated, and the tribes weren't at all united.

Just timid those little flights occurred, little brooklets, whereas streams were needed. Still, the permanent loss demoralized the system, as those who left were the best, and thus undermined the consent. Consequently the Maroons called their areas non-repressive free zones, as total freedom reigned there-in, at least by intention.

Imagination was unlimited. Those who ruined their neighbours nerves, moved on, because freedom was the guaranteed privilege of all, and included the respect to the freedom of others. Being left alone, the actors soon found out, what it meant to be left alone, and were eaten up by solitude. Thus the absolute freedom became punishment. And thus the communion without repression was paid the utmost attention.

The arguments about the 'Hotel to the Hub of the World' that were exchanged between the World citizens and the Isolationists now showed up again on a wider level, concerning the whole world. While no-one could say, which side was right, and which wrong. As the change of paradigm was not wholly rejected by the ruling class, and nobody wanted to confront and oppose the change openly.

As soon as thing became concrete, such changes separated society, just like that, and each side blamed the other of fake. The alternatives blamed the mainstreamers to stick to their privileges, and those in reply, blamed the alternatives of anarchy, they wanted society to end up with, so ran the false tale.

Nobody was content with things, as they went on. There were only losers, and increased in number, therefore they couldn't be ignored. The suggestions of launching private individual initiative sounded naive and cynical. Especially in the ears of the drop-outs and mis-fits, whose existence was questioned.

'Not the people are made for the system, but the system is made for people' thus was the credo of the humanists, to be found on both sides. 'It's got to be for the people. If it can't fulfil such function, then it is invalid and needs adjustment.'

The leaders of the system knew of course that there was something in such arguments. Because individuality meant multitude. Not all humans could be measured by the same scale. They all functioned not by the same laws or accepted the dictations of poverty and disease in the same way.

The clever ones searched for alternatives, and didn't follow the mainstream, and didn't allow the system to utilize their abilities and power

to their needs. There were gamblers and batters who enjoyed risks or even couldn't do without, and were addicted to cards and things, either win or lose – as a matter of fact – mostly the latter.

Confronted with such outlook the humanists weren't able to answer. How could you help those, who rejected help? What could you do with those who preferred to give up life instead of hanging on in a false life? And who said to the decision-makers that their decision was wrong?

Seen from a certain point of view, those people acted reasonably. If you considered a certain amount of egotism and unquestioned will of life. But with such assumptions the trouble already began. And the change of paradigms proved already, that there was a point in the radical criticism.

The money-system had stumbled over its own feet, not only, but also proved incompetent in a globalised world, and couldn't be steered either. All intentions to install artificial brakes, were outnumbered finally. The search for a new leading value-system was in due course.

As long as the live-span was uncontrolled and only limited by the individual, the span of life couldn't be chosen as the regulating factor, and nobody cared for the accumulation of life-span-genes. Each individual was given a certain quantity, as proved in the end. One had meagre 40 years, another merry 95. Both didn't do anything to regulate or influence such flow. In this sector things happened uncontrolled. As long as this was so, the life-span couldn't be regarded as a measure of value, although – in accordance with the quality of life – always had had the highest possible value. That could however be influenced very little.

As everyone knew that, it wasn't worse while to think about ways of influencing such value-system, nobody ever undertook. As long as this was so, money had to grant its means of exchange, and had to represent the absolute value, which in fact had long been handed over to the value of lifespan, which ever since had been the true and final value, and nothing else.

Those, who giggled with billions and millions daily, knew best on the slippery grounds of stock-exchange sites like New York, Tokyo, Frankfurt or London, and the like.

Since the invention of the SLOMES the situation had drastically changed. Now, everybody held in own hands the course and quantity of lifespan, and what he or she was willing and able to do for it. Others however, made up a different calculation, as the strategists of the globalisation reckoned. Especially the youth made fun of those who

prolonged their lifespan without noticing, that it was meaningless and unworthy living, while those concerned either didn't even realize or made more or less effective efforts to alter their situation.

18. The Arms of the Menora

“We wouldn't get any further, this way.” Arundle quite well saw the Gordian knot and she felt like Oedipus and take the sword and cut it into pieces, if anyone ever solved his or her problems that way. The Advisoress didn't make things easier. As it was him or her who packed into the debate a lot, which seemed not to refer to the subject of concern. Confusion instead of clarity was the only consequent outcome.

So she finally brought the Menora into consideration and the historically grown amount of arms, up to nine, while the ninth, the center arm, had a different function, and what this meant with reference to the eight armed model. Because the creators must have had something in mind.

“The many arms might have had practical reasons”, Pooty said, who felt quite homely with Arundle. So he repeated the famous words of great German poet J.W.v.Goethe: “More light, more light is needed...”

“The famous last words of the most famous German poet” Dorothea indicated her sophistication. “Pooty is always good for a surprise.” Arundle said being pleased by such stunning reply. “The obvious might be the nearest at hand, and the most correct”, she nodded.

But what meant right or wrong in such a case? More light could have been produced otherwise as well. You needn't alter the number of arms of an item of sacred value, all the more, as there were thousands of candles of that kind already in use.

“It could well also be a question of symmetry...” Judith mentioned, who should know best as a Jew. That was of course also somewhat prejudicial. Why should Jews know better?

Most likely this was true, and was already part of the identity, making of them the chosen people. If you could talk about Jewishness that way at all, which was questioned from many sides, last but not least from the

Jewish side, who identified in such a positive discrimination already the goat, producing envy and jealousy and causing the most horrible devastations and progromes the Jewish people had to suffer over the centuries.

Despite the fact that their range of action was limited, those partisanships succeeded in forming values out of nothing, so it seemed. Values the craftsmen and merchants in the Christian surrounding didn't even dream of. How dull and unimaginative those appeared, compared to the successes, how poor in spirit and character.

Only when it came to plundering and murdering their witt was present. With torturing they outed themselves, and presented an inner kernel, that usually was almost shyly hidden. Such beings didn't know themselves anymore.

Starving in poverty and misery they envied the better-off. Those paupers tried in vain to be like the victims, they embraced them with the iron grip of the torturing virgin – “Wilst thou not my brother be, I smash your head, just wait and see..” – they mocked in blunt ignorance.

A similar attitude could now be experienced against those Maroons. And even more of that came up, while rumours were spreading of mysterious well-beings outside beyond the edges of the known world. Freed from all taxes and obligations, and in accordance with the natural surrounding, the Maroons, so was said, succeeded in something new and extraordinary, that was without comparison in the past.

Such were the rumours, fired by the press, and didn't want to seize. Whenever there was low tide in politics and the public, the theme was brought up again. It was refreshed and dusted, and proceeded with a new sensational make-up.

Some pointed out the mishaps and whatever ugliness there could be found, while the other side reported of advantages, you couldn't even dream of, and proud Maroons raising and claiming to be no-one's but only the Creator's noble knights.

The whole bunch of the female lot of the Council expected clarification from the Advisoress. What was her opinion of the Maroons, and what did she think of the mocking mainstream. Which side did she chose?

However, the Advisoress didn't let her being trapped. “Often”, she uttered “things only seem to be contradictory, and divert from the matter in

question. - Sometimes”, so she said, “ those Maroons seem to lift a tip of the cloak above the upcoming. But then, the tip is dropped again, and the glimpse you might have been seeing, fades in the invisible.”

Bewildered looks quitted her remark. “There is a lack of courage and imagination, no doubt about that.” – the Advisoress shook her head defiantly. She realized, also here, nobody understood where she was heading to.

However, it could well be herself who didn’t quite understand, not knowing enough about the bionic gear, and had to find out about the loss of identity, because she didn’t bother much about it. This might be so, because she didn’t have an explicit identity herself. Or, to be more precise, her identity was an overall attitude, as if she wasn’t existing in person. Thus she tossed through boundaries, the human brain wasn’t able to dig anymore. Therefore it was meaningless to think any further.

It was up to the women of the Council to show the Advisoress where her limits were. Which wasn’t simple at all, the more so, as they weren’t sure either, whether they understood. Make a bird clear, that it lacks of hands, and a fish the lack of limbs.

Only those who want to exceed their limits might knock against such walls. Well, in fact seldom, and only in reference to neuralgic boundaries of identity.

Any woman might have an idea of the castration-fear, but she wouldn’t be able to feel it. This is just an example, what is meant by loss of identity. The loss of identity is frightening. That’s most important. Now they had to bring forward such fear, and have the Advisoress understand the problem better. Because in her general overview, such negative notions didn’t exist. And if they were there, such notions wouldn’t overwhelm the whole identity. But only if that was the case the Advisoress might be able to dig, what fear meant. Because fear is only real, when you become overwhelmed. Little fear, doesn’t really exist. Fear is either whole or non-existent.

Thus Arundle reckoned and made up her mind on behalf of the Advisoress in a telepathetic mode. And the others took part, as well, as far as they were able to. While they went on talking smalltalk. Still, the one or other idea was achieved, and thus communication was not all that meaningless, or without substance, although the original subject might have become out of the range of the inner eye.

Anyway, the women should have been reminded of their original subject. Sure enough, some wouldn't have been able to tell, how they lost their original trace. Although they all agreed that it had been sufficiently expelled.

They had taken off this time from the Menora with nine arms, the so-called Chanukkia, as was celebrated on Chanukka. While no-one was certain whether they really referred to the nine-armed Chanukkia or was it still the eight-armed Menora. In any case, the Menora had been the input of the Advisoress. She had made her input in contrast to the much too narrow view that existed of the new Time-Value-System. As the women of the Council weren't able to deal with this subject, the discussion had soon begun to dissolve, and was handed over to the free balance of associations.

While in fact the Advisoress had of course a lot in mind concerning the nine-armed Menora. The Menora was so meaningful, because of its ninth arm. And the aim of the Advisoress had been to have the women – and later others – find out what it was all about the nine arms.

There must have been good reasons why a further arm had been added to the eight. 'Nihil est sine ratione': Nothing is without reason. And the advice – more light – by Goethe, didn't really enlighten the case.

The reference to the light was all too obvious with a candelier. But this was not relevant to the Menora. The Menora was different. The question was the multi-armed-ness and perhaps even more important the equal height of all arms. None overrode the other. They were all in the same height, each was equal to the others. The Menora stood for democracy – for equality of all. While the question came up, who was meant by those arms.

What was all about? What did the Menora symbolize? And only for that reason the question of the ninth arm of the Chanukkia – the special Menora - was relevant. Why nine arms, why not eight or six, or seven? And why were the arms all equal, while inequality was all too obvious of everything you could think of.

"Yes, an ancient symbol" it was said, and thus ended the explanation. As if the growth out of ancient times was explanation enough. As if such old symbol would guarantee access towards appreciation and truth by mere age. And thus read the Prize Question of the Menora: Does age define the truth and value of the Menora?

19. A Question of Intelligence

The pier for the Last Bounty was located alongside the Isle of Wisdom-tooth. Therefore the lobby of the main building of the Hotel to the Hub of the World had also been set up there. It had to be put somewhere. And the settled ground for the pier seemed to be a solid and obvious base. The craftsmen came and erected the building in no time. Being located close to the water, solid brick-walls guaranteed stability, to stand floods and tides.

The architects and statisticians calculated and figured out all kinds of pressures from any side, and came to a diameter of one and a half foot. Thus the building looked like a defiant castle, that could stand any attack. While in fact only tectonic stirred up floods by sea, wind and waves had to be reckoned.

About the rest of the installation the initiators of the whole facility did a lot of thinking and planning. Nothing seemed good enough for the self-appointed judges. What ever was brought forward was criticised, and rejected. Only the basic concept of the shark-barrier found acceptance. But as soon as it came to details, like the sluice-doors, the planners came across.

While the facts couldn't be set aside any more. The pier of the Last Bounty defined the depth of the basin, that meant some three feet had to be added, in order to guarantee enough water under the keel.

All agreed however not to plan now for a bigger vessel in future. While everybody knew quite well, that the Last Bounty wouldn't last forever. Her lifespan ahead was by now rather limited.

The reconstruction of the lagoon, with those tiny fancy bridges and outlets for lighters and barges in order to transport the luggage of the passengers was set aside by the Chief-consultant and Manager. Such a system had been rather complicated and time-consuming, because motor craft couldn't be utilised in the narrow tracks. While wriggling became rather strenuous in the long run. Barges couldn't pass on their ways to and fro the check-in, because of the narrowness of the gateways, thus empty boats had to wait at the nearest crossing to let the full ones pass.

Wider tracks therefore should now be considered. While the former isolationists opposed motor-craft in favour of environmental protection.

They favoured physical power of muscles and sinews which might fit even better. While as an alternative pedal-driven vehicles were also considered, or even favoured over rowing-boats.

This way passengers had to become involved, and got an idea what was meant by active holidays. Sailing was also considered, and the isolationist fraction gave way here as well. Photovoltaic energy by sun-collectors and wind-craft in order to produce electricity was wholly in line with them either.

This argument was brought forward and weakened the hardliners point of view. There was no logic in forbidding little wind- and sundriven engines base on electricity-power. However they still claimed their point, stubborn as they were. While Arundle managed to reach an agreement and turned the rudder around.

Billy-Joe was on the side of the isolationists. He changed rather naturally over to the side of the environmentalists, and had now to stand for their convictions. In their point of view, motor-craft was an absolute no-go in the lagoon. Their last and final argument was noise, which would ruin the whole location and disturb the guests' rest.

Motors on electric basis however weren't noisy. They didn't smell either, and didn't acquire space, while running on replaceable energy, the more so since dynamos were connected to the pedals in the applicable devices. Wind and sun were used anyway. Be it by small propellers to accumulate energy, or by little voltaic set-ups, collecting sun energy. Both systems could easily be installed on ferry boats. Thus some boats ran already on a probationary mode, in order to find out how practical or unpractical the one or other way of producing energy was.

Billy-Joe, as the Galion figure of the environmentalists, stood for his case half-heartedly, and felt a little pushed around, so Arundle's stand was an easy one. As a matter of fact Billy-Joe minded very much being pushed forward by the isolationists, and reckoned that Tibor would have represented their matter much better. Because he didn't stand with one foot on the other side, - well, not in the open anyway.

It was high time that someone stood up and cleared those humbugs, which definitely belonged into the trashcan for a long time – you should be realizing. The storm and the monster-wave however had spilled the old quarrel up to the surface again, as if it had lured in the depth of the sea.

The conflict bore in it a notion of total ignorance, Billy-Joe reckoned meanwhile. However the world citizens' side was by no means

cooperative, but acted as if their case had made the show. As if they had been wholeheartedly confirmed by reality. While there were of course some question marks left. What was the point of view with reference to the Syndicate of Infernalía, who demonstrated a similar attitude with reference to the world as a whole, while in the underground a lot of ugliness was hidden. These people couldn't deny in the long run, where they stood. They needn't publish, they had hoisted their true colours for long, and were disclosed. There was no need for more publishing. Definitely not after Anonymous's book.

World-Citizens, and that they had to accept, were after all Citizens. And this fact had to be accepted by the World-Citizens on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth as well. What that meant, did ask for an explicit explanation. All you had to do, was take a look on the Bourgeois decade, and what it did to the world.

That much for the World-Citizens, who meant, that such labelling didn't grow on their own grounds. While the Isolationists counteracted, as they also felt ignored and misunderstood as Isolationists, and unjustly accused. Meanwhile they wouldn't be Isolationists any more, they argued, but somewhere found between vegans and purists, and repellents of civilisation, where they probably fitted better, while perhaps not really yet.

As a matter of fact, you didn't get far, when thinking in drawers. Neither on the one side nor on the other, both sides consented.

The old abyss had only opened, because the lagoon was going to be reconstructed. For one side far too slow, and for the other in ungood hectic. They claimed tranquillity and solid planning and reckoning, while actionism threatened to override the scene once more. As if there was someone hidden pressing forward, as if there was urgency other than artificially produced. While a wave had spilled away a bit of comfort, there was no need for hustle. How much easier and better was a life without permanent pressure, all the more if it was artificially produced.

For long decades and thousands of years the lagoon could well do without artificial add-ups. Now it had made itself known, and had given advice to the humans, that their installations were but mere trumpery. And what did the humans do? They rebuilt what nature had taken back. And why did they do it? Because they thought they knew better, and because they wanted to show nature, how to better it, while the opposite had just been proved.

The purists hardly accepted the pier, more so as it withstood the flood. The ship had to have a safe refuge in a good harbour. Everybody agreed on that. The alternative would have been to relinquish and have no vessel at all. But nobody really wished to do without. The advantages were all too obvious. But why did they need a hotel?

The hotel had been wrongly proportioned and planned right from the start. The statistics of the School of Inbetween over the last 50 years clearly said, how many absolvents there were out there in the world. So you could calculate on the fingers of two hands how long the run of those on search of their past would go on. And how many would actually come and visit the place from where they once took off.

For non-absolvents the isle was prohibited anyway, no doubt about that. At least was this the argument of those who wanted to keep the secrets of the isles. There was so much to be protected. Both sides agreed in the scrambled site and location, the supply of energy from deep down under (as built after the blueprint of the genius Hans Henny Henne.)

Henne, had started off as a world citizen, but was influenced more and more by Tibor during his old age. And Tibor was influenced by Tika and Susamee, that was why he didn't show any world-citizenship any longer. He uttered no objections when it came about reckoning the future, and the question whether to wholly open or push at least back the limits. Such a change would of course be of influence, and might even risk the identity. Even a blind could see. you cannot prolong good wine indefinitely. At a certain point of no return it would become spoilt water.

Thanks to Hilde the aged inventor got new spirit. He remembered his world-citizenshipish convictions, and Tibor became rejected, which didn't bother him much. He knew of his influence on quite a different end, but figured his influence probably too effective. He was so sure about the dwarves, who really adored him, because of his playing the horse-headed violin in the state of conversion, when he was not quite himself.

Hans Henny Henne unmusical as he was, influenced the dwarves nevertheless, the more so as he learnt now of his influence, while it was fading.

Did the dwarves turn the wheel? They had been keen on Henne's inventions all the time. Especially the technology thrilled them, and where the subsoil facilities were hidden. Be it the wholly self-sufficient power plant or the camouflage screen, they participated in, but couldn't

reproduce. So this technology interested them most. They would have loved to uncover such sources.

Hans Henny Henne wasn't prim at all, or a mystery-monger. The only thing was, that he didn't exactly know what he had been able to perform. There were no blueprints any more, or never had been. Order-keeping wasn't Hans Henny Henne's favourite.

Peter Adams still tried hard to put the rests of the heritage in order. In vain he solemnly inquired the newly arisen. Since Henne's brain was repaired, important connections and synapses had most likely suffered. Despite the fact that Hans Henny Henne gave a wholly intact impression, while occasional deficits once in a while had to be accepted unfortunately.

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The whole community had fallen apart in two opposing parties, so it seemed, and Tibor felt himself being torn apart too. That was why he didn't out himself this way or the other, and let Billy-Joe alone, which wasn't difficult at all, as he retired to Susamee's island, where he enjoyed family life.

Susamee really liked being a grandma. While she was rather sad that Hans Henny Henne had left her. However, she was wise enough not to treat Hilde as a competitor. The more so as Watchman Will Wiesly became a real sunshine, now that the awful pressure was taken off him, and he needn't always fear to be abandoned by the adored.

So to speak, Hilde advanced the peace process. And they all realized the positive influence she had on Hans Henny Henne. In her presence he became a different man. Abilities and characteristics of his turned to the surface, he didn't himself ever notice, or were forgotten for ages. While he would have blamed the bionic add-ups, he could make reliable for, as he said.

But this loophole was stuffed by Hilde. Yes, Hilde was a wild one, being set free. She now became aware of herself, after a privational life in the shade of a despot. Because a despot her Roland had been, despite the fact of the changes he had made in the meantime, she wouldn't doubt. Unfortunately she hadn't been able to participate in the new man.

So the frontier of the isolationist crumbled, who had changed and altered a lot already, and now had arrived in the arms of good old Mother Nature on their retreat. A pure and honest nature, for sure. And the more

they began to accept the views of others, the more they realized the contradictions and shallow phrases on their side.

“Our technology is good technology” it was said from all sides, “we have a deep understanding and an agreement with nature, other than the culprits, who can only destroy, because they are so alienated and have no idea of the real substance of life.”

Billy-Joe did know it better. Only ignorants and misled spoke that way. And he didn't stay closer to them as to the ignorant world-citizens. He wouldn't expell even Tibor from that. His understanding of nature, after all, which he had brought here from the Mongolian steppe, you could forget, as this was pretty 'kaput' I.e. cracked or broken).

Tibor admitted that. However he still didn't see himself questioned basically. What you experienced in his Mongolian homeland was not so much the closeness with nature, but the heritage of a hard warrior culture. In the steppe a high culture experienced itself in these days on the decline. Therefore lasting agreements with nature would be searched in vain. Still certain knowledge had been kept in the collective memory with a natural appeal.

Billy-Joe knew it better. His own people stood miles ahead of the true savages as they had found refuge in Tasmania, but that he only knew by rumour.

Thus, this position broke apart soon, as soon as you took it for granted. The so-called bad technology was always in the hands of the other side. Still the world-citizen faction gave way sometimes. Perhaps had - what they gave free - not even a name. It was as if they suffered from a blind spot, as if they didn't notice the big danger, but still meant everything would go on somehow. As if progress was broad enough. As if progress would allow anything, and wouldn't smash doors and gates on its way to doom until the natural basis of existence was used up wholly, to be destroyed irreversibly. It needn't be true what the beings of good-will believed and hoped. They hoped for real genuine chances on every junction. They believed, that the direction could be altered any time. And they certainly believed, that they were able at any time to give the whole affair a push into the right direction.

Just right now – the bionic revolution! How many hopes were connected with it. But what was reality like? What was done with all those sensational discernments and discoveries? – Well, nobody really knew. What was going on in the wide world outside there, nobody overlooked.

Too much happened, and the amount of people had become too big. Despite the fact that the means of communication tended towards infinity, while the individual still was left alone with two ears and two eyes and one head. How should an individual ever dig what was really going on in the world, whose witness he was?

It's easily said "up to date on the height of times" The world-citizens claimed such a position. But could they fill it? Of course not, they were in the same situation as the Infernal Brotherhood, they became left behinds too soon. The train had gone without them, while the future started in any moment. Man can only run after it. He can't get more.

Well, had there been opened a loophole in the meantime? Were there apparatuses like the SLOMES, which put aside the mist over the future? For short moments and for able spectators? This dream of mankind would never be fulfilled. Who broke through the timeline, who saw further than the foggy cloud waved, might see something, but what he saw, had not necessarily to do with the track of history, he was trapped in. There were more or less bigger likelinesses, but not more. After all, something moved on the time scale.

Delaying the time or stop it, is easily said. With reference to the future that would mean, that it had to wait a little. That its entrance was hindered, because someone or something had erected a barrier, the future couldn't get over, but had to take time. Not much, but noticeably enough. Summed up for all parallel lives on earth of all contemporary individuals, this was a remarkable quantity. Perhaps one or two big world seconds – or how was such a sum measured? That would add up to – let's say – ten years per SLOMES user (and that would be comparatively small in case you believed in the euphemistic reports of prolonged living, as could be read online already.)

These could of course be pomposities. And were most likely such. Well, may it be. Everything was glueing tightly together, astoundingly enough. If the whole SLOMES – stuff contained only ten years per individual, that would mean with ten billion of earthlings a remarkable one hundred billion saved years of life-time. The years would not pass by, but were still going to pass by. They built, so to speak – a hidden part of the future. To be exact, part of many likely futures.

Was it okay to sum them up? In theory this could be done easily and could help to understand. If a man had 100.000 hair on his head (which he has in average), and if those hair would grow daily zero point three three

three millimeters (what they do in average), they would grow thirtythree metres per day. But of course set in sequence, what a hair never does in reality.

Both phenomena are impressive, without doubt, while the time itself saves only ten years in those one hundred billion years. If time has such a conscience at all, and understands what is meant by saving, which is unlikely, and can surely be doubted.

After all, everything is just a question of perspective, and then many human senses come into the game, those predicted odds, everything has to pass what is wanting at us or should be wanting or shouldn't. The shut off is in the end more difficult. Our eyelids are rather thin, and the ears hear to the inside as well. Not to talk about feelings or thinking. When we think, a form of sensuality comes up, which looks indeed strange to the one or other.

20. The Conflict

The women section of the Council understood themselves more and more as a third party in the internal battle for the correct line. Part of their position was of course the defense against all disturbances. Where-ever the polarization occurred as a disturbance, it wasn't spared. This led to the forming of a third party. There were of course other reasons as well. But such were hidden in the dark, and had to do with the gender alteration of the Advisor.

Over the many years Arundle did know him, she thought him to be transgender. But why then this latest outing as effeminized twitter? Being now a kind of female, and that meant, that he had before been male. Otherwise the gender transfer didn't make sense.

The Advisor/ess would have vehemently opposed such assumption. She would have argued, that it was for any female harder to live, think and speak. Only therefore she came up with the idea of changing sexes.

"I do not want to expose myself repressive again", she uttered jovially – almost like the Advisor himself, who was fond of such gestures, and was certainly still hiding inside the Advisoress.

Arundle was a little sad, while she accepted the necessity. Because it didn't help insisting, that women should show courage and empower themselves. They just didn't do it. Either not at all or in a strange and peculiar way, as if they wanted to please and to become loved and wanted.

This they longed for doing without men. Still their behaviour differed, as soon as a man was around. Even for herself, Arundle could realize the change.

Now there was the third faction, instead of peace coming in. The beauty or also the problem of the third faction was, that they were cut of a different wood, so to speak. Yes, there was a cut right through some woman, whether she admitted or rejected.

Some stood with three legs in all three factions, if this would have been possible. As Arundle and after all also Grisella could gain a lot good from all three factions. They could see the dialectical coherence instead of the antagonisms.

While the female position wasn't really a position in the true meaning of the term. But that wasn't the isolation either, if you thought about it properly. And the world-citizenship forwarded a psychological condition better than a point of view.

Still grave decisions derived from those factions, and pointed way forward into the future, and set the course for tomorrow, while nobody really knew, what was produced here and now. What was coming, was written on another sheet on the back of the wall, so to speak. From here, you didn't get far with wishes, despite the forming facts.

Everybody would immediately accept, that a red wall, which overcame the nagging tooth of time, would remain. Perhaps a little less red, but all in all it would remain a red wall. You could compare this the other way, looking backwards at remaining walls the like. If it was built well and solid, such walls withstood centuries. No other than the ancient oak-trees, if not cut by a saw, because a conquestive Emperor had had to raise a fleet out of nothing, and had by each frigate used up two and a half thousand two hundred years old oak-trees.

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The Advisoress let Arundle know that she intended to take a more male attitude again. While she couldn't say what that changed for whom. "It's like with those high heels. You put them on and after the first seconds

in panic you realize, how you become straightened, how the proportions gain consequences. And you know once more – yes – I’m a woman, and I like to be a woman. – For a man lesser such aids are available. Some say a uniform induces a push that way, comparable to the high heels. But I don’t really know. Well, I never put on a genuine uniform. What we in heaven put on for garment can hardly be called a uniform. While a certain equality is produced, which might even be intended, I am almost sure. Quite likely to school-uniforms, which form equality. Nobody feels better, nobody shows privileges or the opposite, what sometimes is even harder. Its all a matter of the point of view. I presume.”

The Advisoress halted for a meaningful break, before she went on: “Well, things that equalize us and fix us and take or even steal our individuality from us, aren’t helpful in advancing our own thinking and judging. They fulfill the purpose of uniformity, no doubt about that. While womanliness is of course no uniform you can get rid of like high-heels and the like. No matter, whether she will be brought into limelight by such accessories.”

Tired by her long speech, the Advisoress faded visibly, even sooner than her words did.

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The Hotel to the Hub of the World reevaluated in new glamour – much likely more professional and more invitive, with reference to the long distances and the furnishing of the bedrooms on the platoons. Supported by a fully furnished vessel for all kinds of cruises.

The dwarves on Susamee’s island had been busy as well, and had arranged the public areas the best they could, thus the subsoil trip became a genuine adventure. Influenced by the paternoster system on the home island, they invented on Susamee’s island a similar installation - at least by principle. Instead of the boring up and down of the functional part, imagination had taken over. Out came a mix of kind of roundabout, Mary-go-round, and ghost train. The trip was acoustically accompanied by sweet sounds of the self-induced horse-headed violin. The music fitted to the video clips, which hushed by on the walls of the tunnels rather lively and realistic.

Things like that became of course known in the designers’ world and all those better off people among the inaugurated, who could afford

tourism, got to know this way what was offered down there, deep under, so to speak. And who ever had left behind a bit of a colour-talent inside, such a trip was a must. Hoping to be accepted as a tourist, while the talent didn't suffice any more for the sight, while hadn't been accepted as a student. Which was rather often the case with the offspring of former disciples. There was certainly no-one who had rejected the chance to get in and become one of the chosen few.

That was of course unfair to all the gifted underdogs, who were all over the world. They wouldn't even get close to a travel agency, rather than even booking a journey. For doing so, they lacked of everything, last but not least of credits.

In the slums and reservations other laws did govern. That, however, didn't mean that there weren't as many talents as elsewhere, probably even more. But they weren't found by the talent-scouts.

So the Isolationists feared that a middle class spring-tide was due, and that the few vacancies each year would be blocked, so that those in need would again be left behind. which certainly couldn't be it.

While the proportion since Arundle's and Billy-Joe's entry had been fifty fifty, the ratio of the slum kids went down over the following years continuously. While the renovation of the hotel gave the whole thing another dramatic push in the wrong direction.

The incongruity existed, all of them agreed, not only the isolationists, or naturists and how else they meanwhile addressed themselves, especially those who contradicted the world-citizens. While the world-citizens didn't feel well facing such a one-sided development.

Meanwhile the percentage dropped down to below ten and even further, because the talents, who showed up as rucksack-tourists soon built the mainstream. And no matter how serious they were examined and sorted, they showed a fair amount of talent. Especially those in the colour range of blue and grey, while the green and red shades lacked.

But this was already known by Moschus Mogoleya, who went on scout-tour every year by now, and was gone even further and even checked the jungle areas meanwhile. Which caused him, as a child of the steppe, a good amount of trouble and inner resistance. Could it be, that he looked so unsuitable in the green damb thicket of the jungle? He didn't approach the people over there. They ignored him and showed him a cold shoulder, so to speak, and kept in the hide, what he was so eagerly looking for.

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The office of the School of Inbetween was in close contact with a lot of NGOs and welfare organizations in the slums on the Southern half of the globe. There were especially desinged brochures and handouts, explaining how to look for talents and how to recognized them. While the helpers were untalented altruists, who cared about the fighting of misery all over.

The life didn't get easier with such 'exots', as some of the world-citizen pupils addressed them, in a kind of high-brow attitude. A trend which caused trouble for Arundle. She and Billy-Joe remembered quite well the start-off problems, Billy-Joe had to overcome. It weren't the educational deficits as such – which surely did play a role – while the social background had been all the more important.

Although the teachers of the School of Inbetween had then blamed the different talents. That even might have been true. The sociological differences had however come on top in any case. Still, in the long run, former enemies became best friends, as the example of Tibor showed, who couldn't stand Arundle in the beginning, while now they were best friends.

For the tribes out there and for the slums the absolvents of the School of Inbetween were of remarkable value. The Maroon thing most likely developed the way it did under the leadership of former students, who returned after school to their homelands, to take over responsible positions, as chiefs or shamans with the tribes, or in the ghettos, often as scouts towards change – the so-called 'Maroonisation' – being in full swing. while such facts didn't bother the mainstream, instead vice versa would have been seen with mere pleasure, had there not been the devastating term of 'Marginalisation'. (A similar unword as had been 'Maroonisation' before already.)

Scruples caused such a development – and that was a shame – seldom enough among the world-citizen-orientated main stream of society, at the utmost once in a while.

The world-citizens of the School of Inbetween were not that kind of ignorants, but were in fact miles away. The social orientation for them wasn't at all easy and not really precise. All agreed on that. Nobody however had an idea for a more precise term – like as well on the other side with those isolationists, who lacked clarity as well. Both sides only knew about the contradictions. While other differences lost contour and faded in foggy distance.

But the difference existed, no doubt about that, despite the foreground harmony, which had existed before the catastrophe. – now with the devastation of the hotel and the lagoon, the contradictions came up like lava.

The isolationists might have liked it even better to just put away the debris and let nature take over the lagoon again. They spoke that way anyway. But as they had no chance of winning, such a lip confession was easy peasy for them. – After all the Paternoster existed, they argued. People could reach the other side with dry feet, no matter what was going on on the surface, so the reconstruction of the lagoon didn't effect the subsoil installations at all. And for the sailors a genuine regatta course would again be available. Thus they opposed the 'Reconstructionists'. While everybody knew quite well, what it had been like before. Without the surrounding the gap between the islands had been a dangerous trap. It hadn't been suitable for sailing or surfing or swimming at all. Even when the weather had been fairly fine.

Therefore no objections were raised right away. And the older – first of all Billy-Joe – remembered this time very well. Even the hardest fighters for the re-naturalization admitted, that no races had taken place there - at no time. Instead the incalculable suction of the sea, once in a while, kept away any boat. The only time when a boat crossed, was when the Convertors left the mother island to pass over to the other, which was done by means of a strong motorboat.

The waters in turmoil had been stilled by the installation of the shark-defense device, and thus became indeed a kind of a lagoon. All the more with the settling of the pontoons and houseboats, thus the natural flow of the water was disrupted.

Billy-Joe was one of the leading isolationists and nature-lovers. His word weighed, and the critic passed, thanks to his clarification, without effect.

While good-natured Dorothea picked up the suggestion eagerly. A course for sailing-boats was a splendid idea, and exactly what she had had in mind. For that she certainly would give up those fancy little bridges and things between the pontoons, which had proved so vulnerable.

By limiting the reconstruction, the Hotel would become smaller, but the lagoon more attractive. and would fit perfectly into the new pattern, as if made for what was coming up. The masses wouldn't come anyway, they

had been rejected before already, since the entry conditions had been limited because of the increasing acts of sabotage.

Without aura you were dismissed undoubtedly, or rebooked on an alternative tour. Dorothea had arranged for a contract with a travel agent in Sydney. The alternative was an island, close to Susamee's, however without so much ado, like dwarves dwelling, glittering caves paternoster and the like. Well, not yet. While things were underway the busy dwarves signaled. For the time being a water ballet could be seen performed by actors, who had been masked with invisible masks – so it said in the brochure. In reality Corinia and Boetie finally succeeded with their idea, which was challenging them ever since.

The disappointment wouldn't become all that overwhelming. Although the customers had been informed about trouble with the aura. There were even TV-colour-testing-stations installed where you could test your disposition.

Those installations worked with a utilization-factor of two to one hundred, which wasn't bad. Those who passed the test had a ninety nine percent chance of passing the real test as well.

However, those testing facilities weren't established everywhere, but only at certain busy points round the globe. And there you had to find them first of all. Well, yes, that was already part of the adventure, you were facing. Those who lacked patience and stamina failed right away. Without the inner call you tried in vain.

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Thus Dorothea got green light again and the naturalists convulsed inside, while nothing could be argued. All limits were kept, and secrets as well. Nobody would be able to spot the location of the island, definitely not the correct one.

There was still that uneasiness. The isolationists felt betrayed and sold. They felt being opposed at the pillory and delivered to the world public, who couldn't do better than spreading lies and forgeries about and over them. By tricky assumptions put here and there, more and more of the truth and secrets of the islands were on the verge of becoming disclosed. And if nothing could be found, fake news became invented. To the readers outside it didn't matter, as long as the news sounded sensational, and sensational was almost everything Dorothea uttered, because she was so beautiful.

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Meanwhile pictures governed the reportage and texts only accompanied. Thrilling pictures said more than a thousand words. Taking photos was of course not allowed, definitely those that appeared in the web right away, but couldn't be stopped.

There were meanwhile reporters of the unscrupulous kind enough – what mattered aura to them!

At that time, nobody knew of the falsifications on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, allowing also normal beings without aura to get access. In most of such cases it was a blue-grey shade, which was easiest to be fixed to the body and lasted for almost one week. You got awful pimples from the paint and looked like a sprinkler box, but what didn't people all do for success and a good series of photos. If the photos were the right ones, you had enough to live on for a couple of years, or even life-long.

The site where to acquire such a fake aura was located in the old town of Sydney, in the backyard of a tattoo-studio, and was committed by an old well known acquaintance named Anastasio Baranasias.

The means for the fake was a pasture mixed with phosphor. The whole body had to be generously rubbed with such ointment. Those who underwent the procedure shone even for the trained eye – greyish-blue – and passed the sluice as a Somnior or Animator right away. If not rechecked by the automatic scanner, because it didn't indicate alike. So the entry of the betrayers was at least contradictory. While the individuals in question insisted on their right of entry, and demanded a recheck in person by an orderly commission. Before that, they argued, you couldn't be dismissed, just like that.

Well, the commission then saw what they were supposed to see: the gray-blue shade on the blank skin on arms and legs, on the head, and if this was demanded, on the whole naked body as well. Still such a candidate was examined with mistrust, because his aura didn't shine through the lightest shirt or pants, but had nevertheless granted entry, as to the regulations.

At first nobody uttered objections, until the administration became alerted by fake news in the press, with teasing photos. At that point the reopened hotel was busy again, and finally the penny dropped. Security

had been noticed, the fake pasture was detected and the betrayers dismissed.

Unfortunately many fakes were online and couldn't be erased any more, no matter how hard Dorothea tried. Anybody could get access to those reports at any time. But Dorothea didn't give in and began to publish in the web matters of interest related to the islands, and soon had millions of followers. Her pages soon acquired much more attention than the dirty sites of the pirates, as she quickly addressed the enemies of the islands. Which gave them an unwanted publicity push, but couldn't be helped. So the culprits had a name at last, and that was better than no-name.

The secret agent in Sydney, Anastasio Baranasias, was upset. While he had followed the development with great fun in the beginning, when things went down for the islands, as he had a personal chicken to pluck with that rooster Henne, and with the other hen, who claimed the grand title of a President: The rooster and the hen – Anastasio Baranasias almost died of laughter about such – as he saw it – unbeatably fabulous joke of his.

The whole mishpoke over there caused him a sour throat, as they had done him great harm, and had interfered with all his plans. Which wasn't funny at all. So it was only just, that he pulled their legs. The secrecy was their weak point, that he knew from former days. He would get them right there.

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Baranasias was only a meek shade of his former being. As a matter of fact he was only the alter ego, who had lost his person. His person had gone for good and it was all their fault. - It was all their fault. Because as an alter ego you weren't a real human any more and had to run a life in the shade. That was why he had to hide and live in the dark. He didn't even have personal documents. He had been buried, since that woman had come, and had claimed to be his wife. While Henne conquered such snake that old horny chum.

At that time he had been dismissed, as if a snake got rid of its skin, and leave it behind. But he wasn't dead, but still alive, and he felt what life was, and what he felt was horrible.

Now he ran a life in the shade, and there it fitted well into the picture that he produced shades, so to speak. Those side-effects of the potion weren't at all harmless, as he made his clients believe. Yet, most of his clients didn't listen anyhow, but were eager to gain the camouflage.

However there were side-effects and long range consequences. The aspirants were poisoned by phosphor, and there was no help, the disease ended deadly. All that for a couple of photos and the satisfaction of having them in the papers for weeks, while the amount of credits wasn't too bad either, they got for them. Honour and bargain – two sides of one medal.

At that time they didn't know about the devilish effects of the elixer, they had been poisoned with. Had they known, the majority had surely rejected.

Baranasias was less than half a person, because he was the alter ego of a revived. Would his human be simply dead, he wouldn't be any more either. As it was, he was just earthly junk, left behind, while an astral figure erected, in order to jubilate up there or what ever resurrected beings do.

Life couldn't do without trash, for them either. A little dirt and garbage was left behind, no matter how strong the clensening had been beforehand. An earthly life they all had lived, so trash couldn't lack. They all produced debris. You could also call them side-effects, just like Baranasias' lotion, which had the inconvenient side-effect of a sneaking death.

His false name had eventually been Henry, but being his alter ego, he found Anastasio fitting better. The real Henry didn't exists any more that was why he was so shrivelled and wizened – no real human being any more. Therefore he didn't need anything anymore: A little tobacco for stuffing the pipe, one or two glasses of liquor daily, that was all he needed.

21. Anastasio, the Alter Ego

Henry Anastasio Baranasias he had to call himself. A Professor from Toronto, despite the fact, that he hardly had acquired the necessary command of English for such a profession. Such those sly fools hadn't

taken into account. He, himself had never admitted, especially not when it came to the break, and one catastrophe followed another.

One day the former assistant stood in front of his door. Covered with blisters all over. As mutilated as he was, Anastasio had to grant him refuge. He had cared for his blisters, standing the moaning and groaning for weeks, while becoming less and lesser by the time, when the subject named Waldschmitt took a shark turn of one hundred and eighty degrees, and presented himself as a ‘Do-gooder’, because his daughter had laid hands on him. She and her begotten appendage on those rotten islands, from where so much might shone up. Being the wrong nevertheless.

In those days there had been support. But then their master secretly abandoned, and left them alone with the debris of his reign. And they didn’t have better things to do but attacking each other. While that woman was mainly responsible for that. It was her and only her who forced man against man, mating with the victor, that horny bitch.

They all had to pay the bitter toll. The woman lost her life and Baranasias lost his life and his identity. And Catalanius lost his appearance, that altered in the fire of the state prison of Adelaide. It was a wonder that he survived the fire, while being distorted for the rest of his life.

Would Baranasias had been the same, he would have sent him away when he stood there so pitiable, and didn’t know what to do or where to go. A hunted criminal on the desperate search for refuge. And now this bloke was sitting here, as his factotum – or was it the other way round, meanwhile? Because shades of themselves they both were. Horrible and pitiable as they were, but didn’t limit their wickedness.

Thus they came about that devilish lotion and sold it for good bargain to the greedy reporters. They were all thankful – had just known! While the two inventors didn’t know by themselves what the outcome might be. Nobody knew about the side-effects at this state. The two cheaters couldn’t be blamed. Besides, what ever happened could be charged against the islanders, while the strangest things went on over there, anyway.

Tests with mice proved loss of hair but naked the nicest aura you could think of. Ugly as the naked creatures were they soon covered up with awful ulcers. The guineepigs didn’t do much better, although they didn’t fade right away. The testers thought that a success, and closed the test phase. What pigs could stand, was good for humans, was their conclusion.

As they didn't ask for permission, there was no need for, they had nothing to care or fear. The only thing they cared was that a proband faded right away and hung on like that for the coming weeks. And so it was. That was why they took their wonder-medicine for granted. All the more, as it served its purpose. And this they realized when they learnt about the intimate photos from the islands, and filled the pages of the rainbow-press all over the world.

Hundreds of greedy reporter asked for access, and found their way to the backyard tattoo-studio, where you could get the miraculous lotion. It was the safe entrance key to the island, if you acted clever enough and didn't out yourself as a reporter, but hide as a dynamic backpacker.

Not all of them could jump on that train, be it that they were too old or too fat, or lacking the intellectual touch backpackers supposed to have, or else. Not all, who asked for entry were accepted. Thus Catalanius offered flanking attempts of adjustment. Baranasias was too weak for that. Besides, he was most of the time absent minded. The liquor ate up his brain, while lacking the original body anyway. Thus it was a wonder that he still was alive.

As Catalanius looked awful with his burnt face, the assistant helped him. Unfortunately it was not the same as the previous one, who had been killed by Catalanius in a spell of jealousy. The assistant was new, a kind of double, that looked quite like the original. While the brain and the character differed remarkably, as to Catalanius, who was hard to please. Perhaps things changed in memory, as often happens, we desire something so badly that we think it had been ours before.

In order to simplify things, both men addressed the double Viola, who didn't know what it was about with that name, so she didn't mind. The more so as she came out of the gutter and was glad to find a solid provision.

The false Viola developed a certain cleverness, how to outnumber Catalanius' orders, who remained in the background, because he looked so awful.

For the tourists they had to act the 'Do-gooder'-part. Those on the island stressed on that behaviour. Not only the aura had to fit, second came right away this 'Do-gooder'-thing, and had to be presented wholly authentic. Of course no reference of being reporters or journalists had to be dropped by purpose of by accident.

Since the latest publications, which became known on the islands as well, the people there became even more careful. Still it took quite a while til the controllers finally recognized the false aura, produced by the phosphoric lotion.

Before, other devices had been tested already. The first instrument had been a kind of lie-detector. The test with that instrument served as a means of checking the Do-godder-appeal. and was re-established and used now again as a side-effect device.

But this hurdle was also overcome by the swindlers Baranasias and Catalanius. They produced mock-examans, right at the time the detector was installed, which gave the absolvents a certain chance of outnumbering the device.

Assistant Viola trained the candidates, how to overcome the test. She rented a lobby in one of the more reasonable hotels in town, so that the affair looked impressive, and to push the charges up.

The bigger publishing houses didn't care about costs, and payed any price, as long as they got access and at best placed a mole inside. The preparatory seminars boomed, and soon there was no chance for individuals of getting in, no matter how much money was involved. In questionable cases the organizer claimed support, while the lotion was handed out anyway only at the very end of a course, as the crowning highlight and confirmation of the exam. While a new mole with the Do-gooder-label was born together with the fitted fake-aura by means of the phosphatic lotion.

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As can easily been imagined, such development led towards dramatic turmoil on the islands. The two approaching parties were drifting apart again. One side spoke about the closing down of the hotel, while the other favoured a stricter entry-control.

Dorothea didn't want to hear anything about closing. For that, the enterprise was far too good, and far too beautiful, and beamed and radiated into all the world, as was the job and sense of the hub of the world.

The aim and target had to be kept in sight. There was no sense in baking small rolls, so to speak, and to rescue the own skin, while the whole wide world was to become rescued. How should you influence a

development, or even determine its course, when nobody took notice, while you were hustling in the unknown, at best you could.

More important was to spread not only the SLOMES, but the ideology and view of life connected with it. For the machine it didn't matter, what ideas the user had in mind. They functioned for all and all the same, and served a diabolical brain and a black heart no other than a good one.

The web as a mode of distribution was nice and dandy, but didn't suffice, so said Dorothea. The web was just one way – and not the best. Face to face contact was much more impressive, and was by far more effective, while it could seem just a little drop of water on a hot stone.

The few that were visiting the islands, were of course little more but nothing, compared to the masses, which had to be moved. But those affected by the spirit of the islands became located into influential positions, they became multipliers. The effect and radiation wasn't to be underestimated, after all.

Dorothea therefore suggested to install holiday-crash-courses for late-comers with regard to talent and achievement of the SLOMES certificate. Using the resources of the University. So that the adults didn't feel dumb, when sitting with pupils, which easily could happen in the School of Inbetween.

This was the solution also for the other problem which threatened to split the community. Because in such courses soon came up, who was false and fake. A little colour on the skin didn't do in such courses, you had to hoist your true colours the genuine way. While you noticed the aura with others only when gifted yourself.

This way the swindlers were disclosed. Watchman Will Wiesly became a true investigative specialist. He proved psychological intuition, and succeeded in several cases of confessions. The disclosed showed repentance, because the life on the islands was convincing, and demanded highest respect. Many of the disclosed would have given a fortune for being allowed to stay on the islands for good.

While such cases increased, the Deans of the university installed special seminars for renegades, which were highly frequented, the more so when Dorothea gave a monthly lecture. She managed to tickle out of them, what Watchman Will Wiesly had overlooked.

Thus the offspring of the unpleasant manure was soon found, that had spoilt the everyday-life on the islands. One day Dorothea undertook it in

person to answer the challenge. As boss of the administration she was responsible for the orderly immigration and the regular flow of the tourists. For reasons, she didn't quite understand, she asked Emeritus Hans Henny Henne to accompany her, as well as his newly wedded spouse, who both of them whole-heartedly agreed. Did they get a chance to once again dive into civilization While Hilde wasn't used to so much solitude. For that reason she often undertook the voyage on the vessel with the dwarves or the Convertors, they meanwhile also preferred the sea-route, although it took its time.

Such a trip was after all more romantic, and reminded Hilde Henne of her stormy romance that had changed her life so dramatically. She never regretted one single day, although Hansiman snored terribly. There was little chance to alter, so he would take the chance in Sydney to see a specialist.

Mrs. Henne asked Arundle for company. Together they wanted to have a look on maternity- and baby garment. Arundle didn't want to go without Billy-Joe – who should – as she saw it – show also interest in everyday affairs, instead of only caring for the underprivileged.

Was she – after all – not allowed to make herself known? she asked rhetorically, with a light hysteric aflux, which might be caused by the pregnancy and the output of hormones. She insisted, in any case, on the same rights, and her obligation, while Billy-Joe had no objection to withdraw from her. Why should he? He confirmed, honest as he was, and that he wanted to be.

Billy-Joe was no hard-core naturalist and isolationist any more, and he wasn't dogmatic either, dogmatism was against his nature, while he agreed in many dogmatic affairs. So he couldn't swallow everything – all the more from his kin. When they bothered him all too stupidly, and tried to span him before their bleak cart, because he had just offered himself, and because his voice weighed heavy everywhere. He wished to stay and remain available for affairs of conviction instead.

Now he was looking forward to stroll over the shopping mall with Hans Henny Henne and Hilde, and have a look at the one or other utensil, that they were going to need soon.

On the island a nice place had been found for the young couple. Not just sea-bound, as Arundle had wished, but also not too far away from the waters, so that Billy-Joe could go on with his spleen of spending the nights in the open undisturbed. While a solid roof was available for the going-to-

be family. It was an attractive dwelling at the edge of the village on the University-Isle. Arundle had furnished it comfortably. While she pitied a little that she had to say a final farewell to the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, no matter how close it still was – hardly a mile away.

Since the great flood, living on the water – as it used to be – was out. While meanwhile some boats scratched the edges, where tourists and dissidents resided. All those who couldn't get or didn't want access to the stone house on the pier.

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The party got on the helicopter in bright sunshine. Watchman Will Wiesly had finally overcome the limitations, thanks to a perfect testimony. From now on he was again allowed to set foot on the grounds of Australia, which had been prohibited for quite a while.

He took the opportunity and traveled under the wings of the little party back into the seducing arms of a metropolis. The quarter he intended to visit, was well known to him. And change had been almost none, he noticed, while looking for that tattoo booth, where they suspected the centre of the espionage to be located.

The area was almost as dark as the sky, while it still was daytime. A thunderstorm was on the verge of coming up, as it was used to the time of the year.

The booth soon was found. Billy-Joe and Watchman Will Wiesly formed the vanguard, while the others were waiting in a taxi, Dorothea directed round the corner. What both intended they did hardly know themselves. First of all they wanted to look around unsuspecting. They might as well ask for a tattoo.

In fact Will Wiesly intended to get a nice tattoo in the back. Susamee had challenged him that way, and he had no objections, of course. But this needn't be right here. Such a piece of art was first of all a matter of trustworthiness. And that was definitely not given here.

They were welcome by an elderly middle-aged lady, who had seen better days, but still was attractive enough to catch the attention of Will Wiesly, who blushed when asked for the purpose of their coming in, as if that wasn't all too clear in a tattoo shop.

Will Wiesly forwarded his demand without getting precise as to where the tattoo should become located, the shop-assistant shook her head and said:

“Today is no good tattooing, oui Monsieur? Coming again other day...”

“...no, no we are journalists and would like to see the boss. We would like to know if he can help us, as we were told. We have heard of an island, you only get on when you are shining like a glow-worm at night...” Billy-Joe stepped in, while the woman intended to turn around and disappear behind the curtain, replacing the door, leaving the room right away.

She stopped and grinned more friendly. Billy-Joe seemed to have hit the proper jack.

“New clients, Viola?” a voice from the back was heard. The woman nodded in silence.

They had a foot in the doorway, so to speak.

“...give me a down-pay of one thousand credits and name. Going to Intercontinental hotel tomorrow, ask for Professor B a r a n a s i a s, oui Monsieur?” She stressed on each letter of the name. And raised her hand as if writing it into the air.

Billy-Joe pulled out the checkbook, which was practically out of use meanwhile, and looked for a pin-pad, then scribbled, signed and handed it to the woman who took it and checked it against the light, even smelled at it, then put it into the drawer of the cash desk. The slip of paper with the names on, she also threw in, as if getting rid of garbage.

Someone spending a thousand credits would certainly come, and if not, just too bad.

Billy-Joe asked for the exact time of the meeting tomorrow, and if any reference was required, but the woman waved him off. “Come any time after ten”, she said in a hurry on the verge of disappearing in the back, from where a scar hand stretched for her.

22. The Crash-Course

That was it for today with the defense against espionage. The party went to the hotel, Dorothea had booked for them, and after a quick lunch they headed for the Shopping Mall. However the elderly people couldn't stand the speed of the youngsters and said goodbye for a break in one of the cafes alongside.

Packed like a mule Billy-Joe trotted behind Arundle and was pleased by her fun, despite the fact that he lacked of the proper sense for such amusement.

By now only close acquaintances noticed the change in Arundle's appearance. But things changed from day to day, and soon she would need the dresses and hangers, she was looking for now.

"We surely have better things to do than celebrating a big party, you certainly realize", Arundle told her mother, when she asked later at night if a wedding was due now. Mrs. Henne had in fact thought the two had been looking for wedding gear.

Mrs. Henne nodded devoutly, however she didn't see any cause of hindrance. As to her nothing special was pending, she enjoyed the everyday life of the islands and lived carelessly day by day. She couldn't tell her engaged daughter, of course not, who was feeling on her fragile shoulders the weight of the whole world, feeling responsible for each and everything. So she was – her Arundle.

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Precisely at ten o'clock the following morning, Watchman Will Wiesly and Billy-Joe Karora stood in the lobby of the Intercontinental Hotel and asked for the symposium of Professor Baranasias.

The friendly lady at the reception checked her records then asked for their names. – "Ah, yes, Karora and Wiesly, here you are." she said after a while of concentrated skimming. Obviously the book-keeping hadn't been as sloppy as it looked the day before in the tatoo booth.

The woman from the tattoo shop was also totally transmuted. In her elegant cocktail dress she looked absolutely serious, had there not been that certain acrid tension around her mouth, uncovering unwillingly some kind of beastly cruelty.

Professor Baranasias on the other hand gave the impression of an absent minded intellectual, as if he wasn't all here, but waved like a shadow in the background. He also didn't speak, but let his assistant do the

talking, who obviously tried hard to overcome her accent. She couldn't deny her French origin, but didn't sound vulgar any more, but charming.

"What the surrounding make a change" Billy-Joe thought, and Watchman Will Wiesly once again was on the verge of becoming again the victim of the siren, like many years before. Which couldn't actually be possible as all the world had become alarmed by the terrible crime. The media had been full with it. However the likeliness was so stunning, that he mistrusted his cognition.

Yesterday in the tattoo booth he had been uneasy already, but now he felt so deeply moved, that he had but one thought, how to escape from here. But it was already too late.

They weren't the only guests. You noticed right away that the others didn't come from here, and why they had come. "Funny enough" Billy-Joe thought "Some people you spot miles away of their profession." – They would come into trouble at the intensified entrance procedures, since it had become known that spies were sneaking around on the islands.

Watchman Will Wiesly was too stunned and puzzled, to think at all. But he couldn't make his eyes turn away from the woman. He noticed how he was drawn towards her, as if she was the North pole and he a loose piece of iron. How would that work out, after all?

More and more candidates came by half past ten, and the Symposium began. The lady introduced herself as Viola Dupree. The name electrified Watchman Will Wiesly of course once more and shocked him so deeply, that he almost fainted.

Instead of listening and taking notes, as would have been his duty, he stared at the woman and clung to her lips as if he was dying with thirst.

Billy-Joe, who noticed that something was wrong with him, pushed him, and whispered somewhat angry, as it seemed to be wholly up to him, to disclose and record the foregoing of the culprits.

Dorothea wanted to know what exactly these people knew, and what the purpose of the Symposium was. Billy-Joe was happy to finally find that out at last. This was a clear introduction into the interior affairs of both islands, filled with absolutely secret details and insider knowledge. Billy-Joe was deeply shocked.

There certainly was a leak and there had to be a mole. Billy-Joe couldn't explain or understand otherwise, what he learnt in that session.

The Symposium seemed to come to an end. Each participant got a sheet full of instructions, together with a tube of lotion, that had to be rubbed in a day before the trip, carefully all over the body.

Prepared this way, you should get to the islands just like that, all the more if you put on the camouflage suit on top, that could be purchased right away. The younger you looked, the better. As well you should prepare a suitable legend and keep that in mind for the whole stay, how you managed to learn from the existence of the islands. If possible, you should refer to old acquaintance, who had either been themselves on the islands or had knowledge of friends or relatives who had been here or had had something to do with the islands or with absolvents of the School of Inbetween.

Two legends were available, that could be copied and adopted, and altered to the offspring and course of life of the individual. That was very necessary. Otherwise the forgery might become too obvious.

This latter part had been taken up into the preparatory symposion, since the controllers had become stricter. It was the answer to the Do-gooder-scanner, you couldn't overcome otherwise, as it worked like a lie detector.

At the very end of the session the participants had to pay another one thousand credits. Billy-Joe again pulled his check book, but this time there was a pin pad at hand. And Billy-Joe was made reliable with his personal NCA. He would have to clarify this with Dorothea right away.

One thousand credits was no peanuts, you had to manœuvre a heck of a lot to get that cleared without inflow from outside. Will Wiesly also woke up now, as he was also challenged that way.

Both of them feared to become overcharged and be brought into trouble before the correction could be done. Behind the whole credit system the mightiest agencies were hiding, who preferably laid hands on the youth. Whom they ever had in their grip, would never be left alone again as long as he lived. Because the NCAs couldn't be overcome by the solemn own force of any individual.

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In the afternoon Billy-Joe gave a detailed report of what he learned, and Dorothea took care of the Watchman personally. She sent for

Susamee, while Billy-Joe was in contact with Tibor, so that was no problem.

Susamee came at once in order to save, what could be saved. She laid hands on her Will, so that there was no chance for him on other thoughts or demands, and employed all her seducing powers, which still were remarkable.

By that way Watchman Will Wiesly received the intimate tattoo, which took alone half a day. After that he was pretty sensitive and could only rest on the belly.

This way the false Viola came out of his mind, while she was really the wrong one. He was now able again to let the dead rest.

With Professor Baranasias things were a bit more complex. "With him, I don't see clear, yet" Billy-Joe said, who had been able to study him, because he had been rather transparent.

He hardly looked like Waldschmitt, at least not the Waldschmitt Hilde Henne had known. Still he was somewhat genuine, as far as the stripped-off skin of malice was concerned. This part of his, Waldschmitt had forgotten, so it seemed, when he put it aside. How this creature had managed to get to Sydney would remain a secret. Everything else was at last quite clear, and could be reconstructed by the circumstances.

The burnt-out and flame-stained Catalanius disappeared after his successful flight from the state prison of Adelaide and found refuge with Baranasias, and didn't reappear until now. Catalanius worked as a tattooer, while he in fact was no artist of the needle. In public he covered his face with a mask of leather, that made him undiscoverable, for one thing, but mainly because he looked so terrible with his burnt face. While his appearance, as it used to be, was posted all over the places in public buildings and with the police.

Tattooing was nothing but camouflage. Thanks to secret connections to the Do-gooder in eternity the alter ego managed to enter the thoughts and memories of the former being of Waldschmitt. This way the false Professor remembered the whereabouts on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, as he himself had spotted at his time.

Meanwhile things had changed a lot, because of the construction work going on, but the basic set up, as well as the attitude of the individuals, hadn't changed, and had remained calculable to a certain extent.

“Do-gooder, remains Do-gooder, none of them ever gets out of their skin” Baranasias giggled, as he himself was a stripped-off skin, that was why he couldn’t stop giggling.

Such an empty skin of pure malice was a real challenge for Arundle and the Council of the Menora. Such a problem the Advisoress hadn’t taken into account. She hadn’t thought of that, while she should have known. After all, the idea, of having Waldschmitt escape into heaven had been hers right from the start.

Perhaps they had forgotten up there, what a steep career Anonymous had absolved meanwhile, the steepest ever, so to speak. Waldschmitt hadn’t only become Baranasias, but also the famous Anonymous, and what else derived from that. Reasons therefore would remain and wave on forever in the dark of timeless eternity.

Nevertheless, while all institutions failed and only the Almighty’s indisguisable decision was left, things like this weren’t allowed to happen, definitely not up here in heaven. However quick judgments weren’t the things required. First of all clarification was needed. No-one knew as yet, whether the suspected was the true mole. There might be a far stranger connection, the leak wasn’t the real leak, as a matter of fact. But there was another mole somewhere else. A mole, which was much more real. Who could know?

All these co-incidences were, after all, more than extremely strange, the Advisoress had to admit. She didn’t sound very profound or reliable in this matter.

The identity of the false Professor was cleared, more or less, at least in theory, that is, as we all know, gray and colourless. So Dorothea took the right measures. She accepted the challenge and the battle against the disposed skin, wherein pure malice was hiding.

As manager of the university she informed the police, but too late. The trio had flown off. The secret nest in the old town of Sydney was empty. The police’s efforts hadn’t been very intense anyway, because there was no definite charge against Baranasias, and Catalanius hadn’t yet been disguised by Dorothea either.

When the police finally discovered Catalanius’ true identity, which they managed by means of the DER-tests to be found in the studio, he and his companion had left for good.

The latter was no empty leaf either, the police also found out, while her genetic fingerprint was found in the records as well.

Catalanius could easily add two and two. Other than Baranasias he was of solid matter, and could be hunted down. That was why he disappeared, as soon as the love-sick Watchman Will Wiesly disguised his true intentions. He knew both, Catalanius and Baranasias face to face. Had he looked more closely, instead of adoring the false Viola, he would have realized, what was going on, although the appearance of the two had been altered a lot over the years.

His negligence gave the trio a remarkable lead. Immediately after the Symposium or while it still was on, Catalanius had left the scene. The police found the place in the old town of Sydney empty, when they finally showed up. None of the refugees tried to pick up anything. Catalanius must have warned them while still in the hotel. So, not the faintest trace could be found of the false Viola, while the empty shade, once had been Baranasias, had of course faded likewise.

“Perhaps he can dissolve anyway at any time and disappear that way, with his transparent body, in order to reappear elsewhere” Arundle wondered. “That’s rather typical for a Miserior” Billy-Joe agreed.

Arundle had finally made it with her mother to the hotel – packed with loads of shopping. There they learnt of the failed capture.

“You are not going on a gangster chase in space, do you – in your condition?” her mother argued, when Arundle arranged herself to do exactly this. Billy-Joe accompanied her, what else could he do? She ignored her mother’s warning with an annoyed glance.

Arundle was almost sure, that she would come in vain with such a bad news and wouldn’t be able to insist on a statement by the Advisor. But you never know. He might jump about with a naive explanation at hand about the strange and very questionable connection between Anonymous and Baranasias. If there was any such connection left, anyway.

“Almost anything is possible first of all, that should be clear by now, dear” the Advisoress twittered. - In the way the Advisor enjoyed his appearance for the time being.

“The evil is not out of the world, as you surely have noticed, when once overcome. Which is quite a while ago by now, isn’t it?”

“But who thinks of things like that? and then my father, after all – right after his purification. To me it looks like a bottomless negligence. How can such a filthy rotten little alter ego be forgotten just like that, and is now goofing about on earth wholly on its own?” – Arundle hollered

quite upset. The idea that her father had doubled just like that, and in such an awful way, made her sick.

“Doesn’t he himself realize what’s going on with him?” Billy-Joe wanted to know. He couldn’t understand either and shook his head in disbelief.

The Advisoress smiled her sphinx-like smile, which made her look rather cute, and overrode the expressive play of the features of the Advisor.

“No answer is also an answer”, Arundle thought and looked over to Billy-Joe, who shrugged meaningfully. Something told him the truth. Up here, they didn’t have any idea, unfortunately.

“It seems so”, he uttered uneasily. “After all is he your father, and Emperor is he as well, meanwhile. What ever this means. I don’t think that he has any knowledge of such an impertinent appendix of his, he had left behind on earth.”

“If it was him, who left such a monstrous something behind. Perhaps some-one tried to foul him. Could well be, couldn’t it?” Arundle didn’t really believe in what she was just saying, and Billy-Joe didn’t want to argue with her, not in her maternal state, as a matter of fact.

23. The Mole

Billy-Joe remembered his own alter ego quite well. He didn’t dig too deep into its soul, because that wasn’t necessary in his case. For he automatically assumed that there were no differences between his own self and the self of the alter ego, and that it was good enough to explore himself, in order to find out what was going on with his own self and the self of the alter ego.

Could the Emperor not do likewise? Perhaps he just had no idea of that filthy sub-saucer of his, he might indeed had left way behind on earth. If he had known what was slumbering in the hide, being very active as well, he would have taken measures, wouldn’t he? Someone like him was certainly provided with a variety of possibilities.

As far as the alter ego was concerned, it was definitely no mole. The suspected Baranasias hadn’t even been near the islands. How should he then be the mole? Of course he took care of the fake tourists. He trained

and safeguarded them in order to get them on the islands. Someone who knew, that they weren't kosher - and of course, who they really were. The rest was easy peasy. Once on the islands, there was a lot to be seen and to be discovered. The mean creatures found loads of material. You found it everywhere. You had only to bow down, or scratch a little with the tip of your shoe – so to speak.

But what if Baranasias had found a malice way of chasing through the premises, like Miseriors did? Perhaps he sold in Sydney the lotion and the rest he sold on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth?

Familiar enough he was with the whereabouts, as a matter of fact, while having spent some time together with his original assistant on the islands, years ago. He might even be able to slip into the skin of any contemporary fellow. Someone who was engaged with the entry-procedures, or the hotel, for example.

At that past time, there had also been a lot of construction work going on, and dwarves had been busy all over the places. So Baranasias could still be suspected of being the mole again, he would even be the ideal mole. The only question was, what he would look like – well – if it was him, of course, which wasn't certain yet. He had to be seen after all by his compradores from those slippery magazines and gazettes of the yellow press. How else should they have been able to contact him?

And things seemed to be working, as it looked. This was no one day fly from yesterday, which would be disappearing by tomorrow again. If not disguised now, by the responsible security forces once and for all.

Did Baranasias enter his victims like a Miserior? On the other hand was his closeness to his true and former self quite a challenge for the alter ego, all the more they both differed very basically, which actually couldn't really be. While the good and the evil characteristics had been polarized. Still there must have been a connecting clamp. While this was the characteristic of an alter ego. So many things had happened, obviously too much, so that this connection had been cut once and for all. Which hardly could be. The halves shouldn't know anything of each other. While this was by now nothing but pure speculation. There was not the slightest evidence for this conclusion. Even the identity of Barnasias wasn't really ascertained, while indices directed towards his former assistant and dangerous criminal and escapee from the State-prison of Adelaide.

The endangered were alert in any case and anyhow. They surely knew about the malice of the culprits, and what harm they had to fear from them.

Together with Grisella and her clientele, Scholasticus rehearsed all possible suspects. Dorothea joined them right away, the more so, as she had in fact certain suspects in mind, who might turn out to prove the suspicion. But she didn't want to press forward, but wanted to see and hear, what the others had in mind.

Well, they thought about their part. Arundle came up with her old story of the one thousand faces of Malicious Marduk, and Billy-Joe added that the structure of the conflict repeated again and again, and was not only stunning but might by now demand a faster reaction.

"We become insecure and doubt our abilities, and start suspecting each other. That is exactly the climate Malicious Marduk requires, and therefore reproduces it again and again, at best he can."

This back-up by her mate was water on Arundle's mill, so to speak. "This is exactly what he does, and we become trapped again and again. Think just for a moment that Baranasias was connected with the Emperor, i.e. Anonymous or my father. - I don't know how Marduk manages, but somehow he succeeded in reviving a corpse, and fill it with life. But how did he manage to get access to the human remains?- The empty shell looked like the original, didn't it? Don't you remember, in the hotel? Just mere coincidence? And what about Viola and the crippled assistant – well, the latter the least, I'd reckon..."

"And if there had been a clone from the old Waldschmitt, way behind and ahead of his change?" Grisella put in.

"Could well be, after all" Dorothea agreed.

"That would be just in line with the Brotherhood of Infernalialia", Arundle confirmed, who should have known.

"They have certainly produced clones of themselves, in order to exploit them on their pace towards infinite life" Grisella pick up the thread.

"But why Baranasias, and how could the clone adapt the image, while the original changed his sight so often?" Dorothea wanted to know.

"I was thinking up to now, that Malicious Marduk required a real image to slip in. It wasn't clear to me, that he could produce an imago..." Grisella thoughtfully added.

"If he really can..."

“Shall we now go back to the old strategies again?” asked Arundle looking around – “as we handle things then? Our protective umbrella, the counter-strategy and the joint tongue-twister move by Animations and Somniors?”

“For that it is far too early – besides, we don’t know our enemy yet. He hasn’t as yet entered the scene, as a matter of fact, all we have is suspicion...” Grisella assisted.

“Well, yes, the Trolls” Arundle replied “Their permanent upheaval, and now this ultimate attitude, and the picture they show of the dwarves...”

“And of us as well...”, Dorothea nodded. “That’s rather negative.”

“Right you are – we all feel the same. And it’s so unjust. But that is certainly intended. The idea is to provoke us so that we make mistakes and over-react...” - all agreed on that.

“Has there never been some-one neutral down under? Is it really so unacceptable down there?” Arundle wanted to know.

They all looked at each other. No-one had thought of entering the lion’s cave. Only Corinia once dreamed herself down. While she wanted to see Boetie and moved down one level deeper by accident.

“Well, humid was it and not really comfortable. But I didn’t think about it much. Who could imagine that they all became ill? That wasn’t to be foreseen” – Cory added.

“Let’s keep in mind. We should be blamed of something. First the Trolls tune in, then the attack with the disease follows, and now this invasion of false tourists” – Dorothea summed up the crucial points.

“And this right now, while nothing could help, and we overcame everything” Arundle added. somewhat confuse and thoughtfully.

“Right you are, that must be recognized as well, and the way we did it as well. The logistics and everything” – Dorothea referred to Arundle’s hint about the exodus. Because that was exactly what Dorothea had had in mind. “Three thousand bad-tempered dwarves... without the Last Bounty we would have looked rather dumb.”

“Well they hadn’t been as moody as you said. On board they were in the contrary quite gay – really glad to have escaped the miserable rat-hole” – Billy-Joe went in.

“ Our standard suspects we can this time disclose” – Grisella gave the discussion a turn.

“Yes, Captain Leblanc is definitely out of the danger-zone, meanwhile. On the contrary, he definitely improved” - Arundle agreed.

“It all depends on the dwarves this time, in fact on the Trolls and what picture they are presenting. We accepted it without objections” – Billy-Joe couldn’t get rid of the dwarves.

“Yes, we accepted without any objection, trapped in our bad consciousness, we didn’t present ourselves very convincingly” – Grisella was willing to step back and rehearse the whole affair of the dwarves.

“The scenario fits, that’s the handwriting of Malicious Marduk...” Arundle put in.

“While the pieces of the puzzle still won’t fit...” Billy-Joe objected.

“What does that mean?”

“Well, the identity for example. Baranasias is definitely the malicious shadow of your father, no matter how this makes you feel. Your mother confirmed that to us once again. How this could happen, we don’t yet know, but it became true. We can’t deny that” – Billy-Joe objected, although very uncertain, as he accompanied Anonymous on his conversion-trip.

“Leave my mother alone. You don’t want her milling into the circle of suspects, do you? At best then Hansiman as well...” Arundle rejected.

“Suspicious in the way that mean spirits get hold of them, is basically everybody on the islands, there aren’t any exceptions, I’m afraid. We learnt that by troublesome experience in the past.” Grisella put in.

“More important than the question of who is hiding behind Baranasias, is the question of the appearance he has chosen on the islands this time. There is proof enough that Baranasias and Malicious Marduk interact. The latter enjoys malicious jokes by entering innocent people, that’s all too well known” – Judith made herself heard.

“That was how Peter suffered incredibly, and not only Peter...” Dorothea had in mind to limit the circle of the suspects to the hotel. She also tended to neglect the standard suspects, and could that do more easily, while new suspects showed up. Her personal new candidate was the new operator, she had had so much trouble in finding, but only finally succeeded. He was a drunkard and game-addict on top. The liquor she would have excused, but the gambling passion had taken disastrous dimensions and made her quite uneasy.

The man called himself Luther Lommel. He was the typical Hundred-ender, as can be. Someone, who seemed to search voluntarily for swamps to sink in. His whole life did he spend in opening up new scenes of

despair, in order to fill old gaps, until one day he ran completely out of breath and was cashed the traditional awful way.

Dorothea got him out on bail for an incredibly high sum of thirty two thousand credits from one of the most suspicious NCAA (Negative Credit Account Asylum)¹⁰ quite close here, near Adelaide, and saved his life.

Almost in the last minute, just shortly before cashing. (a barbaric custom on the march, which carried on the pure horror into the public debates on the development of the Time-Value-System as a whole.)

However, thankfulness is a weak partner when life carries on. Lommel had promised to regulate his life in future. As a matter of fact, people tend to promise anything in such a situation.

“What happens to the hopeless cases? What shall society do with the notorious cheaters?” – Thus were the sour questions of the self-righteous, who were sitting on the thick credit-cushions, they had inherited, and were angry about those, who behaved as having also such a big cushion, but in fact didn’t. The opposite was the case.

This was why the idea of cashing came up. Those, who had sold their lifetime, and had no chance of ever clearing the negative account, became excluded from the human society, and was reduced to the state of a clone. That meant he could be slaughtered like a clone for repair purposes, in order to complete another human being. Such practice was free of any charge, while in fact it was some kind of murder, or even worse, as the victim lived on as long as the vital organs stayed with him.

Such species – you couldn’t call them individuals – were put into asylums, where they had to wait and see their fate being fulfilled. Before the final and casual decision of the extraction of vital organs, relatives were informed or friends. For the very last time a call for help was published (and Dorothea had answered such a final call in case of Luther Lommel.)

If nobody answered, the fate of the victim was finally sealed. He was distracted into pieces and sold on the organ-market for repair, as far as the condition in which the parts were, did allow. What couldn’t be used here, was then handed over to a pet food producer. By this way a corpse might gain the value it was due, partly or in the whole. Which had been rather unlikely in case of Luther Lommel, who had to bring the extraordinarily high sum of thirty-two-thousand credits. This was why Dorothea auctioned him for less then sixteen-thousand in the end.

24. Luther Lommel

Luther Lommel was indeed a signal officer and had qualified himself by running through all likely military and civil trainings. You could even call him over-qualified, but that was the only positive qualification he possessed. Beside his little (or not so little) weaknesses he was a nice fellow and a well-liked comrade. However, as soon as it came to gambling, when fun began for others, he became very serious.

This was why he soon got stuck again and Dorothea had to free him. Was the vicious circle starting for a new round? In vain she thought of a means of getting him out of the trap. To his misfortune quite some dubious fellows among the tourists enjoyed the trip to Susamee's Island and spent daily some time with a round of poker in the passengers' lounge.

With the comrades on board there existed an unspoken agreement, concerning Credits, however, this couldn't be assumed with strangers as well. This was why Dorothea received quite some sight bills, that made her hair raise. – She now understood, how the poor devil ran into his malaise.

Luther Lommel had an open ear for all kinds of whisperings, referring to a way of getting rid of his debts. While he insisted on keeping precise record. He was definitely willing to settle his debt. His debt was in fact the reason for him to gamble, so he assured himself, and believed it as well. In his twisted logic he saw here the reason why he took immense risks and wouldn't give in, no matter how mediocre the cards were, he was holding.

The further she thought about it, the more suspicious Luther Lommel became. He soon became her only suspect, more so, as he didn't show up with new sight bills for quite a while. That would mean, he had opened up a new source for loan.

So she shared her suspicion with the illuminated Council of the Menora. And because she was able to present her suspicion so convincingly, the women in the Council accepted and agreed with what she presented.

As a matter of fact, the women didn't jump on Luther Lommel, without reflection. It was him alone, who provoked the suspicion. Perhaps

they should have become alarmed because of the obviousness of the case. Thus, they later thought.

For the time being, a chain of guardians was installed. Arundle joined the crew as the assistant signal-operator with the closest contact job-wise. And Billy-Joe learnt to play the cards in general, and Poker in specific. Together with Tibor, who was a kind of addict border-liner, they soon enjoyed the thrill and challenge of gambling.

Pregnant, as she was, Arundle wasn't really helpful. The child, most likely a girl, was due in about two months. But a cruise once in a while would be relaxing, the more so, as she got the chance that way to see Tika, in order to find out how family-life felt in the middle of the twentyfirst century. Another turn of the year should however be likely. Had she had the choice for when delivering, she would have preferred the upcoming decade. Her claim based on no sound reason.

If Luther Lommel was the mole, so the eagerly engaged couple agreed upon, then he had had to do suspicious things. However, he didn't. Luther Lommel had nothing but gambling in mind. All he was after, were streaks of luck, and the hiding of his losses. Beside that, he was a taciturn, inward-bound character with a poker face, you couldn't detect anything. His duties he did well. He stuck to the operator's times, as were laid down for his kind when at sea. He delivered all news punctually and without delay, while there were very few, as a matter of fact.

Leaving a round of gamblers was not easy for him, in fact most strenuous. However, when duty was calling he obeyed, and did it far more relaxed when some-one of the crew stepped in on his behalf - "in order, not to let the streak of luck be torn apart" - as he put it. He was still convinced of his extraordinary feeling for luck. No misfortune, no set-back or backlash would change his mind. And he would rather die than admit, what kind of an unlucky fellow he was, who was badly treated by life, while being unable to handle the addiction.

If some-one confronted him with his adiction, he wholly denied it. He was in no way adict to anything, he said. In fact, was gambling the only way of helping himself out of the vicious circle of debts, so he argued.

If some-one then objected, that things were just the other way round, and said that gambling drove him into the fathomless hole of debts, he smiled mildly and forgivingly and referred to his past by moving his hand up in the air. And the past looked indeed the way he saw things. Under the

burden of debts he would either be strangled, or he would land the one and only coup with much luck, and free himself that way, once and for all.

“While during the past, things didn’t run well, as a matter of fact. But seen with a distant glance over the last fifty years or so, things didn’t work out all that bad. Well, just as long as it went, actually...” – and his face overran a sad notion. He looked up to the sky and you could read in his face, perhaps for the first time. And what you then read, was so moving, so heartbreaking and true, that nobody dared to keep up that brisk, reprimand attitude, addicted gamblers were addressed in general by well-meaning individuals, who apparently had no idea of what they were really talking.

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Was it incidental, that such suspicious subjects approached Luther Lommel, who might as well belong to the clientele of the semi-criminal scene, Poker were part of?

Since such individuals joined the poker-rounds, the strain of luck turned for Luther Lommel. Gambling he could, no-one could deny that – and he was never ever cheating!

Therefore, the fact that he didn’t show up any minute with new loan-requests, or bills of debts, that had to be settled, not necessarily meant that he was fed from a dubious source. In fact, Luther Lommel was prepared to tackle his basic debt. But before that he had to handle all his small debts with his comrades, until he one day entered the ship-owners office.

“That’s all won honestly” he shouted triumphantly, when the time finally had come. He threw a bundle of bills on the desk. “supposed to be some ten thousand, or so, I didn’t precisely count” he said.

Dorothea felt her hands sweating. She got her pocket-calculator and summed up her expenditures. Then she deducted generously the fulfilled hours of work, Luther Lommel had executed on board of the Last Bounty, and ended up with a remarkable plus of one hundred and eighty five credits:

“Now, you are free, for the first time in your life. You can do or undo what ever you like. And best of all, you never have to go back to the Poker table.” This opening perplexed Luther Lommel. For a minute or so, he couldn’t speak.

“Am I dismissed?” – he then asked, because he couldn’t fully dig what he had just heard.

“Of course not. In the contrary. You get a proper contract, and we the best signal-officer, we ever had – well that’s what I hope. All depends now on you. Nobody can force you, God knows – never ever...”

So it was. Luther Lommel became the first free Hundred-ender on board of the Last Bounty, who had freed himself on his own. – Well, yes Fortuna had grasped into the spokes of her wheel, by two assistant messengers, named Billy-Joe and Tibor, who didn’t know what better to do with their surplus, and enjoyed the opportunity that opened up. While the royalties of patents and the book sparkled like a warm shower, whether they ignored, as Tibor did, or accepted unwillingly. The flow of wealth was like a Brooklet, and was – just like it – destined by the spring- and autumn winds – all depended on the world climate, so to speak.

Money never was a theme, since they dwelled on the islands. Astounding enough, because in their youth Billy-Joe and the Khan-clan of Tibor’s suffered in misery, either in the outback or in the desert of soviet-socialist agony in Inner Mongolia.

They could have given those credits just like that. But that wouldn’t have been the same. For that, Luther was too much a gambler, and an honest one as well. A combination you seldom found, or perhaps you did? A true gambler seeks luck and not a strategy to trick it out. Winning yes, but not by all means, and definitely not by cheating.

Tibor and Billy-Joe successfully rejected Dorothea’s trials to refund their losses. Their losses came along with their identification with the role of a gambler – just like that. They almost had an argument thereof, which wasn’t worth while. For Arundle the whole case was just ridiculous. While she of course agreed in the importance of keeping Luther Lommel’s face, and not only that. Under no circumstances the impression should come up, that the two laymen gamblers played reluctantly and wanted to lose, in order to make Luther win, which would have been the wrong signal as well, and had to be avoided by all means. That had namely meant that Luther Lommel hadn’t been able to free himself by means of his abilities as a gambler, and by the help of Fortuna, the Goddess he believed in.

Under no circumstances should it look, as it seemed to be going to look, that Luther Lommel had been favoured. Nothing had been presented to him. He got what he deserved. Nothing was given to him, what wasn’t his appointed share. In fact Fortuna had opened her horn for him at last, and had helped him to his true destination, so to speak. While Luther

Lommel never doubted his destination as a lucky devil. It wasn't his fault, but his fate and shouldn't be stirred up voluntarily, otherwise the slash-back would be - and had been - horrible, so he saw it.

But grey is all theory – what was it like with his gambling addiction in reality? His debts had gone, there was no reason given anymore for gambling. Somewhat strange and inconvenient was the matter in any case. What should you do with all the time available now? And now Luther realized how much time he had spent at the gambling-table. He spent his time instead in the operator's booth as a real workaholic. And in fact a lot could be done in this field of action, while hundreds of amendments had piled up which had to be incorporated into the manuals. The workload of only one annual pile took at least one month. You couldn't just take the latest amendment, hoping to solve the problem, but there were of course previous and other action required.

This was just one field of action. By tradition the communications officer was responsible for the duty-free stuff being sold on board not only to the crew outside the harbours, but also to the passengers. And a wide range of goods used to find their way into the fathomless depths of the hold, being set up front.

Luther revived this old tradition with fervour and both, tourists and crew were thankful for that. As soon as the harbour lay behind, crew and passengers cued in front of the narrow warehouse, which in fact was but a narrow sticky and dark cabin, stuffed to the tops with all possible goods, you can think of, liquor and cigarettes, and perfume were the most favoured articles.

While selling, Luther Lommel also got in touch with the dwarves as well, who overcame their natural shyness in his case. The dwarves liked Luther Lommel right from the start, nobody ever found out why. Perhaps it was his way of behaving, he presented himself always somewhat bad-tempered and brisk, and always showed indifference, as if he didn't want to sell anything of his goods, but only handed them out reluctantly, with sloppy elegance, arguing about costs and currency, or exchange rates and what else happened to come to his mind. While in fact, all was settled in internal currency, of no public value behind his back by the ship-owner, who ensured that the shelves never ran out of any good.

He never advertised any of the stock he held. Quite the opposite pretended he that things weren't worth the price they cost, and were all worthless rubbish. "What do dwarves need perfume?" he asked

meaningfully. Or he said: “Selling jewellery to you, is like carrying owls to Sparta” – and more so funny sayings, which were liked very much by the dwarves, who couldn’t stop giggling as long as they stayed in front of that little hole, awaiting their purchase, or just remaining there because of the fun they had. The dim light also reminded them of their home.

This was why Luther Lommel found his way up front as soon as the port lay behind. In order not to neglect his communication’s duties, he wired the radio Wlan-wise. By this way he was able to handle the communications business from up front in the shop. He thought that a brilliant idea, no matter that the Captain had his objections. However Leblanc let it pass, because Luther did so well in keeping peace on board, by pleasing the dwarves and trolls likewise, who also mingled between the little folk, without being spotted right away.

It would have been easier, if he had put the opening hours in a way that they didn’t come across the communications business, while the stand-by periods were precisely fixed for any vessel at sea.

But things worked as well as Luther had arranged, and this way the whole ship could hear, where the operator was located at any moment, and seemed to be the most important person on board. This role Zinfandor Leblanc had no objections of sharing with him.

Mr Melford disagreed. He was the second navigator and traditionally responsible for nutrition supply and distribution, exempted was the duty-free luxury segment, which wasn’t so easily to be separated, no matter how pithy the set-up seemed in this case. Dealing with passengers differed quite a bit from handling crew comrades. Running the duty-free shop therefore would have overcharged the man, no doubt about that. But how could that be brought into his limited vicinity? You just couldn’t sell dried out American blondes without filter, just because you got them a nickle cheaper.

Anyway, Mr Melford had enough trouble with bloody pork halves and sticky rice, and all that. While loads were eaten up on those ferry- and sightseeing trips, while freshness and vitamine-push was essential for the sake of those out-powered creatures from deep down under.

The kitchen store was on the other end astern, and it was hardly possible that both areas interfered.

Perhaps that it was, what Luther Lommel required. A sound flash of lime-light once in a while: to be someone meaningful, made him swagger proudly about. After all, it could well be his megalomania which was

favoured by the dwarves and Trolls, making them aware of a spiritual relationship. What Trolls compensated by pranks and dwarves by hard work, Luther Lommel did by gambling. Well, he used to do so, while meanwhile this gap was sealed. Being confronted with such crude facts, he couldn't deny but accept that there was something in it. So the sword of Damokles was floating above his head, so to speak. The addiction could break out any time, as soon as his role was questioned or had become meaningless.

It was indeed a real kind of 'va-banque' play the brave ship-owneress had taken up with and on behalf of Luther Lommel. A lot of damage and old wounds from long ago burnt like fresh ones under the thin skin, so to speak.

She took nothing for granted meanwhile. When Mr Melford complaint, she was as well alerted, and asked herself what could be done, or could be done by him. In case there was just a misunderstanding, it shouldn't 't be up to her. Her nature forbade to let things burn.

The point was not that some-one felt important for something out of his range. But the other way round things didn't show a more favourable site, when people were stripped off their responsibilities, as often enough occurred.

Every-day life on board tended to get stuck in dull routine. Nobody realized any more the importance of what others fulfilled. They all had their extraordinary fields of action. The crew was formed of such specialists. And only the joint orchestra produced the masterpieces which were fulfilled in order to drive a vessel safely through winds and waves, keep it sound and orderly - month after month and soon also year after year.

Such gifts were called Seamanship. And because seamanship was demanded, mainly the lack of it was blamed, like in case of the boatswain and the carpenter, who tried in vain to hide their weaknesses behind a veil of music. While they certainly knew, one day the day would come, when they had to stand in for their failures.

25. The Council of the Menora

Luther Lommel was no mole. That was certain by now. Both assistant commissioners of the secret Poker rounds assured. He wasn't even a pure gambler and addict, but suffered from ignorance. As soon as his way of life changed, he revived as to the given outlets, and developed a promising appeal, while he wasn't able to through everything over board, that had been useful and helpful during the struggle of his former life.

Billy-Joe and Tibor came up with an official report on their findings. For that purpose they had received a special permission to join the meeting of the secret intergalactic Women's Council of the Menora, only women could belong to. The Advisor changed gender just for the sake of it.

This Council was by now the most important instrument for planning and creating the future. The Advisoress seemed to desire likewise. In any case, she participated in each and every meeting of the Council, and made all participants routinely and punctually shining, which gave the Council its name. Because Menora means just chandelier.

Permanent members were right from the start: Arundle, Dorothea, Judith, Grisella, and Pooty together with the magic stone. Pooty was in fact kind of trans-gender and hadn't outed himself in the one or other direction, and the magic stoness hollered that such a silly question wasn't really meant for her and kissed her backside "to say it with plain and clear words. We are, what we are, aren't we, Pooty?" Her foppy way of putting things raised however the question about the part of the body in her case, she was likely to lack – as per the other members, while nobody minded.

"Our Billy-Joe we shan't miss" the magic bow whistled, who addressed himself further as 'Bowess', which was kind of sophisticated, while she claimed the same rights in her case, just like the 'magic stoness'.

The going-to-be-father couldn't join here. Billy-Joe wasn't willing to force anything here, but others did for him. None the least his sister Tika, who wanted to do something on behalf of Walter, who used to have a belly-bag, and now was hiding inside Billy-Joe to come out each month, while goofing around in Billy-Joe for the rest of the time.

Tika was of course in, while she didn't participate the meetings regularly, because of her obligations otherwise. "That has to change", the Advisoress mentioned sweetly. The same applied for Florinna and Corinia, who timidly hid in Billy-Joe's shade, but were noticed by the illustrious guest.

“Would you eventually activate your big boss – Shamaness Susamee - also to show up here”, the Advisoress took the opportunity to inquire. While the meeting began.

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In order to justify the Menora, it became necessary to reach the magic six or seven, or eight, or nine – “if there are then ten, it’s no shame either and the twelve as well. With eleven and thirteen it’s all the same.” – After all, almost any figure showed advantage, as per the Advisoress. “In is everyone, who went through the light” said the basic rule they all stuck to, while they had in mind a democratic procedure, the selection based on.

“Who then elected us?” the Counciloresses asked themselves and looked into stunned faces. Not even they, themselves!

So far so good. The question of the whereabouts of the mole was in no way off the table. The general question was, if such an illustrious assembly should be bothered with unimportant questions the like, while the Counciloresses didn’t yet know what the Advisoress was hiding, willing to trump with the joker she kept waiting in fact, while ready to play at any time.

“Malicious Marduk is never harmless” she mentioned without obvious connection to what was due. “Not when he is invisible and indisguisable. Then his poison is already growling in the bowels of the victim, who doesn’t know himself. However, if you realize how harmful such poison is, then you start asking, what kind of poison this is. And if Malicious Marduk is indeed undetectable, to the extend he would like to be. If it is his poison, that you are feeling, but don’t exactly know.”

Reflections of such confuse kind the Advisoress forwarded. Thus you became aware, how blind she was tapping in the darkness. And so it was. Malicious Marduk threatened like a menetecele on the wall. And the fact that it had become quiet about him, didn’t mean necessarily, that he wasn’t active and present. This was how Arundle saw things. After all, she had just recently experienced Baranasias and seen him with her own eyes – as visual as he then appeared. Because really real he hadn’t been.

A faint idea was born in her mind of a kind of chain or net, in which the mole should struggle at last. Nothing of that kind happened, at least not up to now. Were they mistaken? - Failed the trap? They didn’t know better. – Afterwards everybody agreed that Luther Lommel never fitted

into the culprit's profile. The attacks and fake suspicions were much older than Luther Lommel's presence.

But Luther Lommel would have fitted so neatly. And that could have been the intention of Baranasias alias Malicious Marduk, who became by now uneasy in the windy figure, and was most likely searching for a more solid dwelling, while the scar-face wouldn't loosen his grip.

In order to stimulate the wrong suspicion, there had been seductive poker rounds, with carelessly filled pots of great sums. And by that way Luther vintaged a fair part of the Credits the hard way, and enabled him to pay back his debts in a relatively short period of time to his mistress, the ship-owner.

By that time Baranasias pulled the strings already all by himself, and was choosing a simple disguise, which was easy enough, because he was hardly more but a shade. As soon as he set foot on the grounds of the islands (in his skinny appeal he travelled inside of the luggage of his clients in the helicopter.) He got out and somehow managed to become a giant moth – a huge bat-like insect, which was uttering strange cries, but was otherwise - kind of inconspicuously chasing about in the twilight, in order to implement himself into the soul of any available sleeper, he had of course to test out beforehand, as not all were prepared to open up, as was required and enjoyed by him.

The mole was in fact a moth, and that had been the mysteriously hidden secret of the Advisoress – her trump she held back. Arundle asked herself, when they all were assembled again in the Council of the Menora, what would come next, whether the old nutcase Baranasias would appear as an orchid – a gigantic flesh-eating orchid of course.

She didn't hesitate to publish this idea in the Council. And the more the ladies in the round thought about it, the deeper the idea could settle, until they became almost sure, that it was very likely to see it transformed into reality. They even reflected that the culprit might have access to their thoughts. That he in fact was in desperate need of such stimuli, while nothing anymore came to his mind. Therefore, everything was most welcome, no matter how silly the ideas sounded. – So a flesh-eating gigantic orchid surely topped the gigantic moth, which was certainly bizarre enough. Telepathic mind-reading was after all no privilege of the islanders.

However, who had become victim of the moth? Whom did it crawl into the soul? Where was that silvery trace of slime, which moths left

behind, to be found? In one of the sailors perhaps? Or with the two merry musicians? Or even Stan and Ollie (The Pole), the unequal machine-crew? The Steward or the Cook perhaps? The truth is not always simpler than the theory and not necessarily logical. More so, when Malicious Marduk's hand was in the game.

Both private investigators (as Billy-Joe and Tibor saw themselves) plodded about in the dark, while their job was done by helping Luther Lommel out of his misery. While darkness was the allotted medium for a giant moth, which shyed away from light and at best hid in the deepest depth of the lowest deck, where never ever a ray of sunlight made it, and where the water under the keel was gurgling, if you payed attention and quitened down, which was sort of unlikely on a Motor Ship, as was MS Last Bounty.

The moth started sniffing about in the dog-watch, when everybody was tired, and even the duty-officer risked a closed eye. With its long nozzle the moth entered the brains of the sleepers, mostly through the nose, and stole their thoughts and made them its own.

This way it became familiar with the funniest things going on. While things were kind of mess being acquired that way. Thus it aquired everything that people had in mind, but unsorted as can be. The moth wasn't able to differentiate and put in order or sort by importance what people were dreaming.

It just took what it got. It was simple-minded. The main thing for it remained the opportunity. And at best the moth remained hidden. Fluttering up the staircases, was not what it was after, but the opposite, because getting caught there was most likely, it knew by experience.

Somebody then yelled the cry "A giant moth, help, a huge gigantic moth" - followed by the little less stupid answer "where, where?" - "there, there!" - "but where, where?" - "It's gone now!" - So people shouted back and forth and to and fro a minute or so, which gave the moth the chance to disappear, most favourably back into the depth of the lowest deck where the dwarves used to stay, in case they were on board.

By that time Billy-Joe and Tibor weren't yet wholly able to fix themselves to the moth's trace, while they just overcame their false suspicion. They pleaded the innocent for pardon, not only inside but also by sound reparations in a way that arose Luther's suspicion, and made him threaten to give in, despite the fact that the fortune was on his side and

caused the investigators for a modest alternation.- Just a little, not to make him think that the luck had left him.

This was how Luther Lommel overcame them regularly and made him not only happy, but freed him from his addiction. For Billy-Joe and Tibor this meant that they were free now for another job. That was why they now fervently took up the trace of that moth. They also informed Luther accordingly, who promised to have an open eye for them, especially in twilight or darkness.

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They soon realized how Baranasias sneaked in, however, they didn't know what he looked like, and how he got his information. While this never really became clear. Whether a giant moth would help to get traitors in, remained an unsolvable riddle, completely lacking in logic. The moth was busy hiding while being chased and threatened to be killed all about the place.

Already Luther Lommel's contribution could hardly be imagined. – On the poker-table – yes, but immigration? And that was the clou. The traitors had to be sluiced through the controls, not only the back-packers but also those you smelled the foul fish three miles ahead. Many couldn't do else but look obstinate and utter junk and dirty talk, even when they tried else.

Still such comrades had passed – once in a while and right now as well. Billy-Joe and Tibor saw them with own eyes in the lounge, and at the Poker tables. They pleaded for access as if it was a great honour to become stripped by Luther Lommel.

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Had there been irregularities at the control panel? Yes, there had been – but years ago. Tibor decided to have a word with Watchman Will Wiesly, he seemed him the most reliable. The explanation might be rather simple. And instead of searching a mole, it would have done to enforce the entrance control again, as was common anyway in times of a crisis.

While they spotted the lotion trick by themselves, as a matter of fact. (Shoe-polish Billy-Joe called the lotion the traitors used in order to shine grey.) So he hit the point except for the phosphor. By which the traitors

were punished soon enough. It didn't take three days until the skin began to peel, like with a heavy sunburn. Accompanied by stains and pimples all over the body, which made them look horrible. By that time they were sitting in the copter again. Their cameras were confiscated, respectively the films. While meanwhile a lot was done digital, so the most spectacular pictures were already online. And what they had stored in their sick brains could also not become deleted, but could be read in the upcoming weeks in the yellow press.

Wholly relying on the colour-scanner proved a big mistake, while everybody felt safe by the double control. A meaningful error, so they had to learn.

**

Watchman Will Wiesly confirmed what Tibor and Billy-Joe had guessed right away. The irregularities in former times had to do with the entrance control, which had been in the hands of first semesters. The idea behind it was to train them and give them a good chance of testing 'the other way of seeing'.

Since then the double control had remained valid. But as beginners mistrust themselves more than the colleagues, they tended to confirm the judgement of the first control. And that meant in other words, when you passed the first control you were actually in.

At that time the system, which was still in use, had been installed. Since then nobody saw any serious reason for updating, except perhaps as far as the beginners were concerned. Well-trained colour spotters had taken over. Well – and failed unfortunately. The colour-scanners could be cheated likewise.

26. Sam and Mynona

The system was now obsolete. The colour-scanners could well become deranged, and might find a place in the museum of the school – since it became clear how easily they could be outnumbered. Now you had to rely on the eye again, and the seers of the other kind had to prove their

talents again. While they didn't grow on trees, but were the most precious good the school possessed, that had to be pampered at best.

Under no circumstances they wanted to get back to a situation where gifted students overtook exhausting drudgeries at the control panel, either here on the islands or right back at the Sydney copter port. As a matter of fact had working conditions never been sufficient, neither the social ones but even worth the conditions of the light, so necessary for a proper job of that tricky kind, as was colour-scanning by the pure eye. In such an atmosphere no mysterious mode arose. Creativity and imagination were rather killed but stimulated, and positive energy you searched in vain.

Thus the conviction became loud to limit the immigration drastically, and allow only selected guests access to the islands. In theory this sounded great, but as it came to practise, you soon realized how difficult it was to draw a discriminating line, and to keep it. While justice was still a precious good, and Dorothea uttered a justifiable claim for supply guests, and surely was right with her demand.

**

“And what would happen if we just turned around the pike?” Dorothea suggested in one of the meetings of the Council of the Menora. They could also give entry-lectures analogue to the lectures Baranasias had held for the cheaters in Sydney, where the capability of standing the entry-conditions was trained and tested. They could do similar seminars on their part as well, but this time the other way round of course, and with the opposite intention. What the dark forces could do, could as well be done by them. By this way the entrance procedures would become localized one or two steps ahead. And perhaps they could find localities which suited the colour-scanning better than the circumstances they now had to master.

Those last minute bookings however couldn't be accepted any more. If no-one was found who gave his or her okay right on the island on arrival, and stand for it with her good name.

The little cruises became limited to two per month. And that was really enough. While the Hotel to the Hub of the World (in short - the Double H Double U) - hotel would be stripped of guests, who were located right away on board of Her Majesty's Motor Ship (HMS) Last Bounty, as was the official name. Dorothea, being the ship-owner, as well as the hotel-owner, didn't really mind. All passengers would be allowed ashore only for facultative excursions, on guided tours, and so it was. However,

when the main building became devastated and only a bleary-eyed couple or some frustrated members of the university staff seated the bar-stools and couldn't find an end, while the room was waiting upstairs, or if not, could be claimed right away, the urban flair of the double H- double U- hotel began to suffer.

While on the other hand Dorothea learned that the fake reporting in the yellow press slowly changed into a more positive mode. If she wasn't all mistaken, the public relations efforts seemed to succeed, slowly but step by step.

In order to create those entry-lectures stylish, Dorothea rented a kind of observatory next to the copter-hangar, to be precise topped the hangar for a light-flooded locality, lighter as light can be.

The students of the School of Inbetween were however forced to move. While those gifted with the 'Other Way of Seeing' train a little while on the trip not only with their fellow students, but also with the formations of clouds. And because the classes switched, others were due the other weeks.

No group was left on its own but was accompanied by a teacher. So qualified competence was guaranteed any time. That was different. While in former times the students had been on their own with the meaningful challenge.

Later, when on duty, the students were pledged to take their time and not to hurry. No matter whether the process took the whole morning, while the aspirants had little more to expect but the colour-scanning. Everything else was pure routine, they could easily have learnt from the travel-documents or brochures.

That was why there was little news for the guests, while a solid exploration of their aura, as far as given. With that the pros and cons of the trip stood and fell. A fact that made the case unacceptable in a way. While the aura didn't guarantee the proper behaviour a hundred per cent, nor did the lack of it automatically result in misbehaviour. While witty reporters had entered illegally, it didn't mean that a fake hurdle had been built up, unsuitable for the prevention against destructive elements.

"Has there not been the saying yet, that a fake reporter could be smelled against the wind over miles? What to hell has the colour-scanning then to do with it? We all know it better, as a matter of fact." Dorothea claimed and the other Councilloresses nodded. Objective criteria weren't required in order to expel the unwanted. Common sense was good enough.

Besides, modes for travelling were fixed anyway, so there was no chance of shooting unwanted and mistaken photos and move about disgracefully.

As long as the arrangement remained valid and all tourists were housed on the Last Bounty, no harm could be done. All the more, the facultative excursion programme could be altered or cancelled at any time. There were certainly tourists, who shouldn't get access to the secret catacombs of the dwarves, or the playgrounds of the nymphs and nixes.

**

An even more challenging aspect came to Arundle's mind as she undertook it to accompany a flock of students to the observatory on top of the copter-hangar in Sydney.

The group and herself discovered jointly two potential Sublimations, of the highest grade. Arundle couldn't believe her eyes. While the scouts and seekers had a hard job by travelling around the world, when it came to Sublimations, who were extremely rare. No matter whether they searched the furthest sites of the world.

Such an opportunity the school couldn't let go. Thus Arundle pleased and pledged the two first of all, until they agreed to become presented to the school's general assembly. Everything was done to keep them, while there were of course obstacles to overcome.

**

Encouraged by this discovery, things went different from now on, as far as the pre-selection was concerned. And many people could be found on board of the Last Bounty, who wouldn't have believed it by themselves, but had undertaken the adventure "just like that" as they put it.

Many a back-packer had made his or her fortune that way. And through the school went a fresh breath, while the followers dripped scarcely and by the common channels. For what ever reason.

As could be shown by this new source, the reason was not necessarily found, by the lack of the gifted, but how to approach them. The talented didn't know of their talents, and were utmost surprised as soon as they took notice.

Thus the struggle against unwanted moles and spies became a source of renewal and enrichment. No-one understood anymore, why things hadn't been handled that way earlier.

Sorrows, as far as the new blood was concerned, had existed ever since in certain sections.

**

Something might have torn and teased the new candidates of hope to find their way down here, while following rumours glorifying the islands. – Sam Smiley came all the way from Idaho. He was a farmer's boy without much of an education. He felt drawn on the big trail around the globe. He followed the call, accompanied by a harpoon in his bandana and the guitar over the shoulder – his most important luggage.

He was the one. And he was in the right age – perhaps a tiny spur too old – but with seventeen not too old, in order to learn all what was needed to become some-one special.

Sam was a friendly open-minded fellow – slim by appearance and sensitive by nature. Just made for his art, he, however, didn't have but a faint idea yet. Only sometimes, when he stood beside himself, so to speak, (Sam didn't reject a joint here and then) he felt like swaying. But he put that on the effect of the drug. while, as a matter of fact, he was tied to the ground instead, than made him fly.

Sam Smiley alone was remarkable enough. But he was not alone, while he was accompanied by Mynona Wilder. The two had met accidentally, the way you meet while travelling. And they found out that they were almost neighbours. Because Mynona was also from Idaho, but she wasn't at all proud of it, nor was Sam. So it was.

The reason why they had been driven out into the wide world, could surely be found in the narrowness of Idaho. Tightness, that wasn't necessarily mirrored by the landscape, which was vast and empty, but in the minds of the people.

They had met on the plane, on the way from Los Angeles to Sydney. They looked at each other and knew it at once. And they stayed together ever since, as if forced by fate.

Sam made music. Mynona sang a little or collected the money from the passer-bys, if there were any, willing to spend a nickle for Sam's art.

Had they only known, what stuck in them! And what they jointly could achieve. But they didn't, and therefore they didn't even try, and were happy with what they got for the somewhat dry country-music form Idaho.

They were pretty busted flat, when they approached the observatory of the School of Inbetween on top of the copter-hangar, but found it closed. So they unrolled their sleeping bags, stunned by the Southern brightness of the stars and fell asleep soon, while the young love was burning in their hearts, and filled their senses with a carpet of the plenty, which opens but for a few in love. Everything else would show up.

The rumour didn't fail. What they had heard, was nothing compared to what they experienced the other day. Of course they passed the test with glow and glory, which the students of the art of the other way of seeing undertook with them.

In fact, something almost like jubilation resounded. While for many of Arundle's students was it the first time, that they became aware of the contours – and that in such a strong shiny green.

The young lecturess became upset, and wanted to have an immediate word with Tibor. She couldn't get hold of him on his far island, but Shamaness Susamee promised to pass on, what was transmitted to her, although she didn't quite understand neither the importance nor the relevance at all.

Arundle had her doubts. Not because Susamee was of advanced age, but of her limited mind. However in this case, she seemed to have passed on all information properly, because Arundle found Tibor right at the copter-terminal, when she flew in from Sydney with Sam Smiley and Mynona Wilder on board, who hurried on and just caught the vessel. As they didn't want to have their journey spoilt. The Grand School Assembly met nevertheless, as had been arranged.

Arundle felt reminded of herself and Billy-Joe when they became aware and were chosen, likewise. Both had had little or no family-ties. So she concluded that the two Idahoans would as easily be convinced of the advantages of the School of Inbetween as they had then been.

A last hurdle, many of the members of the conference believed to know, would be the Dean of the Sublimations, the aged and meanwhile grey Moschus Mogoleya. While he became more relaxed and less eager and self-centred, as he used to be. It was his faculty the two would have to join, as positively green as they were.

A change of generations might as well be wishful and necessary here, while the Head-Mistress and her deputy were already on the verge of resigning from active services. As well as Scholasticus and Grisella, who intended also to reduce their lot, or even give up their commitments in the School of Inbetween for good., and concentrate on the adjacent University.

As Dean in substitution of Mogoleya, Tibor would very well suit. He would be the ideal candidate. The more so as he by now had inscribed for the Doctor's degree, since Shamaness Susamee definitely preferred Tika as replacement or deputy. Susamee left no doubts about that. But why could there be only one Shamaness on the island? This couldn't be made clear to Tibor. This seemed to be a primitive idea to him, and reminded him on the Showdown of a Western movie of the fifties.

For no detective reason Susamee seemed to be certain that there was not space enough for two youngsters in her vicinity. As if they would steal from each other the butter on the bread, so to speak. Tika tried to explain it for him. She spoke about spirits and ancestors, from whom you got notice of that kind. But Tibor didn't really believe her this time, while he eventually believed almost everything she said. While the explanation this time sounded like dictated by Susamee and learnt by heart.

Moschus Mogoleya didn't resist, and didn't stick to the Dean's chair. A little more time for his own studies was exactly what he was looking for, so it was heard from him. – Tibor wondered how they all had misunderstood the old miser.

Since there was the University, the faculties of the School of Inbetween disgraced themselves to a certain degree. And as his faculty swaggered along and no great jumps could be seen ahead, he thought that the time had come for him to change into a University career. While it might be a little late for him, as well.

The director signalled 'green light', as Scholasticus put it with a mild smile, because Moschus Mogoleya's Somnior's green tickled him in the nose. There surely was a field of action, where Moschus could do some good and only little harm. The dwarves might be willing to become trained the green way. By nature they were very alike, to a certain extend.

**

“Would you be prepared, and would you agree to take responsibility?” – Marsha Wiggles-Humperdijk interrogated Arundle. She

meant to say, whether they were prepared to manage the school alone. Arundle agreed after a quick glance over to Billy-Joe who would of course be in the boat, while they soon would be three. But that would be no hurdle for her, nor for him. The real question was, if they could imagine and accept the life-long outlook on the life of a school-director's couple, because this would then be their appointed lot.

27. The Giant-Moth

With all those changes around her, Penelope M'gamba felt suddenly alone. While the Conversiors orientated themselves more and more over to Susamee's island, she asked Tika as well, if she was willing to become Dean of the Conversiors, as well.

"It's no hell of a job – it's more the title, otherwise there isn't much change." – she tempted. She had in mind, that it might be of advantage when the connections between the islands became more intense, which was realizable, thanks to the Last Bounty, anyway.

Tika, however, refused. Tibor had just been promoted, so such a commitment would be too much for her, for the time being.

"Perhaps next year", she said. In any case, she had to think about it, and had to have a word with Tibor and Susamee. She most shyed away from those never-ending conferences, and the necessity of speaking in public. On the other hand she felt of course pampered by Penelope's offer. After all the set-backs, she would at last be set on the same level as Arundle.

She would be the Mistress and Shamaness of her own island, because Susamee decided "to hand over and pass on the spoon", as she put it, when she learnt of all the changes in due course on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth. Perhaps the additional task might be too much for her anyway, Tika reckoned.

"Pass on the spoon. – you name it, how dared she?" Tibor commented Susamee's intention. He had served a couple of years under the dominant woman, and knew, what he was talking about. His new job he would keep in any case, not matter whether this meant to spend a lot of time on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth.

Things weren't all that clear between Tika and Tibor. Because Tika raised that existential question again and forced him to decide one way or the other. While she had to make up her mind, and couldn't do. Would she decide in favour of the Dean's profession, she would also be obliged to spend part of her time on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth.

The dwarves would manage without surface guards. and there were still the Hennes and Susamee and Watchman Will Wiesly, after all. While Susamee had no intention to move. In fact she wanted to please Tika with her offer. She couldn't move because of Watchman Will Wiesly. Not now, when he finally managed to get rid of a competitor, while not by his own force.

When Will heard that Susamee wished 'to give up the spoon', he misunderstood the saying and was so deeply hit and moved to tears, that he had to be put to bed, where he lay for hours in a darkened room, sobbing and moaning heartbreakingly. While Susamee had picked up the saying somewhere, and didn't recall the context or the grave adjacent note.

In fact, she didn't want to live forever, so that was clear to her, but she couldn't tell Will, who was so much younger, and feared the outlook of being left alone. That was why the presence of Hans Henny Henne troubled him in another way. Henne reminded him of Susamee's mortality. Which was, of course, paradox, as Hans Henny Henne was technically seen, the most advanced product of the ever-lasting faction. His annual check-up, when all the spare-parts were checked, or replaced as necessary, guaranteed a never-ending outlook.

Susamee, on the other hand, was proud of being all genuine and natural "besides a little lifting here and there" she admitted with a twinkle – "and that, I've done myself."

Besides she was cycling as well with that new type of SLOMES, as everybody did. The idea had come from Watchman Will Wiesly. "Why not combine the necessary with the comfortable" he said to himself and added petals to the island-owned SLOMES. That way everybody could do something for feet and legs while having a meditative sitting in order to prolong and refresh brain and soul.

Others copied his idea, and soon everybody cycled. So Hans Henny Henne, the eager inventor wondered whether so much energy should be wasted. Therefore he invented a warm-water-system which could be plugged in. He couldn't stay away from such tinkery.

When Captain Leblanc told his colleagues on board of the Last Bounty of this development ashore, Stan, the engineer, thought that a great idea, while pedalling was already common on board as well. He however thought of a far better system by connecting the peddlers with the freshwater production device.

That was very effective, and passengers learnt that way, to use only the amount of fresh water for showering they before produced.

**

Sam and Tibor communicated right away on the same wave-length. And Mynona also felt at home at once on Susamee's island. She liked little children and little Emamus was happy about the new playmate. Tibor taught the pair the secrets of their art, they were gifted with, without noticing. In a crash course they acquired the tricks, you had to know, in order to cope with the moody winds and make them servants.

Emamus had inherited his father's talent, and made him so proud. The little boy danced with the wind even before he was able to walk properly. So his mother didn't want to stay back, although she insisted that she lacked any talent in this respect, what so ever. But perhaps she was afraid of loosing her conversability, when switching the colours.

Mynona and Sam were accepted wholeheartedly in the communion of the School of Inbetween. In fact, they were sooner in as they realized, while Tibor was their Dean.

The former Dean, Moschus Mogoleya, had resigned at last, "for health reasons", so it was officially said. The self-induced horse-headed violin played a heart-breaking farewell in the light of the full moon. The magic bow cared for the military aspects of the grand tattoo, and had invited martially looking warriors on a virtual base from ancient Rome, or was it Atlantis?

Moschus Mogoleya sobbed like an abandoned dog, chained to a castle's gateway. And did that for the first time. He would have loved to repeat the ceremony, and have a second farewell. "Yes, we must repeat that" he said again and again with a breaking voice, and tears sprang again out of his eyes.

The invention party of the new Dean – on the other hand - turned out to be celebrated kind of meagre. But that was the way Tibor wanted it,

who was now grown up and had left behind all those little childish humbugs ever since.

He just formed a green circle with Mynona and Sam around little Emamus, who climbed up into the air in his mother's arms, as if both were drawn up by a miraculous hand.

The violin to have been playing, he reckoned rather unsuitable, however. While he was not in the mood. And waiting for the full moon, was no option either, for other reasons. Besides, he took care of his faculty anyway already, since Moschus Mogoleya had abandoned and ruined it, at best he could, as had shamefully be admitted.

Since their generation left a good while ago, nothing had been done, new talents were out of range. With the help of Mynona and Sam Tibor hoped for fresh winds blowing, and have the forlorn flock of Sublimators aired and spirited.

You could see already how well the newcomers did, when they joined the circle and lifted it up to incredible heights, instead of the timid jumps the group performed, when left on their own.

So Tibor was diving already deep into loads of work as the new Dean, and had no air of feasting what so ever – not yet.

While he was still self-righteous, he was meanwhile able to see things in a more objective light, and sought for true justice, he was all in favour ever since.

**

Tika also took over the second problematic faculty, after hesitating for a good while. The Convertors weren't in good shape either, which also had to do with the previous Dean. Since Penelope M'gamba got stuck so miserably as a castaway, she was not the same anymore, and couldn't converse as properly, as before. At least she didn't show any intention. The wound was sitting too deep. Besides, she came into the years, and therefore it might be just natural, that hormones turned tipsy-tosy.

It was high time to give her stool free, and so Tika was grateful, who finally turned in, and accepted the generous offer. Penelope promised a soft turn-over. If Tika wanted it, she would keep an eye on the awful parts of the task.

"It's all about field-research", she explained. "I am not myself anymore, and that is noticed by the students. I think, they have a right for a

full teacher, and that I am not any more – no, no, no objections, I know my limit, - and it's been reached for a good while, I'm afraid..."

Tika didn't know where to look. She had no objections, and didn't want to be impolite, so she uttered a few lame compliments.

Penelope deeply sighed.

**

Conversion was also a question of the proper drugs, Tika knew by experience. Many problems only occurred, when bad mistakes were made. And that happened to all beginners. Therefore, her training with Shamaness Susamee had been the right education for her new position as a Dean of the Convertors. Like Penelope M'gamba, who came here to the Isle of Wisdom-tooth filled with a great treasure of herbes and totems out of the deepest heart of Africa, so she also had something to offer. And that hopefully turned out to be of as great a value as the former Dean's knowledge.

The worst mistakes occurred already when looking for the right Totem-animal. This is how it started, and then aches were unavoidable. Because where-ever there were hidden obstacles, or only faint traces of aversions, the self turned into a wrong imago. Probably only mistaken by a tiny bit, perhaps a likeliness to be hardly noticed, but that could be already enough, to commence a tragic fate, that could later hardly be altered.

Hadn't she learnt it from her own brother so drastically, she would have reckoned it as envious twitter, that inflamed again and again, whether this all could really be. While it never became clear, what really was happening then.

Conversion is but a mere word, but what is it? How real is, what happens?

Was, what could be seen from outside, real? Could it be, that cells and body-parts became sorted anew again? Or became something visible, that was always there, but was hidden and covered?

The secret of the Conversion, that Tika knew for sure, and better than many of her mates, hadn't yet unveiled for nobody.

As the soul erects from the lifeless body of an Animator, the Imago of a Totem-animal could as well erect from the body of a human, that is – a Convertor. No matter what it then looks like.

But who pays attention to what stays behind a wolf, when he erects and stands up in wrath, and spreads nameless terror, and unspeakable fear?

—
The twilight is doing the rest, and dawn throws a cloak of desperation over the scene. Such conversions never occur in daytime, of course not! Only the silvery light of the full moon teases the creatures of the darkness off the human remains.

Well, Tika was in due course of founding a brand new theory of the Convertors. Not even Susamee was in the boat yet, while she knew most. And she knew of course, that she wasn't burnt monthly alive, to raise off the flames as Phoenix.

“What steps out of us, is inside of us” – was the basic rule, Tika set up. “You must see it as characteristics. Nobody is always angry, while still impetuosity is lurking inside of us, ready to break out and overwhelm the whole being, if you let go or can't hinder.”

With such queer sayings the new Dean of the Convertors explained her view of the world “out of the perspective of a Convertor” – so she put it.

“And what substance does such an Imago consist of?” one of the clever pupils wanted to know, who was sucking each word from the lips of her adored idol.

“What do we exist of, all who are sitting right here, and we, who people our dreams at night or swagger through the worlds, if we employ the gift?” – Tika asked back. She also didn't know the answer. But one thing she knew: Who ever hurt the Imago, hit the human body likewise. This was what she experienced the hard way.

Unfortunately Penelope M'gamba neglected to reflect the Convertors' faculty in theory as well. Viewed by objective eyes from outside, she had been hardly more but an administrator, who took care that things went smoothly each month, and that there was space enough for all. The latter had been mainly her personal problem, as she knew what it meant to lack of space, converting into a griffin. In fact each Dean set her own priorities.

**

One of Tika's most clever students was in many ways remarkable. There was her Totem animal first of all, that wasn't a real animal. Well,

not in the sense of moving on its own behalf. It was short-living and didn't last longer but a moon-phase each month, quite likely to Susamee's Phoenix, that had to become reborn anew as well.

"My body seems to be kind of intermittent host", the clever girl concluded consequently. Before the giant moth rose, a caterpillar had to hide and transform into an awful looking huge cocoon, that lasted for almost a day of the precious time unmovable, while a gigantic moth took off the second day. That moth then could of course move – by gosh, you wouldn't believe!

Almost bat-like it hushed about the darkest corners and caves, while the plain moonlight was already too much for it.

So by Nelaza, so the student was called, Tika became aware of the true secret of the Convertors. While Susamee had made her think already, Nelaza rounded the picture up now. In her case a visible body remained back on earth, when the moth took off, there was no doubt about it. You could see the interrelation as clear as daylight, that had to be in range with that Phoenix already, but by far, less obvious.

At best Tika would have liked to check the vulnerability, but she didn't dare. How could she think such an awful thought? Things were all too obvious right away. There was no need for testing again, what she had experienced on her own body. Those who did harm to the moth, would also harm Nelaza, i.e. the human body the moth sprang off. For Tika that was so clear as had been the silvery moonlight when that arrow hit her, long time ago.

**

Nelaza was kind of special in many ways, not only as a giant moth. And Tika was all too glad to have met her.

Nelaza helped her with a revolutionary view on things. The phenomenon of Conversion had to be seen in a totally different light.

When the Emeritus Scholasticus Slyboots learnt of the new Convertors Dean's theory he was kind of electrified. He rushed to his former assistant Peter Adams, who was an aged Professor himself meanwhile as well. Peter Adams was alerted by the news and forwarded the information to his wife, a specialist of Nano-technology and responsible for the basic SLOMES-technology.

Tika's Convertors Theory, (or should it be called just a hypothesis up to now?!) alarmed and alerted them all, because it seemed to fit perfectly into Judith's studies, i.e. to the most stunning aspect therein.

While in the case in question, no Nano-bits, but converting beings were concerned. Stunning as to Judith was the fact, that some Nano-bits and certain beings behaved by the same pattern, and followed the same procedures. Tika's discovery seemed to have the quality of a real sensation.

So far only Nano-bits were able to show up at different sites at the same time, but could never be localized or watched together. Harm, done to one of the two Nano-bits, also occurred to the other, no matter how far away.

Up to now, the strict separation of the Nano-universe and the physical world had been accepted so far. The barrier still stood. No-one ever managed to break through so far. But with Tika's interpretation of the Convertors conversion, the barrier was blown. There was no distinction any more between the world around us, and the micro-cosmos with its special and so stunning laws, or should they better be called phenomenons?

Of course many questions arouse. The first and most stunning was perhaps, what substance it was, that erected from the human remains in the procedure of conversion?

"Have we to do with matter at all?" Judith addressed to the Council of the Menora, while reporting of her latest discernments. And so the women learnt what was known so far of Nelaza, the giant moth and the Convertor's Theory by the new Convertors' Dean. A complex matter, sure enough.

Dorothea was of course alerted by that giant moth, she had so much trouble with, and wanted to know if the moth was really the same. Had poor Nelaza been the moth they had been chasing, and almost killed?

After the rehabilitation of Luther Lommel all were convinced of his innocence and consequently focused on the moth instead, suspecting it to be the mole and culprit, responsible for all kinds of malfunctions, terrorist attacks and awful deeds, none the least of which were the fake reportings in the papers around the world, meant to ruin the good name of the school.

Seen from a distance, such a suspicion seemed somewhat strange, while the Councilloresses wholeheartedly had agreed. All the more as

Baranasias was suspected to be a kind of Converter too. Even the Advisoress didn't comment here, who generally didn't hold back with irony and doubts.

28. The Uncertainty Principle (as Miracle)

Arundle was deeply shocked in the aftermath. Shouldn't she have reminded back, for good reasons? She had then been blamed of the attack on Tika. And still felt guilty, although she was as innocent as her baby 'in spe'.

"Why for God's sake, didn't you warn us, because of the moth?" she exclaimed upset.

But Tika didn't feel guilty -- in no way. She belonged to the Council of the Menora officially, but hadn't participated so far. That was why she didn't experience the fuss about the moth, while being on Susamee's island so far away. At that time she didn't bother about the faculty, she now became responsible for. That was the wind of change.

"So far, thing went alright" she tried to calm down Arundle, who shouldn't become upset because of her baby 'in spe'. "We don't even know by now, whether Nelaza and the moth at that time were identical. Perhaps there were other moths before her. On the other hand – the time would fit. I looked into the record. Nelaza had been at the school then, that can be proved."

"We do not understand our little Nano-world as yet at all. And instead of getting forward and escape from the field of casualness and probability, we meet the same phenomenon in our reality as well, and now even want to tackle."

"If its really the same", Grisella commented Arundle's interjection. Grisella had no idea of the nano bits and pieces, but she believed in her brother-in-law, who referred to Einstein, who never gave up his disbelief about the strange behaviour of the nano-bits. "If he doubted, we should do likewise", Scholasticus would have grumbled, if he had been present.

Grisella forwarded his injection unquestioned and brought Judith into trouble. How should she now present the whole theory of the SLOMES or give at least a quick glimpse inside? - "For the time being, I can only say

that: Facts speak their own language, and don't care about the doubts of Professor Einstein. The reason why the SLOMES work, is based on that Uncertainty Principle. What we call uncertainty, the Either Or referring to the locus - or to the time-definition, is our source. The gain of time stems thereof."

"...and if we translate this for the Convertions, we are exactly where I want us to settle in transition. I and my Imago can either BE at the same time or appear at the same place. But never both. My Self is either present as my I, or as my Totem animal. Because we both are corresponding entities", did Tika pick up the thread. Excited as she was, she had almost forgotten about the moth in danger, which wasn't hurt after all, while certainly endangered once in a while, and here and then.

"Yes, at the same time we only appear at entirely different sites. When you see the one form, then the other form is elsewhere and cannot be seen here."

"Or one after the other. First you'll be seen, and then the Imago of your Totem animal, and then again you, and you are still you, and only you. – Yes, from such a perspective it makes sense", Arundle nodded and Tika was glad that they agreed. The opinion of the competitor of long ago days still bothered her, perhaps more then ever.

"And the Sublimation follows the same principal?! Is that what you mean?" she added. Tika wanted to know it really.

The women in the Council of the Menora gazed stunned at each other. This interjection didn't make sense at all, came to their mind. So they didn't comment but thought things over, and Arundle was first with a preliminary suggestion. "The circle of the dancers was to be seen in an instant, but in the next disappeared and flew as a green whirlwind high up in the air. Well, you believed to see it there as you could hear the screams of joy out of familiar throats, so you had to believe they were the same as they used to be on the ground a second ago.

So, the same phenomenon appeared right here, as noticed in conversion. It was impossible to see the dancers on the ground, and the whirlwind high up in middle of the air, at the same time." And this was what she told her mates then, and surely convinced them.

The Advisoress also agreed and uttered this by a discrete but soundless clapping of her substance-less hands. She still didn't say anything, but looked positively amused. While the magic bow and the

magical stone hollered and screamed like madmen, almost obscene, as if they had forgotten where they were.

As a matter of fact, they were accepted only with patience and snare, so to speak as the borderline hybrids they were, just like the Adviosress, who was demonstrating that she also was subsumed under the same law and principle. Beside the fact that she could appear either the male or the female image, but never both at the same time.

Those were indeed a lot of hints, more than most could stand, because what opened up here, exceeded the capacity of the common sense. Such you could accept, and that was it, or you hid behind Einstein and denied with him God's capacity for gambling. ("God doesn't gamble" – so goes Einstein's verdict.)

The magical stone and the magic bow shared the same opinion. Their little demonstration of agreement might suffice, so they hoped. However in vain, while the Counciloresses were thinking of a way of getting rid of the misfits, and have them reduced to their basic gender, they here just represented in such an awful manner, and then have them consequently dismissed.

That could however not be done without the two, who were quite well able to read thoughts. So the women gave up: They didn't see a likely chance of proceeding, so they closed the meeting and decided to meet again at a later date. The stars might show then a better constellation, when the moon was rounding and the Conversiors were on their way. But they proceeded without having reckoned with their host, (in this case with their male-suspected magic guests).

'How people resist, how they stick to their little secrets and wonders' the magic blokes let the women of the Council know instead. 'They do not want to lose, as if they found the highest joys of the heart therein. Instead of being pleased by the discernment, they moan, and instead of rejoicing, they sob, and instead of marvelling, they close up. What a peculiar form of being humans are!' the two magic fellows agreed with unspoken words.

There was however no alternative, they both knew all too well. The dwarves were no alternative "Definitely not" the magic stone ascertained, who should know, because he also came out of the depth of the earth.

"It's that way" the magical stone went on "if someone knows how a the piano works, he cannot play the piano. He can only do so, after having

trained a long time. And a master he most likely never become, if he isn't talented or if he lacks motivation and endurance or fun."

"Or everything... Not anybody can learn everything, what can be learnt. And sometimes it is so hard to be learnt, that only gifted can – that's the way it is, after all..." the magic bow agreed.

Again the Advisoress showed agreeance the same way as before, and the Counciloresses gazed at each other stunned and bewildered.

What the magical fellows had wanted to let them know, had nothing to do with the reaction they emitted. The women felt somewhat stripped, and the Advisoress seemed to be on their side as well.

Frankness is not really an option of women's circles, or was this an unfit generalisation already? Arundle didn't think this to be quite likely but even desirable, while interfering with the sharpness of the bright brain. But she didn't dare for peace's sake, and not to offend the harmony-minded assembly and their reaction on the behaviour of the two hermaphrodites, who could only keep up, because they hung between the genders. A woman couldn't have dared – no way. Not if she wanted to remain in the group.

How valuable had the group become for all of them, why should they dare to risk it? The expectations were so high. So much they had as yet achieved and so much still to overcome.

The little crisis they were just in, offered a chance to reflect again, if men were really unwanted, if men were really only part of the problem. Had the world become wiser, or smarter or better under the supervision of women? Had it become better since women overtook the responsibility for the future? And what was the Advisoress's part?

They knew by now about the secrets of the Convertors and the Sublimators, at least they had found some kind of a trace, by spotting the origin in the Nanoverse. The transfer from there to the real material world was to a certain extent the achievement of the Council, but had probably little to say. The time was ripe for such enlightenment. Soon it would become common sense, like before the wonder-world, and stunned would only be, who had no idea what so ever.

No-one dared to bother the Convertors with rationalizing their gift, lest the Sublimators – about whom all kinds of explanations circled. There were mainly two contradicting ones. On the one hand there was the classical aerodynamic interpretation. Rotation generates uplift by thickening below and by thinning above the green whirl. That was a clear

and clean fact. The only thing was, it didn't work. Such a thickening couldn't be proved, not with the available forces in reference to the lift-off weight. The weight was too heavy, and the mechanical forces far too low, the wheelers could achieve.

The second, the electromagnetic theory, had trouble in explaining the generation of the field. After all the gravitation had to become topped locally for a short time. And this was when this interpretation got stuck. Sure enough you could produce strong fields, but they caused an entirely different behaviour of the objects, then could be observed by the dancers with the winds.

Compared with the two modes of interpretation, the virtual imagination-thesis sounded by far more elegant and sound. While nobody could explain, why so many billion nano-bits were caused to behave identical, and became open to a will, that came from the dancers. And this will had to be so strong, that it could with-stand in the thin zones of probability, which was very unlikely, statistically seen.

Diffusions there were many. How could they then crash over the sea? Arundle asked herself, while reckoning in the circle of the Menora the pros and cons. How could that happen, while their body lay fixed to the ground, if you followed the new theory? – The corpses drowned and were reanimated, and not some fancy imagos.

Alas, what ever happened to the Imago, also happens to the body, didn't it? Whenever the Imago crashed into the sea, the body did alike, but set apart for a second! In the moment of death both would come together again.

The theory of probability wasn't able to give an answer. In other words, no matter which side you harmed, the corresponding equivalent suffered just the same. In that, Conversors and Sublimators were exactly equal and identical, seen in the light of the theory, which intended to explain the miracle, in order to unveil the mystery, and take it no longer for granted. Because miracles are only those phenomenons of reality you have no explanation for.

At that state of reckoning the Counciloresses of the Menora brought the momentum of talent into their reflexions, in order not to strand in mere positivism. By means of which they wanted to tackle the criteria of repeatability, the final true measure of any sound theory. Thus, they escaped the trap, and assured themselves, that there had to be a loophole for the gifted. Despite the fact, that theoretical discernments had to be

objectively valid in general, certain predispositions had to be excluded from the mainstream.

The main obstacle was the proportion. Out of approximately 10 billion individuals, who peopled the world, only some hundreds were gifted in the way of the Convertors and Sublimators. That was but one of the criteria which had to be taken for granted. Before any experiment would be going to work, the candidates had to be found, and that was of course already a kind of miracle, that lacked of objectivable data. Only a trained scout and adept of the other way of seeing, had a little chance.

Spotting the candidates was in fact a hell of a job, and sorting out the cheaters as well. When the first step was successfully made, the talent was then only recognized. It had then to be developed. And not all candidates succeeded, not all achieved the goal, be it the green whirlwind, or the moon-sick totem-animal. Mainly the latter was never seen in public, but was hiding at forlorn sites, and was then picked up after re-conversion, four days later, back in their human fashion. While green whirlwinds weren't seen at all, or if they were seen, the seers either didn't believe their eyes, or took it for the reflection of a forest, or a fata Morgana.

The talents mentioned here could well be also compared with singular pieces of art. No one except the author is able to produce a certain poem. The same applies for painters or composers. Artists don't fulfil inexplicable deeds. If you don't call a piece of art inexplicable, because it was produced by a genius. The same applies to the Converter's produce or the faint image of a green whirlwind.

"Enlighten fire with a pointed stick, appears miraculous to contemporaries, because we surely wouldn't succeed. Still this way of lighting a fire was one of the first inventions of the early mankind. If someone sets his feet right and employs the help of an air-cushion, or when he enters the Nanoverse willingly, and make himself known, then..."

"...you mean" - the magical stone interrupted the interpretation of the magic bow - "you mean, that's on the same level?"

"Well, yes, it's miraculous enough, in any case. Nobody would be able to do that. At least I don't know anybody" - the magic bow added, and Arundle nodded, although she was only half convinced.

She wasn't certain whether the bow was fibbing a little. He certainly knew more than he admitted here right now. "He could have helped me with that, a little earlier" she thought and felt him realize what she was thinking.

“Nobody asked me” the bow bluffed back and Arundle meant to feel him laughing suppressed. However she could be wrong. Humour was not his favourite cup of tea. But she suppressed, what she was due to think at best she could. Running into an argument with him was the least she intended. Since she was sitting in the Council of the Menora, their relation was not the best, anyway. The stressing of the female part of man annoyed and obstructed his tender senses.

He didn’t feel very male, as a matter of fact, he didn’t feel very gender after all. “Genderisation is in any case a limitation” so they had agreed – he and the magical stone. With Genderisation he meant to put a finger into an open wound, blaming sex as the cause of the character.

The reason why the two endured the situation was that they thought it as a phase of a development, which would soon go by, leaving nothing endurable behind. While some of the ladies might awake out of their Sleeping-Beauty-slumber, and take things into own hands, instead of hiding behind male activity. And have men work for them. Especially where risky acting was required.

The two should have listened to themselves for once! Like boom companions they hollered along again. For months they had held back their anger, they had to endure for their male parts. While the Advisoress only dared to talk in a soft and tender tune, and soon couldn’t do other any more, as if her vocal chords were frozen, or over flown and powdered by female moisture.

Such resentments couldn’t be ignored by the Advisoress. But she stressed on the successes in general and the success in the Nano research in specific.

“Still, his Eminence Hans Henny Henne is however the inventor of the SLOMES”, the magic bow argued. They wouldn’t give in so easily.

He didn’t mind such details, but the exaggeration when it came to the conclusions. While in a male dominated world female inputs were very necessary, although they almost always were ignored, he saw the pendulum now turning the other way. And as the time became short, he didn’t see a point in an over-boarding single trip.

“Such fuss we can’t stand” the magical stone agreed. “Without Billy-Joe, Arundle is rather helpless. What a pity she doesn’t realize by herself...”

“The moth does, what it wants to do with them” – the magic bow added in a humorous air.

“While this goes on Tika’s account. Arundle has nothing to do with it...” Pooty put in.

“She has other problems, that’s true. But problems she has, and quite a few.” – all talked at the same time, which caused the Advisoress to faint, and was soon gone at all.

Was that the end of the intergalactic Council of the Menora? – Wait and see. Never blame any being for what it is. You won’t cause a change.

Nelaza would be questioned thoroughly, there was no doubt about. No matter how valuable she had been for the research-process. As the giant moth, she was suspected to be the mole. Despite the probability that there was another moth under way. But that was only a further assumption.

29. Malicious Marduk’s Exposure

Wherefrom came the idea, that Baranasias had changed into a moth, or a cocoon or a caterpillar, being smuggled in that way, inside the luggage of one of those filthy reporters?

By such means Malicious Marduk found back into the game, as per Arundle, who was quick at hand, when Malicious Marduk had to be localized. The long phase of tranquillity arose her suspicion all the more. While his final defeat would occur only in the twenty second century. If it was true, what the adventurers were going to face. While this faded in the mist of uncertainty, behind which the true future was hiding again. From the future you would hardly get other but graduated probability.

What ever they had experienced then, was it really the future, and was there one future at all? Seen from the latest discernments of science, this could well be doubted. But there were probabilities, and they shouldn’t be ignored. Because they had a lot to say about the fan of possibilities that opened up and became somewhat real that way. Whether all of them had been properly spotted, whether they fitted into the proper proportions, was another question.

For the time being there was no certainty with reference to Malicious Marduk, and of course no permanent victory. Malicious Marduk might have had to stand many set-backs, his concepts might as well have failed, his creatures were disguised, or had finally separated from him under the

pressure of truth – however, as far as he was concerned, he had not been reached.

While the good side had been able to score considerably. The defence stood well, and the invasion of the dark powers seemed to be almost unlikely. Still, the suspicion couldn't be ignored, that Malicious Marduk had found another loophole to sneak in. There were definite hints of the kind. A Trojan seemed to hide in camouflage right in the middle of the heart of the double-island.

“How nice it is that no one knows,
what gear I wear, what mask I chose...”

the Trojan hummed, whenever he felt unobserved, and that wasn't seldom at all.

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Mynona and Sam didn't like the idea of becoming separated. They protested. It was however common in the School of Inbetween to separate boys and girls. Most of them liked it that way. While standards remained the same as elsewhere in comparison.

The new Headmistress on the other hand knew by experience that youngsters shouldn't be treated all alike.

Her deputy was against an exception. although he never resided in one of those dormitories himself, but spent the nights in the open under the wide sky, to look for shelter only in heavy rain or bitter coldness. But he never favoured the idea of living together with Arundle. That came much later, when they were on the verge of leaving.

“Things are rather different with Mynona and Sam, you can't compare” Arundle objected. “You can't compare yourself with Sam. Do you think he would be willing to stay in the open at night like you? – Besides, they have a totally different motivation. I think we are not entitled to judge over them. They came here together, so we better let them stay together.”

“Let's ask Tibor then, let him decide” – Billy-Joe wanted to get rid of the responsibility. “After all, he is their Dean. Besides, it won't be wise to produce a case of precedence right now. We might as well ask Dorothea about her opinion, because she has the most experience with parents and sponsors.”

While asking the Humperdijks' for advice didn't come to their minds, although somewhat logical. Billy-Joe was already happy that Tibor had come to his mind. While Arundle had touched an old scar by referring to his own strange habits. He still couldn't even imagine to dwell in such a dormitory, which reminded him on the horrible time in the Mission-School, when conservative religious hardliners tried to teach the little ones the advantages of what they reckoned to be Christian civilisation. Tika had suffered even more and longer under the bigoted regiment of the nuns, while he had then been able to achieve decisive impulses by the clan.

Such early experience stamped an individual life-long. No matter what later came. Such an experience you would never get rid of. You couldn't shake off or wash away, but follow you where-ever you go, like an invisible tattoo on the surface of the soul.

The deepest longing stem from there, and wouldn't stop winding, be the lost ever so far away, and unreachable, you still knew it was there and was shining, no matter how distorted your self was.

Neither Billy-Joe nor his little sister Tika had an idea of the origin of such images. It could as well be the oceanic feeling said to hide in everyone, and the first great ache of being delivered. Billy-Joe referred to the clan-life, that had been stolen off him. While Tika had little to forward beside her Totem Animal. No wrong had existed before the mission, nothing comparable had bothered them – well – so far so good – t' was wishful thinking, after all.

They had been torn out of their habitual mode of being. Their childhood had been stolen from them. They were replanted and stripped off their identity. And because this had happened to them, they had restored deep inside the memory of a precious treasure.

Sometimes Arundle envied Billy-Joe for that, what all had happened to him. While this treasure had piled up deep inside, nobody knew, not even she, because she had no access, and slowly began to realize of its existence.

Meanwhile she traced down such hints and approached areas which Maya showed her. Maya, so she called her unborn for the time being. She didn't know, and didn't want to know, whether girl of boy.

Arundle had no such background. Where Billy-Joe saw a shining light, she saw but darkness and shapeless emptiness, and grey nothingness. The inner garden of his equalled her inner emptiness. His garden had been

stolen from him, again and again a hundred times – still the memory stuck inside, couldn't be eliminated, a piece of incomparable remembrance. No-one could ever take away.

After all, she realized something that seemed to have little to do with what they were just dealing, and that was the fundamental difference between the World Citizens and the Isolationists. The conflict had to do with such memories, or the lack of them, in case of the World Citizens. And that was quite an discernment, she reckoned. While she still wanted to donate peace and limit the conflict.

No matter how many failures and false judgements occurred from such Inner Garden, it still was a sound measure for what people were doing, not only for the Isolationists, but also for the World Citizens. The latter had to deal with the lack and the loss, and had to realize what was missing in their coming of age at a very early stage.

And even further Arundle kept on digging: By means of that deficit you might even find the cause for the Cardinal Mistake of mankind, that sneaked in some-when in history, without being noticed, when or where. The Mistake was just there, undetectable and omni-present.

And if was right what Arundle and the Counciloresses of the Menora had found out about the Cardinal Mistake, then it was the coincidence with the loss of the Inner Garden and the upcoming of the Cardinal Mistake. While the Inner Garden founded the identity of tribal cultures.

The Inner Garden circumscribed scarcely what was missing. Not all humans shared the emptiness, as far as extend and value was concerned, but was mostly pushed aside or didn't reach the consciousness. And such people would vehemently deny, that they were lacking a most precious part of being. But thought themselves as proper and well-built individuals, who lifted their head high, when comparing with the so-called primitives.

What was meant by the Inner Garden? It was the paradise, as it wavered through history of mankind ever since. This paradise could shine up where people had access or lived inside, and this was the privilege of the tribal kids. This was what they inherited from their mothers, who didn't know otherwise. It wasn't a matter of doing right or wrong.

Sure enough, there were various temperaments, there were also regional differences and injections – not all paradises were equal, quite the opposite. The fact of being bound inside was the main clue. That was what counted, and that was why such habitats could be regarded as paradises.

The mother held the keys to the paradise in hand. They unlocked the door, while the family and the clan soon intervened, as well as the animals. The latter even to a growing extend.

What was the paradise alike? It wasn't the idyll first of all, while it showed idyllic aspects. Often such paradises were devastated sites, where life had to be gained the hard way. but wasn't seen that way by the dwellers. Because love and joy of life came first – the gracious feast of life as a chain of immediate awareness and ecstatic moments of happiness.

Such might be said just like that, and a lot could be said against it. And viewed from the outside, you might never be able to understand why famine, cold and heat do not employ the existential value, they deserve. All the more if you take the stand of a World Citizen.

To be not misunderstood, we are not considering global strategies and challenges by the growing population, but bother about identity. We deal with the question, whether the beings are pushed into an inner hell and shapeless emptiness, by which their life becomes a curse, no matter how brilliant and rich it might appear outside.

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The inner hell was Malicious Marduk's target. Therefore those tribal cultures annoyed him that much. And tackling them was his favourite, no matter how often he failed, while so many of these people were in command of the Inner Garden of love and joy of life.

But where-ever hell has won, Malicious Marduk is gaining allies and aides, he can employ for his targets. By doing so, he erases the last traces of the Inner Gardens in them, which might have hidden somewhere deep inside in the furthest corners of the soul. While man never gets totally rid of his becoming. No matter how arid and unfruitful the inner landscape may have become, from which his longings and hopes derive. In the driest desert you discover scarce leaves or a thistle of the burning thorn-bush in the Saviours presence.

And the brighter the green is, the shinier it appears to the inner eye. That's the way of beauty: quick it blossoms in the fertile jungle. But doesn't fade in the desert, while it grows out of scarceness and blossoms out of nothing.

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What about Baranasias? How could it happen, that the empty shape remained, while the cleared soul of Anonymous rose to heaven? If it was true that it worked that way.

Was it always so, that empty contaminated shells stayed behind, while cleared and cleansed Astral-bodies rose to heaven? – It has to be so, Arundle reckoned. Otherwise she hadn't been able to fix the two parts of the former being of her father in one. While thinking over and sorting out the whereabouts of the human remains, she noticed for once the concurrence of that image to what was earlier found out about Sublimations and Convertors.

Did cleansed souls rise? Did the earth-laden, death- and ache-contaminated shells remain like debris in the material mud? Did the Uncertainty Principle disturb the Imago? Or was nobody able to look so close any more, as if you had to do with a three-dimensional picture from the early days of photography, when you couldn't see clear without special glasses, that meant here 'the other way of seeing'?

Was Baranasias just a Miserior? And were all Miseriors left-behind empty shells of malice, in order not to disturb the ascension? Or even to hinder by the weight of hell?

It looked that way by now, while Arundle never thought about it that way. The hidden solution offered here, appeared to be absolutely elegant. Even a little too plain. Besides, the question of guiltiness became further transponded, while the battle between good and evil was no longer pending.

From this point of view it looked as if good beings were overwhelmed and raped against their will. No space was given the idea of seduction and the uniqueness of the soul.

'But it isn't that way, when we give way to the seducing of the devil' – came to Arundle's mind. 'We surrender with flying flags and hot longing. The protest keeps quiet and sinks into nil – keeps quiet and diminish behind the sweet teasing of the poison, that is spreading all about us to take us in, with skin and hair. Scruples come up only when resistance rise, be it outside or inside, while frustration and disappointment are generating, because the promises became lame and weak. They never keep what they promise. And that might be the good in the evil. In fact, the evil proves to be weak and colourless and without genuine fulfilment after all.

Because the evil doesn't know real happiness, that's the wrongdoer's dilemma.'

Wholly different was the situation on the other side. Only those who weren't willing or able to give, or saw no sense in sacrifice and devotion, were in trouble.

Those remained outside, and had to search for a door to get inside. Had the individual finally found such door, a process of change began and took up speed and power the further it went, while no frustration mingled and happiness guarded and guided and never fell asleep.

Was that so? Was there no triumph of evil? And was any triumph automatically followed by the feeling of happiness? - O no, bad characters were never happy, not really and truly happy. Somehow they also triumphed, but their triumph remained cold and gay-less. And the stream of happiness passed without touching their souls. On the contrary, where you found the 'do-gooder' who was bathing in the plenitude of the truly sacred.

Was it possible that other conditions ruled on another level of the being, where the culprits, wrongdoers and seducers found a secret corner wherein such feelings survived even for them, while an object of a wholly different kind took the basis - a dog perhaps, or the beloved daughter, they knew to be loved by? Could they feel that love as well? Did it reach their rotten soul? Those are the questions of the big change already, and Anonymous had generated unforeseen answers.

Such a quantum of wrested happiness then settled in the throat like a hook, as hurtful, or even prolonging the ache right in the soul. Thus such happiness couldn't be called true happiness, but endured as a steady pain forth and forth.

30. Metamorphosis and Earthbound Fate

The scales fell from Arundle's eyes. All of a sudden she saw clear, saw with one glance, how things fitted together. She felt as if she was looking into another universe with own laws, while directly interfering into the affairs of the earth. However people didn't realize, because they were separated by an invisible barrier from that other reality - unable to

recognise. And still feeling the influence from there. The influence was there, whether they realized or not.

Arundle now was on the verge to understand what the Advisoress wanted her to understand, by all those hidden hints – how moth and butterfly free themselves all over again and again. Seen under this aspect, she was certainly right. The close tidings on earth hindered such metamorphosis and the following ascension, and perhaps this was what she meant. Because the way the butterfly overcomes the state of the caterpillar, the cleansed human overcomes the earthen lot. And here the question arises, if or how the SLOMES - with all the accompanying circumstances - hinders the processes. A long-lasting life, as promised by the SLOMES-advertising, may miss in the end what was meant, and might end up on the wrong side.

Arundle noticed the dilemma, that resulted here, while the aim was clear, something else was meant. She understood now the growing desperation of the Advisoress. With angels' tongues she had tried to transmit her truth.

All she found was misunderstanding among the Council of the Menora. No matter what she uttered about life, it was taken for granted, according to existing standards, which didn't care about angelic states. The more so when it meant to leave earth, as had been the case with Anonymous.

As a matter of fact, he hadn't been seen on earth ever since, anyway. Quite the opposite, what he had left behind, was irresponsible mean junk.

And what became known about his heavenly state didn't invite – even enthusiasts - as followers. So the Advisoress stood alone in the rain on vast grounds, so to speak; emitting the rumour of polluting the earthen lot, like former hermaphrodite Puh-Tse in far away Atlantis, sticking to the heel like sticky cold slime. And it was up to Arundle to hinder such opinion, and disgrace the Advisoress unnecessarily. While the latter only wanted to point out the marvellous opportunities, to be found on the road of overcoming the earthen heaviness.

She eventually wanted to assure the humans of a beautiful life in eternity. And she also wanted to hinder the sacrifice of the transcendent reality against the earthen one all too soon, or have it disappear out of sight. The one had nothing to do with the other. But that couldn't be transmitted even in the Council of the Menora under the existing circumstances.

All the more was the Advisoress pleased by Arundle, who had the nose up once more. – Well, with such a father – this was eventually no wonder.

Purification should become visible again. By all longing for an everlasting life, with all the accompanying circumstances, which became by now rather considerably, purification fell short without doubt, the Advisoress objected, and she knew what she was talking about.

“In former times, when people had almost no time to become grown up, things were different” – the Advisoress lectured, somewhat high-brow “then a SLOMES had been necessary, but now living-conditions weren’t that way any more. Nowadays people live on for more than a hundred years, and therefore have all the time in the world to purify, and foreword the matter of mankind a little.

That is, what people want, no matter what they all have in mind all the time. Happy and satisfied with themselves they are, when they blink like pure silver” - thus ended the Advisoress.

“Exactly” Arundle agreed – “and because they do not succeed, they get angry. And that is because they don’t have time enough, their earthen life is far too short, and leaves no time for them to properly understand life.”

The Advisoress looked around into the faces, she realized the misunderstanding which hurt her. She might go back to single talks. Alone with Arundle she had had the best experience, right now as well once more.

Only with Arundle she felt understood rightly. What she was saying in a general mode, Arundle backed up, and added depth in a very helpful manner.

Arundle pointed out that the bettering of the world, was not only faith, but was the result of hard work, the individuals had to absolve. “Many just have no ideas or the wrong ones. And that’s even worse, as if they had no ideas... We earthen worms aren’t the slyest after all. Beside the fact that we are weak and instable, and are seldom able to endure, even to the right cause. On the other hand we have love. Out of love we do a hell of a lot, for our little ones we go through fire, if it must be, no matter whether they deserve it. Because love never asks for merits.”

The Advisor nodded and wholeheartedly agreed while the Advisoress had disappeared during Arundle’s long speech. She had turned inside out, or outside in, depending on the point of view, and was now dwelling at a

site far away, from where the Advisor had just returned. They behaved just like nano-bits.

Was that now the final end of the Council of the Menora? – Arundle asked herself. The Advisor nodded, as was his mode, when reading thoughts, even before they came to her mind. And sometimes she doubted, whether such thoughts really came to her mind at all.

“...at last with that kind of limitations – ...don’t make sense after all – ...we cannot stand those ideological fuss any more. Our time runs off. The exclusion of men might have been a signal for the softies among them, who knows?”

The Advisor didn’t sound convincing, when he said that. He knew the male part, after all. But Arundle listen only with half an ear anyway, the question of the target-land bound her attention. She was thinking, how the question of the target-land could be forwarded somewhat lively and agreeably.

While only the trial would become a dangerous act of balance on the blade of the sword, so to speak. The conditions of Atlantis stood clearly and threateningly before her inner eye.

The hysteric mass-movement for the negation of the earthen lot had become awful traces, and had resulted in the doom. While this couldn’t be it. Only for that reason life on earth had to be seen as a selfish valid form of being, and therefore a development, that had resulted in the invention of the SLOMES, had been very helpful.

Was the pendulum in due course of turning the other way round again? Arundle meant to hear the voices again, which asked for a fast and collective departure from earth. The outlook of landing right in heaven was in fact seductive.

Under the surface of mankind a latent yearning for death was waiting to break out. That of course was in no way the Advisor’s intention. He, as well, wasn’t able to make clear the difference between his standing for the earthen purification and the glorification of the heavenly aim. Life wouldn’t gain value, unless the people began to turn things upside down, and have heaven come down to earth.

Had Arundle only known by then how the Advisor felt. Did he know what danger he procured? But he didn’t open up. She had no access to his inner world of thoughts.

“You may burn your fingers, dear child” he mentioned tenderly and fatherly, and Arundle felt quite young again. Had the cause not be so

tricky, she would have insisted on clearance. However things didn't work that way.

"We must find a straight line" she demanded very decisively. "We certainly are not interested in conditions as had been in Atlantis. Mankind hasn't changed that much, and still cling to the damned affection for death."

"Life on earth is no fun, so the yearning for another and better life comes up just like that", the Advisor agreed. As if this was the most obvious matter in the world, and no reason for the greatest worries.

"We need a clear guideline. I think we should go on as follows" Arundle objected – "We neither touch the SLOMES programme, nor the new doctrine of prolonged life, but keep as flanking attempts taken up meanwhile. Access should become easier. The aim should be, to allow everybody to decide for a prolonged life in freedom. The advantage is right at hand, while genuine purification and the bettering of the world may follow – if at all – when opposing poles meet again ..."

The Advisor appreciated highly, what was said, and made that public by loud exclamations of agreement. Arundle blushed. She didn't exactly know why. Her idea was basically simple. Whoever lived long, understood life better. He learnt more and understood the interdependences better, and wasn't helplessly delivered to the circumstances of life. He discovered his forming possibilities, and was likely to try them out, and might even be successful. From such a person you could expect, that he was able to give his share and do his part in the bettering of the world, and find his place in the world, to master the tasks successfully, deriving from there.

Such a point of view didn't oppose the preparation for an eternal life. Rather quite the opposite. Such a position anticipated to a certain extend what was due to come over there, while there was a spiritual dimension already working, that was determining the earthly life already.

People were busy on several levels. Life on earth was a rather dark and blind groping, similar to the moles' state. Still it didn't mean that there were no moments of happiness. In fact, many such moments fitted well into any average life, while the promise of a complete happiness remained the carrot before the nose of the donkey. Great danger was threatening, as could be seen when cultures and civilisations fell in love with death, and were affected by such a collective 'amour fou' (i.e. crazy love), and have the thousands march jointly towards doom, like those disturbed little rat-

like animals called Lemmings, when crashing together or one by one into an abyss, without obvious reason.

“Still, you even find a morbid quantum of happiness here by anticipating eternal joys or even participate already by means of the so-called ‘unio mystica’ (i.e. mystical communion with God) – which is by no means modest, but seems to have the temerity of the highest degree. Thus is the communion in which Adam allies in wholeness over all borders right here and now by mirroring mankind’s destiny” – the Advisor commented somewhat complex and dark, although perhaps a little less frank and straight than Arundle, who felt a deep warmth inside, and well understood.

The magic bow was reminded of his mother-country and a tear rolled out of his red eye and dropped into Arundle’s neck, before it ran hot and salty in her dress and over the shoulder, where it finally faded. And Arundle suddenly understood, what the magic bow meant to her and how much she owed him. Without him she would be in the same position as the other Councilloresses of the Menora.

The reason, why she saw further and understood more, was entirely up to him. She wasn’t sure at all how important it would be to publish her discernments right here and now, and that the logic inherent would overcome the others, so that they couldn’t do other, but agree.

Was it really so important to know the truth? Could you not strive for the truth with half of the whole knowledge? you needn’t be all wrong at last. Why should the members all bother now because of that blooming striving for death, as was supposed to be hidden somewhere in mankind, but seemed to disappear behind the SLOMES these days anyway! The Advisor might be right somehow. The idea of purification could also be installed into the struggle for life on earth. While this was a struggle and not the solitary cooperation in favour of the common wealth. – Yes, that sounded much better!

“I think, we leave it like that, right here and now, I would suggest” Arundle suggested, because the disappearing of the Advisoress caused quite some irritation among the Councilloresses.

“It’s almost like the cancellation of the celibacy” Grisella commented in a moody air. She asked herself whether she suffered, but couldn’t find any ache. What were the others like? – There were no objections, so she agreed with Arundle. The Advisor faded and by that the whole matter seemed settled. The Council of the Menora had come to an end, after

reaching their goals – well, after almost reaching the goals, while the big hopes somehow stranded.

Women didn't do so much better in saving the world. They also had big trouble in forcing reality to disguise the secrets of the future, and the proper conclusions.

Their circle had been no less limited, while perhaps somewhat opener and more willing at work. In the end, however, not much came out, and the question, who stood behind the moth had found but a one-dimensional answer. All the fuss had been perhaps unnecessary, while the trouble they caused had done quite some harm.

The hot tear of the magic bow burnt still on Arundle's skin, and dug a trace in her memory. She would certainly never ever agree on a suggestion, while being fashionably upholstered, flattering the ego.

No pregnancy could excuse. – She had also to beg Billy-Joe's pardon. She did it in thought, and hoped he would read in her mind, so there would be no further public excuse and argument necessary.

31. The Therapy

*Lord, let me know my end,
and what is the measure of my days;
let me know how fleeting my life is!
Behold, thou hast made my days a few handbreadths,
and my lifetime is but nothing in thy sight.
Surely every man stands as a mere breath!
Surely man goes about as a shadow!
Surely for naught are they in turmoil;
man heaps up, and knows not who will gather!
(Ps39, 4-6)*

Well, the sense of life – what a question: ancient but always fresh again and rather like new. Most answers you can surely forget. What do people do over here in this beautiful world? Why-fore the whole?

“I'd rather be never born!” sound the tortured through the centuries in deepest desperation and greatest pain. No matter where the eyes of the historian fix. The phases of happiness are but mere tender stripes amidst

black currents of agony and unlimited cruelty. The latter seemed hardest to believe.

Man does the most cruel things with man, but why must they generate fun thereof? Wouldn't the deeds as such suffice? What's the sense of the extra quantum? While the unavoidable is already more than enough.

No way – because there is that diabolical drive underneath or amidst the rational calculation of death. There is an extra-quantum of cruelty, self-sufficient and sweet, in none reject able seduction.

'Look at the kitten, how it plays with the life of the mouse. The way it's reacting as quick as a thought, not the tiniest move overlooking, even before it was to be made, foreseeing the direction of the intended flight. Does it enjoy the pain of death, the horror of desperation? Or does it play with the mouse no other than with a ball of yarn, perhaps a little lustier because of the auto-life exposed? Would a mechanical mouse also do? Or does it need the smell of deadly pain, to tease the senses utmost?

And do modest humans not employ the same notion, while thoroughly covered by neat convention?

Who dares to answer here freely and convincingly? – nobody, who is honest, and reflected, though. He had to be a self-centred miser, who could withstand such notion.

Well, yes it's got to be cleared away, while it's not steadfast enough, and won't pick up with the orgies of creativity, meaning so much more, when unlocked. But that's the clou sooner or later. Be it, because the presumptions are missing, be it that the endurance is lacking, be it, because the surrounding doesn't comply.'

'However, is it true that people become cheated and stripped off their joy of life, and cannot hinder? Or is it, that they build a fantastic castle out of a pile of shit in the darkest corner of their prison or dungeon?'

'Happiness is the spark, which people beat out of nothing. Courage not always stands up, often enough it is low, and deeply faint-hearted, and the yearning for death reaches out for such self. While he still has the anchor at hand, the tiny straw, the aide in emergency.'

'Often enough, otherwise we wouldn't be as many as we meanwhile are, we are becoming more, if nothing interferes.'

'The satisfaction of needs is a weak expression for what keeps us alive, and demands us to stick to our lives, no matter how sour we feel. We are like gamblers, who feel lucky when the run of bad luck ends.'

‘Or like a soldier, who feels deep genuine happiness about the tranquillity during cease fire. Such happiness may seem to us poor or even ridiculous, but it is still there, and perhaps a deeper feeling than the poet’s, when kissed by the Muse.’

‘Yes, by the paradox, those fortune-hunters, who can’t do otherwise, but strive for luck, would run empty permanently, while others tumble from one lucky strike to the next, while dealing carelessly with fortune. Because luck is no proper aim, but the circumstance of our acting and striving. Luck is the colour, that suits us, when on the winner’s straight.’

‘Not the unexpected luck is meant here, but the feeling, that comes up, when something turned out well, we were longing for desperately. Happiness is the fulfilled expectation, the solved hope and of course again and again love in all shades and modes. Love is without doubt the mother of happiness.’

‘When happiness endures, and is but a quick appeal, flashing on like a sun-ray, then it’s tightly bound to love. But thus only the few experience. In general love appears fickle.’

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Luther Lommel could sing a song of luck. He knew the hasty sides of fortune, his Goddess of addiction. Therefore he could frankly admit, that he was no addict to the cards, while cards were only the means and vehicle he required to reach his goal – well, or not.

Striving for luck contained the misfortune. While strands of luck and misfortune interchanged. But Luther defined what side he was in at a time. And that might have been the tragedy of his life, that he believed in such strands. He believed so hard, that they then happened – the strands of misfortune in any case, that were following any strand of luck, as sure as daylight. That was the law, as to Luther Lommel. A law, he wasn’t destined to overcome, while remaining his defined target over the years.

Now, since all debts were quitted, and all obligations fulfilled, and the desperation had come to an end, he could feel boredom yawning him insolently into the face.

Luther Lommel sprang into his work – and in the beginning there was a lot of work to do. Soon his booth shone in perfect order. All updates had been incorporated. The manuals stood like puppet-soldiers lined up. The frequencies and nautical calculation charts hung orderly and readably

where they should. The sender- and receivers blinked. What had to be movable, was movable, even the stool turned and rolls ran in soft protectors underneath.

The duty-free area was cleared likewise. Cigarette brands were lined up in alphabetical sequence on the shelves, just like the perfumes, lotions and crèmes and other beauty utensils, as were bound for the beloved at home, or for a darling-to-be, somewhere in the world, as far as the sea lords were concerned.

As a matter of fact the tourists bought most of it, as if the duty-free shop was the only place to buy thrilling gifts from afar. While they didn't look different than those ashore. With one little but obviously important difference -- the governmental revenue stamp was missing, which were in fact discretely fixed, as far as the beauty-staff was concerned, and was spotted only by eager customs officers, who loved to maltreat tourists, when they entered the homeland shore over the mini-gangway of the helicopter.

Luther Lommel usually forgot the prepare them with the necessary details and limits of immigration and transit regulations. While surely the heaviest smoker wouldn't smoke a full carton in three days, or drink two bottles of finest Scottish Malt. The trend had moved in the opposite direction, meanwhile, anyway. But such news hadn't reached Luther Lommel and yet the conservative behaviour common in duty-free trade.

Luther Lommel was bored never the less. Despite the workload or because of it. He missed the strands of luck very much, and even a little the strands of misfortune, which had been a sweet ache somehow. At least he felt in nostalgic radiance.

Luther Lommel shouldn't have risked an eye on the gambling saloons, but he did. He did it, and the more often he did, the hotter he felt the flame burning, until he couldn't resist any more. He tried with yoga and antigenic training, and asked for psychological advice, now that he realized that the addiction held him still with tight grip.

There were no trained psychologists on the islands, no practicing ones anyway, but Susamee felt competent enough. She said, she would be able to help, besides, she liked him, and that was probably the main reason. While she hoped to learn some tricks of him, as far as the cards were concerned. She liked a game here and there, but was upset when she lost.

That was, of course, a big mistake. You shouldn't seduce an alcoholic with the stalest beer. Luther Lommel was of course rather amused of this

therapy, and showed Susamee everything he knew, and that was a lot. – Everything you could collect in thirty years of practising. You would be an idiot, if you didn't pick up a hell of a lot.

Instead of disaccustoming the addict, both gambled like mad-men and Susamee didn't notice how she was twisted around Luther's little finger, and snuggled into a dark bottomless moloch. Or did she leave him in this belief, and was two steps ahead all the time, as tricky as she was?

Luther Lommel took it as it came and was pleased about his disaccustoming. While he was also proud, that such an important personage could learn of him something, and be it only the card tricks and the adroitness of the gambler's fingers.

But what happened to the discustomisation? Luther Lommel asked himself if he hadn't been betrayed. His time was limited, because the therapy could only take place when the vessel stayed in the harbour. At sea he could not be replaced.

Therefore he began to inquire Susamee by asking for the progress he made. Yes, Luther was so upset about Susamee's therapy, that he didn't look into the saloon at all, no matter what the other gamblers did or what the weather was like and how quiet the sea was, for the whole length of the journey.

He stared pig-headed after the sea gulls, which were diving after the junk the steward kept throwing over board after each meal. Or he looked through the orders for the duty-free saloon and the bar. When he didn't fetch his earphones to listen what was going on out there in the wide world. This was much more productive when the weather was bad. Still he was fascinated ever more, how far his ear reached and the air-waves managed to creep around the globe. Well, waves didn't creep any longer, Luther Lommel knew. Since satellites accompanied the globe, you could reach every hidden corner, without delay, from everywhere and at any time. While on certain frequencies extra filters were installed by darkies, who had to hide what they had to say. Requiring exchange of news, nevertheless.

The former old-type telegraphy was out. Except for the submarines, which still clung to that means of the creeping waves in order to send and receive those ancient morse codes these days used by submarines and destroyers, their declared enemies. Luther Lommel could sing a song thereof. – remains of a long life at sea.

In short – gambling was distracting, since he felt exploited by his therapist. After each journey he wanted to tell her this time. But then Susamee bewitched him with her naked smile and he found himself back at the card table. She argued she still lacked the proper pokerface. And that was true. A clever opponent read from her mimes almost as well as if he had had a look into her cards.

Soon he only played, because he didn't want to offend her. He realized that he became worse and worse, because the game couldn't give him anything anymore. He began to see, what gambling was for most people: a waste of time.

Susamee was close to her target. She had killed two flies in one stroke. She could now stand her woman when playing Poker with the other Shamans at the annual general Shamans' meeting, and Luther Lommel had lost interest in the cards for good, so it seemed. No other drugs were necessary.

The thrill of fortune he felt like the donkey, striving after the carrot in front of his nose, was disguised and demystified. He recognized lots of other stimuli in life, like a good drop of liquor, excellent food, or the sunset, or just the warmth on the skin, when bathing in the mild light of the morning sun.

Life was indeed full of moments of happiness, the strands of luck were but one way under many. The feeling as such had become closer than ever. Puzzled as he was, he felt forced to exchange with others, what had happened to him. Because those, whose heart is full, overflows the mouth', so to speak.

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Literarily seen he was like a raw diamond, because he had no experience what so ever. So he took off clumsily, yet he had no problems in writing, because he wrote freely and wrote down easily what ever came to his mind. Instead of staring stubbornly into his fan of cards, with a stoic air, in order not to unveil anything, he sat in front of his laptop and hammered like mad on the keyboard, or looked with an empty gaze somewhere afar, awaiting the next idea or groping for the best way of putting.

As a matter of fact, he hadn't been forced to give up his nature, which served him now, as his diligence was stimulated. Ideas he had enough. But

instead of forming faint buildings in the clouds, he came about with something, that could be read, while it had to become lectured to a vast extend and couldn't remain as it was.

His rising was not yet the real top flow of creativity. Bits and pieces he produced, but the red fathom was still missing. Had he been able to find it, the flow might have become interrupted, or even stopped at all.

The guideline should be found later, when more material was available, so he hoped. Thus he slowly became aware of his way of producing, he had so irksomely to find out, like any human being, who must learn everything in life laboriously. The more did he enjoy, when he succeeded, and was honoured by the fruits of his efforts. While the process of writing became self-sufficient but was only the qualifying parameter for the outcome.

For the first time in his life Luther Lommel felt the waves of happiness carrying him away. Those were this time genuine strands, able to carry him over all hurdles, on and on, and no end was in sight.

He had a lot to tell! Such a long life contained stuff for a whole library. And what he didn't experience himself, he invented, was it then thinkable or imaginable, even frightening – so it was his property and experience nevertheless.

Such a real life didn't only consist of events, but is found in everything that is accompanying us. What drives through heart and breast, and head and kidneys? What is it, that make the famous butterfly flutter in the stomach and seek expression in yearnings and aches of the soul?

The time was also well chosen, because he had gone through many heights as well as many more depths of life. He knew the demands and fears of desperation and agony in deepest darkness, where nothing goes any more, and the longing for death takes over, and the yearning for an end of all pain, won't cease.

Yes, there was stuff enough, how difficult it ever was handling adequately, no matter how hard Luther tried – still some descriptions remained just drafts, not yet ready, but vague outlines. Nothing but a faint idea came up, what the whole was going to be one day, the more so, as Luther hadn't yet found out himself.

But who manages better? Whose curriculum makes sense? Why were all these experiences made? Did experience serve education? Was life a 'Bildungsroman', an institution of purification?

What life was about, Luther Lommel not yet had in focus. While this question really bothered him, when he became aware of the senselessness of his existence during his struggle against addiction, as far as the struggle for rehabilitation was concerned: His addiction and the hunt for the strands of luck. Did he not step all the time on the same spot, and turned in wheels?

Perhaps others should decide. While too close a look may cause blindness. The years counted, of course, which were winding back an almost endless straight, fading in the mist of the past, while forward the distance had become rather short, as it suits a hundred-ender. The more so, for one who had just escaped death, by the hearty last minute purchase of his ship-owneress. He would certainly never forget. Very slowly he realized what a fate of nameless horror lay behind him.

What kind of world was it, where things like that were allowed? Without Dorothea's courageous intervention, he would lie somewhere cut in pieces, ready for transplantation, or even worse, had become dog-fodder, while the skeleton would be standing in front of a school-class. As if the addiction stuck right in the bones. That was of course nonsense. But what didn't scientists all do in their unlimited curiosity and in the mean enjoyment of power? His scull, he was certain, would have become observed in detail, in order to get hold of his fate this way. All that was now an old hat. Soon nobody would care for him any more. Not for him, but what was with all the others? He had never been alone.

Little by little and slowly the red string shone up and so Luther's curriculum became some kind of a warning and prophecy in the Anonymous's style.

Grisella took notice. She read and corrected. She cared for a publisher. And because she had a good reputation, Luther Lommel overcame all hurdles and aimed the target. He was commercialised with great effort and rose right up into the bestsellers' heaven. The subject was worth it. The public had to be sensibilized and alarmed. Of those endangered Hundred-enders, there were far too many by now, to be ignored furthermore.

And this was, what happened. Luther Lommel's writing went under the skin, and hardly anybody could resist. Perhaps it was just the uneven and kinky way of writing, and even the mistakes that hadn't been erased, which gave the little booklet its charm.

For a short period of time those killing sites, and ‘slaughter houses for human beings’ became the public scandal number one. Governments and Parliaments became alerted and hastily revised the legal dimension of the subject.

Judith finally succeeded with her idea of an immediate and general remission of all pending debts and saved the SLOMES Corporation before ‘the doom into barbarism’ as she put it. While the loss was marginal, but the prestige rose immensely.

The company was transformed at the same time, and all employees became shareholders and participating owners. Where had such a calculation ever happened in capitalism? A company distributing their shares amongst the employees for good, and let go all debtors at the same time. These steps could only happen, because the SLOMES Corporation was by nucleus a family-owned institution, and Judith the undefined boss. “Chapeau Mme. Kornblum, Chapeau...”

32. Edmond

How you could fail! Nobody ever figured, while the likeliness was perfectly in order. As a matter of fact Hilde Henne’s mother and her mother and also her mother’s mother always gave birth to girls, therefore Arundle had been convinced to do alike. But now it turned out to be just opposite. She could say good-bye to Maya. “Postponing is no dismissing” Dorothea tried to console, in a pragmatic air. Everybody started right away and somewhat clumsy to think of an adequate name, while no-one was prepared. Not the far away grandfather or the grandmother, and the second replacement grandfather, who generously offered himself, although he had no such experience and never had had to do with children in his life.

“ - Had loads of other things to do” he declared rather helpless. “Besides, I was missing the suitable woman on my side” he added thoughtfully and pressed Hilde tightly so she cuddled tenderly in his arm. If she had had the choice, she would have loved to be impregnated by this man, who’d certainly deserve it.

Anonymous didn’t come alone, but was accompanied by half of the court. Hans Henny Henne met old acquaintance among, and it was a great hallo. The Advisor generously presented a halo. “Right in advance,

prophylactic” he explained. “While he certainly will have to deserve it, the little comrade. So let us then call him Edmond, the Protector of the Heritage. This is the name that fits. If it isn’t too sophisticated, so let the young mother decide.”

“He’s then going to be called Eddy” Pooty agreed eagerly. He saw it pragmatically, while he in fact preferred Walter, for reasons rather obvious.

The magic stone from Uluru had a ring of sparkles spread over the little creature, supposed to commit the choice.

Anonymous was accompanied by a little cloud that could be drawn like a curtain before the sun, and would always stay near at hand, as long as the childhood lasted. “My own invention” the proud grandfather explained. The cloud fitted to the airy consistence of his and was therefore more than adequate.

The other gifts were all alike, first of all those from heaven. Nothing solid was among, and when the messengers from above left, Nothing remained except that little cloud in one corner, waiting to be called. From the rainbow-coloured sparkles a few lay around still, but nobody noticed.

The wishes nobody could see, of course, or grab sensually. They were, like the colours – only visible or noticeable under certain circumstances.

Edmond, what a name, strange and somehow confidential. ‘Yes, I could get used to it’, the young mother thought. She found back while the big ache faded. Happiness mingled into exhaustion, while the flow of visitors wouldn’t stop.

The earthen gratulants came with flowers or pink pampers, while light-blue was due. Little Ed shrieked of joy and desire. The little cloud exercised by following Billy-Joe, when he brought his son to his mother for feeding, who could not yet get up and walk around.

Otherwise she had been very brave and strong like many a tribal woman, who retreat alone in the bush, and return only when they have the baby in their arms. Susamee had taken care of that. Her influence had done Arundle well, tranquillity and patience had been of great help in her gravest hour. Arundle hadn’t been alone, but the labour she had done all by herself, while nobody had been able to help.

Hilde was sobbing all the time, because she was so happy, and because everything had gone well. Hans Henny Henne stood by, somewhat clumsy and didn’t manage to sorting his bionic limbs. He was not familiar

with what was going on around him, while he most likely had the most challenging present in a suitcase, which was another obstacle that had to be surrounded in the narrow hospital-corridor.

Together with Judith Kornblum, he had developed a handy version of the SLOMES, that fitted into a suitcase, and could be taken away while travelling. You needn't be a Hercules. The times of the mover-truck were definitely over. Everyone could employ his or her SLOMES – at least the new type, that was a prototype up to now, but kept what it promised.

“There are definitely more functions available” Henne proudly explained, and took the opportunity to unpack his present.

“You needn't get up for that. Yes, you stay in bed, as you are. We try it if you like.”

But Arundle waved him off somewhat tired. “Perhaps tomorrow” she sighed. And Hilde blushed like a hen and pushed Hansiman and the instrument away from the bed. Hansiman didn't know whether you could leave such a precious present unguarded, but Watchman Will Wiesly signalled him to stay calm, and leave this up to him.

The moth attack was not yet forgotten, and Arundle belonged to the circle of the most endangered persons. Therefore Watchman Will Wiesly was present to watch and hang on, all the more Susamee didn't show that she was going to leave, quite the opposite, she seemed to prepare for a lengthier stay.

“Here is where I might be needed” she said when questioning looks of the hospital-personnel fixed her, so strange an image she was, but dared no comments.

Arundle required her presence. She felt isolated in the single bed room. She would have liked to stay with other young mothers and their babies in one dormitory, but she was the only one at the moment – except one other - who had delivered this week.

But one more birth was due these days, so the room next to the Operating Theatre should be made available, therefore Arundle would soon have to move most likely anyway.

“It's just a dwarf” the station sister explained somewhat ignorant, but corrected herself after noticing the questioning glances of Arundle and the Shamaness. “A small-grown person with pelvis-problems” she added hastily, and hoped to make the word ‘just’ overheard or vanish.

Hans Henny Henne left the incredibly valuable prototype, - ready to service – behind, but exchanged a glance with Watchman Will Wiesly

when leaving the room. The Watchman just nodded quietly. He would stay in front of the room, where Arundle and little Eddy would finally end up. The suitcase he took right away. The case was rather light, and had no appeal of a home-trainer any more, the old SLOMES reminded strongly.

The moving of the patients was a welcomed opportunity to interrupt the flow of visitors. No matter how nice such flow was, the young mother felt stressed and longed for peace and ease, only the Shamaness could grant.

“Tomorrow is another day and in two days our young mother will be at home again, if everything turns out to be the way things should be” – the surgeon on duty added, while the bed was made and little Eddy was put into his mother’s arms, where he felt visually well.

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Without much fuss Judith Kornblum and Hans Henny Henne had undertaken to develop the SLOMES further. And thanks to Peter Adams their ideas became real. Judith had always brilliant ideas and knew everything what was going on in Nanoverse research, but this time it was Peter who managed the transformation just like that.

Hans Henny Henne consisted of so many bionic parts and limbs, that he as well could be regarded as an artifact himself. He was a kind of artifact with a human brain, and a human identity, while many functions did no longer follow natural principles.

This was why he wanted to pack as much of himself as was possible into the new SLOMES. And so the set took over other functions as well, but didn’t hinder minimisation. The set was now no static apparatus any more, as had been the predecessors, but a complex being with a self-fulfilling interior life.

In other words copied Hans Henny Henne himself to a certain extend into the new set, and widened the SLOMES functions accordingly. But that was not all. The SLOMES of the new generation became a sort of servant, who enjoyed the services he or she performed, as there was first of all the prolongation of the masters life. That was not all. You could send him shopping, but that was for another reason kind of a problem. He was just too precious to let him wander unguarded on his or her own in public.

Without doubt the time of total autonomy would surely come. Technically seen, he was more than able – as to the inventors. The sense

and the mechanotronic of the prototype were sufficient without doubt. That had been proved. While improvements were most welcome.

Hans Henny Henne was really looking forward to see his double going online as soon as possible, but Judith hesitated. There was the family on one side, who had a word to say as well. But there was the fussy side on the other hand, and the more or less likely side-effects, such a revolutionary step meant.

Productability was not all. Not everything that could be produced should be produced. With the old SLOMES a lot of change had come by, and even more had to be expected with the new one, while not all was wanted, but couldn't be avoided.

So Judith argued that the prototype wasn't ready yet, but required rehearsal and improvement. Some weaknesses were all too well known, but were in sight these days, therefore the public had to wait.

But Hans Henny Henne didn't have time. When his old chum Anonymous came over for a visit he raised hidden longings in Henne's breast, he would have given way the sooner the better, while the matrimonial state began to fade and turned over into everyday routine, with all those unwanted side-effects. Not only Hilde got to know Hans Henny but vice versa as well, and what came about, was not always comfortable.

In the honeymoon-phase everybody shows his and her sunny side and favourable characteristics, and keeps the dark aspects hidden. But that's soon done and the true and whole character appears.

In short: Hansiman didn't feel so closely bound over here any more. He badly felt missing the sound talks and the friendship tights with Anonymous and the Advisor. Here on earth he had no chance of meeting the Advisor, for what ever reason, while Arundle seemed to have no problem of that kind, neither had the other members of the former Council of the Menora, where men weren't allowed.

The location of Susamee's island - and on the other one - was also not all that attractive, while the sound of the metropolis still hammered him through his arteries. The teaching was also not as challenging any more as it used to be in the beginning. Therefore he would have so much liked to become public with the new prototype. In his imagination he saw himself teaching students in how to handle and teach the extended artifact, which

had become so unlikely because of Judith's hesitation. Under such circumstances he could as well look from above, when it finally became public.

Judith had good reasons of taking her time with the set. The new being was in many ways human. Communication was even more productive and never frustrating. In theory a deep relation was built up between artifact and owner. You looked your mate not anymore into a square set of binoculars but into almost human eyes, in order to enter the conventional functions of becoming younger. While a deep emotional intimacy occurred, that exceeded even the deepest interrelationship with real human beings.

As to Judith was this the main problem. Would such intercourse not limit or even diminish the interrelationship with other real humans? Someone who was cuddling all day with his artifact, might not need any human contacts any more.

Marriage, family, friendship, coupling would become surplus. It was quite likely, that Hansiman was suffering of the consequences of so close and so deep a contact with the prototype. And the reason was found for Hansiman's homesickness. Hilde was by no means responsible.

Fortunately Hilde didn't realize what changes were going on with Hansiman, since his old pal Anonymous came for a visit. There had been too much hustle because of Eddy's birth and all that. The baby occupied her emotionally and Arundle, her daughter, took the rest, so there was not much care left for Hansiman.

Edmond – what a name! The name would probably never take over, while Eddy was too likely. The Advisor, who suggested the name, had not thought that over. Billy-Joe didn't mind. He liked his ordinary name and wanted for his son the same. Other references, especially not of the dark kind, weren't his cup of tea – no way!]

Such a little shade didn't bother, because Hans Henny Henne didn't realize himself. He rather wondered what made him head towards the other side, while he felt totally earth-bound. The new SLOMES he wanted to see invented here on esrth, but then it would be high time for him to go.

He didn't know how to explain that to Hilde. He would have a word with Anonymous on that, who certainly had a word to say in this matter, as Hilde had once been his wife as well. Easiest would it probably be if she came along with him. But while he thought it over, he realized a hell of a

lot of problems arising thereof, so it might be better to leave things as they were.

Beforehand he asked Judith, who he had the best wire with, while Arundle never got close. Despite the fact that they shared the same spheres.

He let Judith know that the whole bionic outfit was no good and ran sensible characters most likely into depression. Such a depression goes hand in hand with the loss of identity, caused by the over-alienation of organ parts and bio-mechatronic replacement-wirings. The body seemed to react unconsciously on such distortion with stress. And stress led to an increased erosion of the organs, and demanded ever faster and more repairs or replacements. An ungood race for life and lifetime was on the march then.

Such an armament was by no means a pat solution. In the first euphoria you felt strong and youthful, and life expelled like a colourful carpet. You felt invited to muse and plug the rose as long as it blossomed, as it said in the bionic advertising.

Hans Henny Henne had by now grown out of this phase for a good while. Yes, he did plug the rose, he had taken a second and a third cup of youthfulness and emptied the cups to the bottom, while a stale aftertaste remained of his untimely behaviour. Deep inside he had become old, and that his body knew as well, at least the rests still available of the original fabric.

Judith intended to have a word with Arundle about her mother, and how she managed – while being a grandmother now. Whether she still enjoyed the youthful role she had taken over in the young matrimonial state, or might as well feel stress caused by the untimely expectations.

People are that way, they undergo the heaviest stress and ask for things, they normally would recognized immediately as absurd with others, but not with themselves.

Wholly new aspects came about with the fuss Hans Henny Henne produced and published. The yearning for an everlasting life would come to an end by itself. Nobody wanted to become a real Methusalem as a matter of fact, as long as life could be prolonged by the free will, and everybody reached the age he or she demanded. If no tree fell on their head, or evil men shot them down. They lived a long life as it was, with heights and also frightening depths, causing as well satiation or

satisfaction, so that the one or other granny sighed in saturation, when thinking of the grave and the sweet everlasting sleep. A feeling, as after a heavy meal, that had eventually come to an end at last and after all.

Hot curiosity needn't be burning for what was going to come. It was true and genuine saturation, content saturation like after a meal, that finally had come to the very end, nothing could be stuffed in any more. But that was no reason to argue. As it would be ridiculous to argue because you filled your stomach after a long period of starvation.

No-one really wanted to go back to the decadent custom of the old Romans who ordered their slaves to tickle with tender feathers their throats to make them vomit and empty the fodder-hold to be filled anew.

Such orally fixed characters surely existed ever since, who didn't notice or didn't want to notice when boredom sneaked into the repetitions, and the thrill became thin and watery in the yet-ever-known, no matter how sensational it once had been. And they didn't limit themselves on nutrition, but handled the whole life as if it was a gracious meal. Yes, they might live for the only reason to make life but one great meal.

Such characters were fixed to the first level of the human development, and seldom proceeded ever further. Thus they passed by other - more or less doubtful - satisfactions, first of all the spiritual satisfaction, that might show up on the horizon for the one or other contemporary fellow, mirroring the highest happiness of an earthly being. Rather similar to the sunset glow, seeking a secret path behind thick cloud banks, to break forward suddenly right from the middle of the sky with red glow, while the world around has sunk into the mysterious dawn of the upcoming evening.

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Anastasio Baranasias was a genuine problem, because he represented a form of existence, that couldn't exist. This was how Hans Henny Henne and Anonymous saw it, who were personally affected by this matter, because Baranasias was the curse laden Alter ego of the latter.

The Alter ego of Anonymous was left behind on earth after his ascension. And that was very unusual, neither he nor Hans had ever heard of a similar happening lately. Nor of a 'de-cention' as happened to Hans at last.

This was a case for the Advisor they both agreed. Anonymous decided to take up the subject and use the visit to the newly born baby for a short talk ‘en passant’ so to speak. While the great event bound all attention and centred around little Ed and his mother.

But the Advisor kept covered and fled into laconic banalities: ”Well, there are many things between heaven and earth, no man would even dream of” he declared solemnly with a sweet smile. He seemed to be overcharged, while his face showed astonishment.

“A curse laden Alter ego – a kind of shadow angel or an angel of darkness?” he asked, turned inside, as if he didn’t expect an answer from outside.

“His Imperial Majesty doesn’t know the answer?” he uttered, turning to Anonymous with disbelief. The Advisor obviously tried to shove the bogeyman on.

Hans Henny Henne and Anonymous looked at each other meaningfully. They never ever experienced the like: the Advisor without advice, that was almost like a well without water.

The ‘Imperial Highness’ (i.e. Anonymous) had to admit that he knew the volumes on the imperial shelves only by backs. He never took one out and open or even read in it. While the whole history of the whole universe was laid down therein. And the unsolvable phenomenon surely had to do with it, he doubted not an instant.

“You are forced to represent day and night, there is no time for reading records. Why do I have advisers?” the accused defended.

He decided to have a word with the Minister of the Cosmological Order. While this seemed to be a question of the basic partition of power, and the mode of affection of the material world.

33. The Yokel’s Sacrifice

Did purification mean to get rid of one’s sins and leave them behind like a parcel, containing an undone things-to-do-list? Who ever found it and opened it by accident was conquered by the evil contents hidden, and handed over to hellfire and devil’s claw.

Even worse: did such wandering boxes of evil goof about? And not only in parcels and boxes but as well in empty skins? Did they marvel

through the nightmares and fairytales as miserable creatures and scenes of terror and fear to death?

“Eventually it’s got to be” Hans Henny Henne mused, who was very fond of sound logic.

“Each ascension might go along with an equivalent descent down to hell. Otherwise there would build up a disproportion, while the evil would surely be favoured. And that couldn’t be.”

Anonymous stunned in disbelief, but Hans Henny Henne went on: “That’s quite logical. Its like blood-letting – the comparison doesn’t fit exactly ... Well, but you surely can imagine what it means for the earth when more and more good beings ascend. The scale would move to the evil side. Therefore I think it necessary and logical to have ascensions and descensions kept the balance.”

The Advisor nodded but looked somewhat frightened over to Anonymous, who was his boss after all, you tend to forget this over here. The Anonymous’ curriculum was by no means the sequence of good deeds.

“Anastasio Baranasias didn’t ascend, that’s for sure”, Anonymous commented.

“That’s an offence of the world order, I would say” the Advisor added.

“...as long as we agree with the Honourable Professor, and that, I presume, we can.” The thus addressed shrugged - “...or it was balanced by my descend. After all, I came back. And if I may say so, I enjoy it – after all. It’s done me a lot of good.” Hans Henny Henne smiled thoughtfully, while his sense had changed again, he nevertheless had enjoyed his time of fulfillment.

“If the system is transparent from one side, it’s kind of logical that it is transparent from the other side as well.” he added. Hans Henny Henne favoured logic, no doubt about that.

“You mean, because you went down to earth, you offered a ticket for an opponent. Because what we can do, must be also allowed for the other side. I see, what you mean.” Hans Henny Henne nodded eagerly.

“Sounds convincingly” the Advisor also agreed.

“We’ve got to check this in the manuals” Anonymous addressed straight towards the Advisor, who took certainly notes on what His Imperial Highness suggested.

Even this title wasn't mirroring the true powers – still you got an idea of the incomparable deference. Most likely because Emperor was a sounding title, you could imagine what ever you liked, as long as you remained on the adequate level. A real Emperor, and Rolandus certainly doubted to be such a one, might come shortly after God, while kings or counts or princes in comparison looked like usurpators, who sneaked illegally into power.

And this, by the way, was how it all started in heaven as well. And out came the devil, and that couldn't be it. Perhaps the phenomenal carrier of Anonymous had to do with the circumstances resulting thereof.

Where had this ever happened, that someone out of naught and nowhere raised to the highest heights of the heavenly hierarchy? Or was that the seductive challenge Anonymous was facing? Was he threatened by the same fate? Was he also destined to crash into the deepest abyss of hell?

How could he! Did he not come out of the purgatory of passions? And had he not freed himself from the slimy embrace of power and voluptuousness?

That a creature like Baranasias stayed behind, was nobody's intention. still it happened, otherwise Anastasio Baranasias wouldn't be.

Thus something entirely new was on the verge to grow up, and was similar to the old Luziferian tragedy, but should under no circumstances become mixed up with it. The Advisor had a keen eye on that. He understood himself as the heavenly loudspeaker, to be exact, as the voice of God, while you shouldn't imagine God obvious and concrete, and give him a figure and size, somewhat human by appearance, in order to build up a relationship, and embrace him as the head member of the family, in order to come along with him, or her. The gender question still pending and unanswered ever since.

That was why it was much easier to come along with the Advisor, and Anonymous as Emperor Rolandus had a similar function, after all. From a certain point of view, they could be regarded as competitors as well. But that was a specific interpretation, being spread about in the world but didn't have too many followers.

In short, the question came up what happened when Hans Henny Henne would return and ascend again and reverse his original ascention. Would Anastasio Baranasias then be forced to return to hell, instead of goofing about on earth in ungood mission.

The School of Inbetween would get rid of their major problem that way. Espionage and terror-attacks would come to an end after all. The false phobia, which had done so much harm, more harm than the cause justified, by the way - (thus was the joint opinion of the members of the Council of the Menora) – could come to an end at last.

Was that sacrifice justified? Could the people on earth let go Hans Henny Henne, only to get rid of Anastasio Baranasias?

Hilde Henne cried desperately and sobbed to melt a heart of stone, but for sorrow and not because she was caught like when the self-induced horse-headed violin took over and bewitched the scene. Arundle stepped protectively forward to safeguard her mother, who wasn't herself anymore, and Billy-Joe stood by.

The Advisor kept covered as usual. On the other hand the logic couldn't be rejected easily, while Hans Henny Henne himself had uncovered the interrelation, more or less, anyway.

And that made things complicated. Even Anonymous had no advice, although he was Emperor and responsible, and he had - as a matter of fact – stick to his responsibility, no matter what his heart said, which was deeply divided.

He would have liked to have the old wise chum around with him for good, of course. Heavenly peace was waiting for him but eventually also quite some boredom. Hans Henny Henne however sparkled of ideas, and was able to inflame his surrounding. In the short period of time, he had been back, he had proved his outstanding abilities by inventing new solutions for old problems, he seemed to be the only one to tackle. No-one thought about rationalisation, or of skipping processes at all, which might be regarded as sound. While many things went their destined way unquestioned, just like that.

The specifics of the race were all executed, which might be regarded as stubborn and tricky to handle. Hans Henny Henne had proved in his personage not only that this was shortsighted, but also undertook suitable measures to overcome hidden errors, which had settled over thousands of years in man's history.

Thus those inspirers often ran into unnecessary trouble, by starting off from outdated premises. Mankind wasn't all that fixed, and things could be handled differently, although people used to do them in a certain way. And only a few knew whether this way was the only or the best. While genial strokes out of nowhere hit mankind once in a while. They seemed to fall of

heaven and came about in dreams, or in visions, when time had come to give mankind a push and move the wheel a tick forward. For that the heavenly army was good enough. They watched over their earthen messengers, while each individual complied a heavenly equivalent, who matched with the earthen twin.

The matter was easy enough, and was no secret any more since the discovery of the uncertainty principle. But the discovery was not necessarily accompanied by the necessary understanding. The more so because a specific logic was required, not all people shared, while logic itself was a kind of inspiration, just as all epochal ideas needed a push.

As the Luciferian side gained influence with all kinds of fancy fuss, genuine inspiration appeared rather difficult. It claimed the stony path of moral as a by-product, while the Luciferian side used the broad avenue of exploitation and self-content power-play. Power, so it seemed, had a lot to offer. And you needed a clear brain to tear apart the webs, that were garnishing the evil.

Never was the evil allowed to appear naked, the shock would have been incredible and the abhorrence insurmountable.

But the abused didn't realize at once, who enjoyed the power play, while strangled in the end in abhorrence. Baranasias and his assistant were seen as warning examples by the eyes of those who could see, and such were lots on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth.

Anonymous had managed to tear himself out of the mud in a genial pull. During his ascension something unforeseen happened, an unexpected exception so to speak, and could only be cleared by Hans Henny Henne's descend to earth.

This was possible, because Hans Henny Henne had his earthen work not yet fulfilled. He was sent back to earth and into life, and a second life had been granted with everything that belonged to life. And this new life was more beautiful and better than his first, although also not without thrill and highlights, while as well stained by several shades.

There was one thing, the Advisor didn't have in focus, - (although it was very unlikely) - and that was the existence of mean Anastasio Baranasias. He was the surplus on the evil side to keep the endangered balance. At least the limited human logic favoured such interpretation, and was surely groping too short like with other subjects, the human brain and hand invented.

“Perhaps I can make myself understood a little better with an example” the Advisor argued. – well, Arundle thought he was arguing. Perhaps he only wanted to be polite, and didn’t want to make her feel somewhat limited and mentally reduced.

“Is it perhaps like in a game of chess? You do sacrifice one figure, for a likely victory” Arundle wondered and did so in order to justify herself. Then she continued as if she had just had an enlightenment:

“Ah, yes, I understand, that makes sense. The pawn sacrifice. What we now experience with Baranasias is the consequence of a pawn sacrifice. Yes, this makes sense.”

“...mind you – Baranasias is the pawn sacrifice, I’m afraid” the Advisor carried on and gave Arundle a sharp glance. “But only, if on the other side Hans Henny Henne also falls.” The Advisor’s glance said more than a hundred words, he passed on to Arundle. He pampered the young woman and made her blush, as often happened when he liked what she said or did.

Of course, this was just a parable. Reality was no game of chess. Arundle knew that. Reality was no game at all, but bitter earnest. What was going to build up right now could just as well fail and that would then mean “Good by dear world” – at least as far as the sunny sides of the future were concerned.

The nightmare of Laptopia was threatening. Arundle saw the route towards the abyss of doom before her inner eye. All gates and doors were wide open while doom was ‘ante portas’ threatening. “If we don’t manage to uncover the mal-doings of the giant moth, and fix the leaking communication channels here on the islands – that’ll be it. What other source do the informants then have to pass on all that filthy junk?” Arundle objected, but didn’t reach the Advisor any more.

If they wanted to get rid of Baranasias, they had to sacrifice Hans Henny Henne. He was the price for a balanced justice. That much, Arundle was obliged to understand. Any other action on this behalf would turn out to be patchwork, and curing symptoms. Chasing the giant moth was useless. The body would only collide, after the head was cut. And the head was Baranasias. Nobody on the Isle yet found out, how he managed to survive, and what secret forces he employed. Arundle suspected Malicious Murdock to have his filthy hands right in the game, but that was not more but an assumption.

34. Forbearance

Baranasias didn't know about the conditions under which he carried on. His identity seemed to be granted, and he didn't question, but regarded his existence obvious, and kind of natural, no matter how artificial and sick he was. Because he was no human being in the sense of the meaning, but endeavoured in the shade between image and reality, as an evil thought, and malicious perfidy, and the leathern crutch of a horrible creature.

Unlike other wrong-doers he lacked of hope. He didn't long for anything, but did what was demanded. He functioned like a robot, quite similar to the bionic creatures, who spread in secrecy the further the bionic medicine advanced. They didn't act for their own sake, but proceeded customarily. While there was no such common sense. Many creatures could be found on all ends of the world, who didn't know from each other. But obeyed their creator.

Baranasias didn't question his fabric. He lacked of emotions, or if there were any, they didn't get closer but into his pre-consciousness. Still he suffered. He couldn't do else but suffer. And because his suffering never ended, he thought it an existential base. And he felt forced to tear his surrounding environment into his mode of being. And not only the close subjects but at best everyone and the whole world. He couldn't do otherwise. He couldn't get out of his skin. While he was hardly more but an empty cover, a kind of a blueprint, awoken to life by an evil force. He had but one purpose – destruction.

On the road to the apocalypse wound a trace of horror, following Baranasias and expressed in several strange modes. What ever it was, everything mounted in noxiousness.

By such injurious impact Baranasias experienced some kind of satisfaction. And that was why he clung to his life, beside the fact that it could not be called life.

Had someone mentioned the poverty of his existence, he might have answered, he should care about his own way of being, before interfering into matters of no concern. While in fact he himself didn't understand what was going on with him, and where he was drifting or what drove him. Quite like a Miserior – the category of beings he most likely belonged to somehow by now.

They all didn't want to end up finally in the deepest hell. They were drawn to the light like moths over to the living souls. They didn't give in until they were sent back into the world, after a banning ray sent them back.

All by themselves in everlasting darkness any life came to a halt, even theirs, because it lacked of awareness. There was nothing they could do. Nobody could be punished. The seduced were all damned and condemned, and didn't show signs of suffering, because they didn't cling on life. The corpses didn't suffer, because they were dead. You can only suffer as long as you are alive.

Those Miseriors didn't bother about decent silent suffering but about the absolute horror and the naked abhorrence of a truly innocent soul. At best for the first time, while the horror had no limit yet.

Life in hell was no fun for the semi-beings, the zombie-like creatures, the spirits of darkness. That was why the boss had trouble in guarding and keeping the crew together. Such guarding didn't go along with the chaos-principle they all obeyed. And that was why the banning became a big thing all over again. The so called 'Semi permeable membrane' separating the spheres had to be erected frequently and all over again, with a lot of noise and with many catastrophic side effects.

Similar to the day-night segregation the picture changed, and so did the world. In the good light the evil became rejected, but never disappeared, while on the other hand, the evil couldn't wholly eliminate goodness.- Plus or minus advanced or prevailed, depending on the state of being.

In fact, segregation never succeeded completely. On both sides left-overs remained, which hid or clung stubbornly, while the camouflage ability favoured the evil nature. On the other side honourable mimesis embraced the beings for good.

The principle of hope was the main reason for the good beings to prevail, thanks to an even crazier constellation, than the one Baranasias came from. The heavenly patience was not without limit, but sometimes expelled as never-ending. Even the meanest got his second or third or fourth chance, if it had to be so, even the hundredth, until he was really given up for ever, or was saved for good, after all.

Hope asked goodness to endure and to give not up, but hang on, while the impossible might occur once. It was a matter of the point of view.

Those who were certain to live in a good world, weren't bothered by the question, whether the world was suffering in devil's hands.

If you looked with devil's eyes on the world, then the earthen lot became a cage of evil, in which man and beast were suffering. A never-ending toil and harm, only mercy death could end, in order to proceed you on back home, if you were lucky and professed the right duties. For example the tunnel diggers, flight aids or sluicers, just to name some professions, suitable for good spirits to free from the claws of evil.

Such a sight of the world was of course extremely wrong, because the earth would exist no single second longer, if darkness outweighed, and the evil had taken over all power.

However, there were times and areas where it look the like, and doubts overcame the human beings involved, then fleeing into unconsciousness. Instead of facing the challenge and follow the inner voice, while all the world around seemed to have become crazy, spilling like a mighty flood away, what culture had established.

While the hell on earth was not yet hell. No other than the heaven on earth, was no heaven either. but was nevertheless experienced by some lucky ones - - experienced for seconds, but was a foretaste of the true heaven – so says belief.

As long as such heaven could shine up, the side of the good wasn't lost, and the grip of hell was not complete. Swimming isles of happiness waved in the dark ocean of horror along. This parable might stand best for the situation. Sometimes there were many such isles, and of remarkable size.

While it could happen, that you didn't meet such a vehicle of happiness for months or even years, until you felt yourself threatened to be drawn into the depth, bare of all happy outlook. And from the depth you felt hopelessness tearing, and you felt too weak to defend, until you realized, that you yourself was on such an isle, but had forgotten to share your isle with others while it had been time, because the isle was separable. And as soon as a part had segregated, it grew, and it tended to segregate again, and again, and so forth up to the far horizon and likely further on into the invisible and uncertain.

Thus, things could change, and reverse to the opposite, and it required but a moment of negligence therefore, and it happened without assistance. No navigator was steering, and no vessel was seen in this ocean, if you didn't take the swimming isles for ships, and have the translation done by

a SLOMES. Without, you didn't see anything. You didn't even know that there was something for those to see, who had eyes to see, and had learnt to see the other way of seeing. And for them was destined, what could be seen, while the others didn't understand.

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Florinna was pleased to take up the new task. With her father she traveled a lot and came into the furthest parts of the world. But further side-trips she couldn't afford, so she reported. She might even be forced to cut back. Still the side-job turned out to become a fulltime one.

This was what she reported to the new Headmistress, as it were, at night while dreamtime was on the agenda. Arundle and Billy-Joe pointed out the importance of the job, while their concern was burning in their hearts. Florinna might be luckier as a talent-scout. When Mynona Wilder and Sam Riley had shown up, Arundle almost felt as electrified. She didn't believe any more in the reports of constant fiasco, that dropped in monthly into the Headmistress' office. Perhaps a generation change was also overdue among the talent scouts.

With Florinna a start was made. A pity was that Vasantha Hare's talent was limited to the dreams, otherwise Arundle would have engaged her right away.

Vasantha never thought to look for some-one of her kind outside the family. This would never come to her mind. That was why the ability of 'the other way of seeing' was not far developed in her.

After all you got rich bargain for any recruit, either in credits or common cash. The advantage of the Hare-family was, that they reached the furthest metropolises and landscapes on their hunt for archeological sites and excavations. There they met local guides to help them reaching the sites or assist language-wise with the museum people. The contacts were rather close and intense, and there were no problems when Florinna examined them secretly for their aura. Her mother was trained by accompanying her and soon found out the whereabouts of the art, and became an able assistant.

They found of course mainly Somniors. Only once in a while they also met an Animator. The outcome they mailed to the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, if they couldn't convince the candidates of the suitable age to travel right away.

Those who hesitated, were put on the mailing list and provided with appropriate material and information about scholarships, and how to get one. While talents didn't stick to boundaries and language-barriers, but preferred to hide in niches and at boundaries of human society.

Other talent scouts might have been too negligent Florinna assumed, who couldn't believe what she was experiencing. Hardly a week passed without a promising candidate.

While the rare colours were thinly sewn. Still something happened in her vicinity, and a lot more than before.

Not all talents could be motivated however to take up the road. Often parents and family-clans stood in the way. Young girls were mal-treated, becoming married far too early, and then no escape was likely.

Florinna experienced as a by-product quite some misery and alienation, that almost broke her heart. So much had to be done, and so little could she do. Some things however, she managed to do with her mother, and that made her feel great, the more so when the candidates were thankful.

The road to the School of Inbetween was a one-way, and there was no return. Who once chose that road, wouldn't come back as the same. He or she would be widened and clarified, and would lose their naiiv innocence, but would gain more than language could say.

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Professor Hare was all in favour of his daughter's side-job, but when she ran into emotional trouble, and the job grew and grew, he began to worry if this was the adequate profession. He spoke with his wife of course, who took part as well. The findings had little to do with archaeology, while treasures were also excavated, but treasures of another kind, he had certainly to admit.

Vasantha agreed. Besides, she hoped that Florinna would become quieter as time went by, while it didn't look the like. Especially the fate of young women and girls moved her, and she thought, she had to do her best. Thus she acted on high risk. It did happen that she was dismissed of a country, and with her the whole team of researchers. Fortunately Professor Hare lectured at the Island-University, otherwise his daughter's behaviour would have cost his job more than once.

He realized of course how important Florinna's occupation was. It was no side-job any more, but her main profession. And her duty was surely more important for the School of Inbetween, than the archaeological research. The more so, as the evaluation of the research in far Atlantis didn't lead to outstanding results. This could change however by means of secret magic, still hiding in the diffuse underbrush, Florinna heartily favoured.

And while Vasantha backed up her daughter, Professor Hare also altered his needs. His situation still worried him. He saw himself soon way behind other colleagues, who were enticing away the best helpers and diggers, not to mention mules, horses and donkeys, you required to reach the excavation sites.

Professor Hare was a genuine practician. He loved width and adventure. He felt drawn out into the world, at best all alone, but had never admitted to his family. In a family you always meet limitations, which he never faced, when he was underway alone. He now had to take care of distorting affairs, while beforehand only the needs of the guild, and his free will governed. By now he also realized the conflict of interests with Florinna – who – just like himself – tended to have her way, and stand for her interests by hook or by crook.

She could do so, all the more, as she didn't do it for herself, but for the School of Inbetween. This was at least what she told to herself, and convinced her mother as well, to back her up, while such behaviour turned out to be a rather bitter pill for the Professor, who was used to a wife obeying her husband's will. With one exception: he hardly ever managed to enter his wife's dream-world, or only a little, and not very deep, but only as far as she permitted. At least it looked the like to him. Vasantha denied such limitations, but told her husband that the dream-gates always stood wide open for him. So he finally had to blame himself, while he was lacking the antenna and sensors in comparison with his daughters, who didn't share his difficulties in that, but moved freely and unhindered in the wide range of a mysterious inner world, well embedded in the outer world. A world, he unfortunately would most likely never be able to enter.

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Professor Hares's worries were but one thing, another was the incredible push-up the School of Inbetween experienced. The new

directing couple was of course very fond of the fantastic job Florinna made.

Since the Island-University opened, the School of Inbetween went down. At first, the signs were hardly noticed, but by now they couldn't be ignored any more. While the call for a change of generations plopped up, a while ago.

It almost looked now as if the change went on rather quickly. The new Headmistress and the new Deans were hardly elected and busy in their fields, when the atmosphere in general experienced a dramatic change as well. The depressive atmosphere and the ubiquitous suspicion, the fear of espionage and the quarrels thereof, seemed to be like blown away. Nobody understood anymore, why the dispute between Isolationists and World-Citizens ran into such a destructive dead-end. While the giant moth stirred up the minds inappropriately, even after Nelaza was disguised and proved herself as a decent person. She was in fact the only detected giant moth, and traveled meanwhile each month when the moon was full, over the Susamee's island together with all the other Conversiors, to whom she obviously belonged.

The positive trend might also be caused by the new pupils. It was so nice to see them picking up all the structures and procedures common on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth and the School of Inbetween.

The teachers, first of all Arundle - felt as if they were looking into a mirror of the past, and see themselves young again. They realized the youthful fire from inside again. They experienced the identification with the youth and the wonders, they once detected for themselves and now for others, while they were the key-holders for an upcoming generation.

Whether the others felt the same, she couldn't say, but Billy-Joe received the youthful message of the uprising as clearly as she did. He could read it in her eyes, and she in his. The School of Inbetween and the parable of the reborn Phoenix out of the ashes, matched. The reborn Phoenix he was himself, but was someone else at the same time. His uprising flight described the wonder of life, how it's being lived, without being ever wholly understood by those alive.

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- 1.Secrets of Laptopia
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