

ARUNDLE & KIN

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ARUNDLE & KIN
4. Uncertainty by Principle

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considerations – “don’t want to be” she pushed herself, while she raised a loving hand for a gentle touch of the back of her gorgeous sister, she truly admired. “With Dorothea everything lies in the plain, there is nothing hidden, she is all clear, true and transparent.”

Dorothea would have sent such positive thoughts right back to the sender, had she known of them – or did she notice by telepathy what Grisella felt? Since the eternal light had flooded her, things became clearer now – not only for her but also for her brother-in-law, Amadeus, who’d joined her on that trip, and who was now also stepping out of the shade of his famous brother. Being chosen by the light, they enjoyed the special attention of the Teachers Board as well as the affection of the students. Therefore, Marsha had appointed them - somewhat high-handed - members of the Board.

“We try to avoid wrong hierarchies” she pushed aside doubts as had been uttered by Moschus Mogoleya. The latter had better favoured her decision, he was still a precarious case, though, and not at all settled. The other day Adrian had caught him when he tried to steal the Magic Bow with the quiver out of the strong room.

“It did look the like” Adrian later reduced his charge, while he was not so sure anymore now. Moschus Mogoleya denied of course, and said that everything was a silly misunderstanding that soon would be clarified right here by either Arundle or Billy-Joe, who both would surely explain the whereabouts.

The relation between the Magic Bow and the School of Inbetween was not the best, - such fact was widely known. This was true in a way, but the trickster forgot to state his initial role, when he had been the pushing part, forcing the bow to disappear out of sight.

Thus, this matter had to be cleared right away and the Magic Bow was asked to comment on the accusations. He was all too willing to do. He was very interested in having his status cleared finally after his recent return.

“If not now when then?” he asked when he got the word and his red eye was sparkling full of holy rage.

“Can these crusted conditions not be overcome once and for all?” Arundle hoped likewise, but didn’t comment yet in full agreement with her Magic Bow.

“We need a Lex Magic Bow”, he said and neither Arundle nor Billy-Joe had any objections, and didn’t want to argue. Many reforms were underway. However the trail was long and the aim far and threatened to become far and further - ending in a deserted nowhere land like a rivulet in dry lands, and people like Moschus Mogoleya were just the right ones putting strokes in the School’s wheel with their legalistic stubbornness stressing on rules and regulations in permanent complaint. Without him, the drastic measures would not have been taken in the first place.

Thus, the mood was not in favour of him, while the decisiveness was not the best either. The Board of Teachers had been stripped of power since the upheavals and riots, where their helplessness had been proved. Therefore, it was of vital interest to have things straightened and clarified, and the case of the Magic Bow might serve the purpose well.

So far, nobody had thought of the new situation or had drawn the necessary consequences. Instead, they realized how they fell back into old structures. The janitor, who was against change anyway, arranged the seating as he always did.

Of course, there had to be a Chairman or Chairwoman who was in charge. Nobody was against such a necessary instrument. Nobody wanted chaos, but why did they become seated in the same way again and again – only because they always had been sitting that way? Such thoughtless behaviour made Arundle blush in wrath, and her Magic Bow not only supported, but also enforced such feelings, as he had come cross with the School of Inbetween because of the bad treatment he had suffered. The time for a change had come.

Arundle knew Billy-Joe on her side, and he was not the only one. In fact, there would have been hardly anyone who’d publicly oppose her. Thus, the brave girl almost took for granted. Her aim was liberation not oppression; the latter was the least she wanted to cause.

“Let’s get started, at last” the Headmistress yelled and looked rather upset. She didn’t enjoy such critique, no matter whether righteous or unnecessary, while most was unspoken yet. “Telepathy can be somewhat strenuous, though” she couldn’t resist musing. Criticism and self-denial was not what they needed.

“After all, we do have to show some extraordinary successes, that we do not want to be robbed of, my dears” she then tried in a persuasive manner, but didn’t meet much interest, though.

Things might be easier if they elected a Chairman, thus she could participate just like the others. She didn’t mind being set back, as long as they steered the adequate course and didn’t fall back into disastrous structures. If the others saw the necessity, why not...

“The last will be the first”, sounded a voice seemingly out of Billy-Joe’s chest, who was carrying a Medicine Pouch around his neck as usual. While Pooty, likewise as usual - was sitting right in the middle of those strange smelling items and odd objects Billy-Joe kept since he was a youngster, and might not know the whereabouts any more. However, that didn’t matter as he had become one of his kin that way:

“Your roots are sacred. Never cut your roots off, when you wish to grow and find your destiny. Everybody knows that while nobody cares...” thus, he did explain himself a while ago, Arundle recalled.

Pooty’s voice now sounded as if Billy-Joe had spoken with a funny voice, thus, everybody paid immediate attention, even more, when Pooty stretched his little head out of the Pouch and the surrounding audience noticed the actual whereabouts. General agreement sounded by acclamation and Pooty found himself in the role of a Chairman all of a sudden.

Marsha left somewhat demonstrative her seat overdoing in devotion and headed towards the vicinity,

while her husband, who was sitting next to her, followed her in the line on to one of the last rows.

Things like that were no big deal any more. The democratic self understanding had grown meanwhile. Had Pooty not hollered his gay jubilant outcry nobody had minded, while now a great laughter arose, freeing the assembly of mistrust and envy, the most severe enemies of decision-making. It freed the individuals from uncertainties and opened a heaven of consent and affection.

Yes, that was the School of Inbetween. “There you know what you have, and why you are here” it came to the Headmistress’s mind. She felt soothed and relieved, while Pooty was growing with his task. At first he asked Arundle and Billy-Joe as his assistants then he went on making funny faces and jokes in order to cheer up the atmosphere, as he explained and then gave the word back to the Headmistress, who was already waiting in the starting box like a spirited racer.

“We’ve got to define where we stand”, she yelled far too loud into the public microphone, which was brought to her.

“Sure enough we do have us back. The School of Inbetween is save for the time being. The sponsors calmed down and so did most parents. You know again who you are – yes, I can see that clearly”, she interrupted herself, and gazed about noticing the crossing auras in colour of her disciples.

How she had missed such beautiful sight in the dark times behind. How had they been able to endure, while the mud of the Miseriors covered up all clarity. Now the colours shone up as bright as ever, in funny patterns all about. Large fields of silvery pigeon-grey more on the left, while pure soul-blue was spreading right-hand side, mingling on the edges.

In between you saw green or red spots – no one was isolated, not even the teachers.

‘We might be astutely advised if we made the colour scheme the base of our seating arrangements’, it came to Marsha’s mind - while she wondered, whether

this could be realized. Right now, she noticed wide agreement from all sides. She didn't have considered the endurance of telepathetic thought, though.

Why not begin right away with that. Her speech could wait. Thus, she gathered her manuscripts; she had placed on the small rail of the balcony. She gave them an involuntary (intended) push - thus; they sailed down like butterflies over the heads of the bewildered students sitting down there. Helping hands collected them and took care that the big whole of the important concept was not lost for good.

While Marsha was sorting anew her speech, the colours were on the move, either to mingle or to differentiate, which was not so clear. Nobody yet understood what was going on. It was fun first, and an interesting way of meeting and greeting, while the garbling mass made remarks when passing left and right and centre, thus it was a turmoil of the friendly kind without hostility and bad mood.

Pooty and his assistants found themselves all of a sudden in the centre, and to make them visible the wooden cubes were pushed to where they stood, while of no use at the end where they had been placed for the former Chairwoman and her aides. A measure, surely bound to upset the caretaker, who was not yet convinced of such dawning of new times.

"We'll tell him that they can remain" Marsha agreed with her acquaintance that was gathering in her vicinity while everybody was underway. Their gazes crossed agreeing, even those who had been separated by their colours – for the time being.

When Marsha had put her papers in order, the hall had gone silent; the tramping feet had come to a halt, no scraping of chairs – expectant silence prevailed.

Somewhat uncertain without her matrimonial support Marsha picked up the thread of her speech where she had paused.

"Where did I stop? A, yes, our colours, our glorioles, our non-interchangeable specifications we have them back - the world is colourful again and is waiting for us – seducible and mysterious. Thanks to Dorothea's

efforts the distorted public could be soothed. What had we done without you?” Marsha turned towards the so addressed, who was – strange enough – near-by, who was shining now as light as Grisella or even a little shinier, though. Be it because of her eternal beauty, be it because of the freshness of her experience, she had come about such unexpected glamour.

“Our little world here inside is save and sound again. Thanks to you, and not only you. Without the brave deed of two students, we wouldn’t be here any more. What they performed was almost a miracle. Yes, the two of you, would you please stand up that we all can see you?”

In case of Billy-Joe, one of the Chairman’s assistants, that was no problem. He was sitting on that cube, while Tibor, the other hero was way back near Tika, somewhat entangled to that strange girl.

Tibor – easily upset if overlooked or discharged – was at his ease – just the opposite. He accepted the merits gratefully with polite gestures waving friendly at Billy-Joe over the many heads, grinning his timid grin, while listening to the laudatio (feeling in one with Billy-Joe) and didn’t care the least when the attention went by, while the Headmistress continued her speech turning to another subject.

He’d surely could have claimed a seat next to Billy-Joe. Pooty had only overlooked him, but that didn’t bother him, and still didn’t while the cards were shuffled anew.

“We’ve met our stage – a battle is won, however, not the war. Even worse, we still don’t know if we deserve the victory at all. Sure enough, we did a lot. We have done everything in our range. Without our courage and enthusiasm, we wouldn’t be where we are. That is quite clear – still we don’t know what happened to us. Where were we without heroic Walter (never will he be forgotten, he will always have a place in our hearts, as long as they beat. Sure enough...)

What I’m going to say is this” Marsha went on with her betrothed speech: “we know the chronology of events, but we are missing the last piece of evidence. We

should study our deeds carefully, we should keep in mind what happened, while this might lead us to the missing link, without which the puzzle of our immediate past doesn't show a proper whole, and the heroic deeds remain individual actions we do not understand in context."

Marsha didn't mention Zinfandor Leblanc not to offend poor Penelope who hadn't yet overcome late near-miss showdown, and didn't scrabble about his dubious role, - supposed to be very clear on the one hand, while on the other rather muddy, and would thus remain. He himself hadn't found out how he came to his role, and why it had been so difficult to get away again without the help from outside. Even more so as he was grateful to his saviours, who saved him for the risk of their lives.

"What did happen in London?" the Headmistress went on with her speech. What happened really? We only know the part referring to us. We know from a reliable source what kind of people those brothers are. However, that's about it. We only know little of their strange and threatening projects. We don't know how this brotherhood managed to get the Southern hemisphere out of balance. – If they did!

Has there been something initiated that cannot be stopped or reversed?

Something is under way, and nobody has an idea of the side effects, while the idea as such is monstrous. We know far too little, and this is very bad, because we cannot react. How shall it go on? Are we handed over to unpredictable circumstances, we do not understand?

We know that Malicious Marduk is going to be finally defeated in the 23rd Century and sent back to his horrid empire. However, what is now? What's threatening from this side? What masks is the rascal presenting? Is he again right in the middle amongst us? We don't know yet. We have no answers to these questions."

Marsha Wiggles-Humperdijk stopped meaningfully and looked around into thoughtful faces.

"How nice it is to be among you again" she went on. "The happier I am on the one hand that we came

together again, the more such uncertain circumstances threaten me to death on the other hand. Neither about the Brotherhood nor about Malicious Marduk do we know enough.

Walter killed that Legionnaire Sergeant, that's for sure, we have witnesses for that. While those witnesses witnessed likewise the triumphant retreat of the rascal. He didn't die really. Malicious Marduk only got rid of a corporal cover, so far so good (that is, so bad), but what does that mean?

As far as we understand that means Malicious Marduk is looking for a new host with whom he can mingle in order to do his old evil things in a new shape. The advice Arundle brought from the Advisor is not so helpful than we thought; still we thank her of course and appreciate very much what she did for us - because such advice refers to the future. In the future, so it was predicted and defined that the rascal will not be allowed to alter the past in a way that the future becomes affected.

Unfortunately, the Advisor didn't tell what deed this is. What is Malicious Marduk not allowed to do in the presence? That is the question of concern. We know nothing about that. We have no picture at all with regard of the future, and what is altering the course of the world now. We don't even know whether the news from the future, we received - thanks to Arundle - are dealing with the right future, or if we get pulled by the leg, so to speak by discernments into parallel worlds that have little to do with our history and the course things are taking here with us."

Arundle applauded full of admiration. Marsha had done her homework, or had taken extra lessons with Scholasticus. Up to now the Headmistress had refused "fuddling about with such fancy space stuff" as she used to put it.

"May I have the word?" Scholasticus Slyboots thus made himself known, and lifted his massive trunk. He was widely seen, though, even without the cubicle, now serving the Chairman of the day by acclamation. Scholasticus could be sure of the undivided attention

Marsha felt, and let him interfere, although it still was her turn.

Soon, however, the Professor got lost in the labyrinth of his subject musing about the essence of Time in general and the future in specific, but didn't enlighten the virulent questions. – or if they did - none of the present could find out. Thus, Arundle was almost forced to throw at least a touch of light into such darkness. Pooty did not object and let her go.

The Headmistress collected her leaves somewhat fussy and still concerned, whether she had made herself clear enough, and turned to her husband, who gave her a quietening slap on the back.

She didn't mind the colour scheme for now when seating where she was, she minimally offended (if at all). Her finish stirred up somewhere else, not where she had expected.

“I'm not the only one who has made such an experience” Arundle began willingly and pointed at Dorothea and Amadeus, as well as on Pooty and Billy-Joe, next to Tibor, all seated more or less close, except Tibor, for good reasons.

“You all do know perhaps better than I, at least no less”, she thoughtfully went on.

“The Advisor is wholly untouchable. You cannot describe him. Are you of the same mind?”

Her mates of the light agreed. Thus, she went on: “The Advisor is not from this world. Nothing has been from our world what we experienced. Still we had a look on our world. An alienating look, if I may say so. Therefore I am convinced that the Advisor showed us our world, no matter whether we realized or not, because that is up to us, and of course up to the perspective he tends to take.

Let's think of that very pompous entourage and the fancy figures – even the Emperor or the Princess. I think there is much commotion involved. Perhaps you had the same impression, and you experienced a similar mixture of feelings as I did - a combination of identification and disgust, being confronted with such ridiculous and puffed

up characters, and the ado they made about themselves.

You, who had been with me, might have felt likewise. It was like in a dream, just as desultory and flighty, and overloaded with sentiment. The causes seem to be exaggerated; still the highest emotions show up. You are overwhelmed by the strongest feelings, you cannot protect yourself, while still unjustified.”

Had Arundle hoped to find agreement, she was badly disappointed.

“All right then, we might have all our own pictures – that is, very basic situations meant only for you, and mine are as I told”, she added.

“I discovered the personality of my father in the emperor, and you can imagine what that meant for me – well, all who know me surely can – and that was not enough, I had to stand that princess and her affectionate behaviour. Yes, I felt pulled by the leg, believe me – ‘such are images of your own megalomania’ – I said to myself. Believe me, I’m telling this to myself day and night.

However, if this is no megalomania, seducing my self with wishful thinking, but a secret message, which has to do with what we are researching right now here on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth and others elsewhere.

That Brotherhood of Infernalía – what research are they forcing? We do hate of course their wrong targets. How can you dare to prolong and enjoy life on behalf of others, and long for immortality with stolen lifetime? Yet, do we know if this weird connection is arbitrary, or was it born only of sick brains? Could it be that immortality is possible without such unacceptable price?

Perhaps it is a wrong conclusion that lifetime prolongs only by reduction somewhere else. This might be a limited mechanistic view on the functioning of life. Perhaps life doesn’t follow the basic law of energy.”

Could the audience still follow? Did they understand what was bubbling off her lips like a fountain? Arundle had her gaze wander and at the same

time those miraculous sensors of telepathy, whether understanding or ignorance wavered about.

She dared not decide one side or the other. Perhaps it would be best to stop right here. Others had also much to say and waited for their chance. Because good advice was dear, so to speak, but this, by now even the slowest thinker recognized.

“I would give the Magic Bow a seat of honour in the Standing Council of the School Board. We would be well advised if we offered him a job as Honourable Professor, we should have done this with Walter by the way.”

“...And I apply the same for the Magic Stone from Uluru” Pooty threw in who put himself first on the imaginary list of speakers Arundle had taken over. However, she was still musing behind her thoughts, and didn’t notice such offence.

It was Scholasticous’s turn anyway and after him, the Headmistress was due once more, next to Amadeus and Dorothea, and there were still more to come, thus the meeting would become a lengthier one.

“I’m sorry to interrupt” Pooty excused a little hasty. “As Chairman I apply for limiting the speaker’s time to – say - one or two minutes, otherwise we will be sitting here until tomorrow morning. Is there any comment on my proposal, if not, we can close that sad chapter and have our magic heroes honoured the way they deserve it. May God bless them.”

Like an able politician, Pooty turned his mischief into an official application, asking for the voters’ decision.

Nobody objected, but an addition came just from Amadeus, who was whispering with his sister-in-law. “We apply to involve Pooty as guardian of the Magic Stone. He and the joint home should become idolized.” (What ever this intended)!

Neither Amadeus nor Dorothea had been able to tell what such status meant, however, they wanted justice for the oppressed little ones. That was why the Magic

Bow was entitled to a considerable indemnification for his time in detention.

The Magic Bow and the Magic Stone were promoted Honorable Professors. “With own resources and adequate means” the Headmistress added meaningfully, and Pooty officially became the ‘Guardian of the Stone’, while Billy-Joe’s Medicine Pouch was declared sacrosanct. Such was laid down in the protocol, voted and incorporated.

A Professor - dangling on the neck of an Aborigine – on this side of the globe an absolute innovation! Hefty applause and calls for the two caused Pooty to raise the Magic Stone with both hands over his head. He climbed out of his home – now raised into a sacrosanct state – and became seated on Billy-Joe’s head, thus, enabling everybody to see him and the Magic Stone who began to shine in the brightest rainbow colours.

Billy-Joe raised the Magic Bow in the air to have him participate in the standing ovations. Seemingly moved he turned towards Arundle, who tenderly comforted him, causing waves of heart-stirring concussion.

All these dark threatening clouds were gone. Away with enduring in the strong room, - freedom, width and action – the life of a bow eventually.

Yes, you could learn a lot from a bow, such the humans had rightly recognized. Alas, but humans had that not been, no, it was Pooty, yes, Pooty alone, who understood and fulfilled his dearest dreams and most secret wishes by this unexpected promotion.

‘Professor Magic Bow’ – almost everything had he been already, as time was not his problem. So many masters had he served. He could hardly name them – if at all: ‘First Servant of Pasha Sultan’, ‘Moon Delayer’, ‘Day master’, ‘First Knight of Cavalry Chief’, - titles as many and strange as the life itself, that he was leading. Some change had been very hard, while death was the true reason in general for parting.

Never had he been Professor - a marvellous and peaceful occupation, he couldn’t imagine a more decent

one. Their talks now became the proper status, which he had with his friend and competitor.

‘Magnificent Stone’ as was the title the Magic Stone selected, gazed down from his Olympus knowingly and affirmative. He was looking forward as well.

Thus, the meeting went on. Administration didn’t settle by itself. Dorothea officially became manager in charge of all administrative obligations as well as all public relations with an office of her own and a secretary.

“I’d prefer a male secretary” she put in and had her brother-in-law in mind, who should bring along Intellectus his witty and bright son, especially for the afternoons.

“Smells like nepotism” Moschus Mogoleya commented, however nobody paid attention. Still they had to be careful with that man, Arundle reckoned. “Courageous he is, after all” she thought while the Magic Bow – that is - Professor Magic Bow agreed, however relieved the man in a generous gesture. As it was now clear that he would never return into that musty dungeon.

“What ever this man intended by trying to fetch me out there, everything is better than being locked up...”

Being administered by Dorothea, Countess of Griselgreif to Greifenklau-Slyboots, the School of Inbetween would hopefully never run into such a clumsy trap again as was laid by the Chairman of the Brotherhood of Infernalìa. For that Dorothea was much too clever, and familiar with business obligations. She could almost smell dirty tricks and fancy manoeuvres.

The main subject however, didn’t get any further and could not be laid open publicly. The time-research programme was far too complex to have it discussed in such a broad scale.

Nobody was able to emphasise Arundle’s experience at the imperial court. Hers seemed to be singular, and had to be accepted or rejected. Nobody was able to find sense in her tale.

What was the purpose? Arundle didn’t find out herself - and nobody else could bring her clarity, with

one exception: Professor Magic Bow. He was the only one who understood, and took for granted what she felt. She could hear him snarling tenderly in her back.

Did she underrate someone? Was there really no one else? Well, yes, she was feeling that way sometimes. Sometimes you are very alone, terribly lonesome and without help in this world. This feeling will soon become lighter but will never end.

2. Time isn't Money yet

“What a nuisance” the Chairman of the Brotherhood of Infernalía thought on his journey around the world, wondering how little effort it took to acquire funds. More than once he had to refuse, as the expectations were fundamentally opposing. While his campaign had become decent. He never promised anything remarkable, and never boasted with interest shares. Clear and plain, he said what he had to, wherever the journey went. However, his logic was convincing and his cause very simple: “Invest your money into the future” was one of his slogans. “Invest your surplus in Life-time” another.

Before he accepted larger sums, he rechecked meanwhile where the money was from. Pure speculation capital was rejected right away.

Such unusual behaviour rose curiosity and the longer the acquisition tour went the more curious the market became. Even the mishaps and failures in research changed little for some time, although such research was any other than open. As easy and light handed as Roland Waldschmitt jiggled with investments freely, the more he closed up when it came to research results. This was his weak spot, and he knew it.

Too wide lay the competing approaches afar. On the one side, they dealt with gigantic quantities of energy-consuming accelerators on the world scale, on the

other side with bionic transplantation medicine, and genetics based on Nano-technology.

He knew little about both fields of action, because he changed into the new field earlier, when they still fiddled around with the imaginary mouse seesaw, when they first managed a remarkable break-through, by proving the aging of the one side in favour of the other by shooting one electron out of the genetic material of a clone. Well, Roland Waldschmitt was not so sure any more about that either.

“You don’t need to know, *mon cher ami*” cooed Viola de Stäel facing such attacks of self-criticism, as they happened once in a while. “We care for the money and the researchers blue it. What does that matter, as long as you stick to the truth?”

“Yes, but do you believe in our research? Are you not bothered by doubts as well? You know where we stand...”

Nonsense - Backstrokes – success that is, a long row of successes. One success follows the other. That’s the way you ought to look at it. That’s reality. Is it your fault when Botho van Zyl, your representative, starts panicking when the wind is blowing a little harder? Had you not given in and turned back those days, we would look better now. You mustn’t blame yourself for that. Quite opposite – use it. Strengthen your influence. The Time-Value-System is going to come. The time is ripe, ...why are you swamped with surplus capital? Everybody feels there is something coming, they all feel the uneasiness of the markets. The future belongs to the Time-Value-System. This is the horse they all will bet on sooner or later.”

Roland Waldschmitt needed such moral injections to improve. The horror news from the London headquarters he still felt them deeply in his bones – and his own daughter was right in the middle...

It didn’t take long to get about it. The humdrum-attacks of the fool against that bumbling institute deep down under at the end of the civilized world had used up not only energy but also a hell of a lot of money.

As little, as the spy found out, that much became somewhat clear: Those people down there also were on the way, and had found out about the true relativity of Time. They even seemed to follow an astounding timescale, nobody understood, while still impressive, though, - being very much to the point, no matter how they managed.

Looked at it that way - the interference of the South African colleague had had something good. Thus, the place survived that had very likely been swept away, as could have happened if you believed the reports of the weakling and coward from South Africa, which was in no way unreasonable.

Thus was the state of matters, seen out of Roland Waldschmitt's perspective. However, this was all old stuff from yesterday, so to speak, because the Brotherhood had been blown sky-high meanwhile. Somewhere a huge leakage had opened, and now the Intelligence Services of all major states chased the Infernalians Brothers for whatever reason this might be, none the least was the research stuff the agencies were after.

The acquisition tour of the former Chairman and his representative altered into a flight around the world, from one business centre to the other, while the couple learnt of arrests in the media. Thus, it was almost accidental that they weren't yet caught.

The clever ones of the Brotherhood dived away and retired to the countryside pretending to be horse breeders or landlords, or rented solitary bungalows somewhere in the Seychelles or on Caribbean islands, or even lodged in one of the monster-hotels on Majorca, under false identity, of course - not the worst mode of hiding, though.

Reasons for prosecution were enough. The Chairman had not been prim acquiring dirty money - especially not in the beginning. Now those cheated investors saw their chance for revenge. Officially, their money didn't exist, they could do very little, the more so they jumped on the train now, blowing for attack.

The most irritable accusations turned up in the press. They weren't even wrong, however, where did the writers get the information? Where was the leakage? Was it the South African? Had they tricked him too ghastly? Or did they come cross the international mafia organisations by burning their money on large scale?

You could only guess. Fact was the Infernalian Brothers were the prey and the hunt was on.

Viola de Stäel and Roland Waldschmitt were hiding in a small Corsican place, where they enjoyed safety. The pair had erased all traitorous traces. Nobody knew of their site. They lived there of course, incognito.

Viola de Stäel took care of the outside contacts. She pretended to be a Parisian Art Collector and Auctioneer. The little cottage was in fact her own, and had been equipped with the most modern high-tech communication systems as far as this was possible in the Corsican mountains.

On a mountain peak, near-by a powerful transmitter was installed with a very clever protective device, showing an interchangeable location some hundred miles away.

The system functioned by an enigmatic system the clever woman got from a queer inventor, who was looking for investors, and operated on a specimen basis for the time being.

Boredom became the true enemy. The safety pretended a freedom, which was in fact very limited and ended on the boundaries of the premise. Roland Waldschmitt was of no command of the French language, and thus tumbled from one depression into the other, shut off from all communication, thus the passion suffered as well.

In the solitude, without diversities, and without a task, and - more important still - without success, the childish characteristics pressed forward hidden in both of them, however more clearly and harder to stand in Roland Waldschmitt. The two of them soon were a pain

in each other's neck, and couldn't stand the once beloved characteristics.

After many weeks and months – Roland forgot to count them – the press humdrum faded. The Brotherhood of Infernalina vanished out of the public sight; in one or two months time they would be forgotten.

The accounts were frozen in, as far as governmental authorities hadn't claimed their charge, contenting as many creditors that way, in order to get them out of sight and hinder them from interfering into research affairs, which were going on undisrupted as it seemed, for the first time noticed by the public – to a certain extent, though.

Universities became involved. Famous Professors acquired research funds for the projects, and what had been secretly done by a dubious organisation, now became a matter of public affairs. The Idea of the Time-Value-System (TVS) was born.

Roland Waldschmitt couldn't stand the solitude any longer. This was no life for him. Chased like a criminal, (he didn't feel alike) – in the hands of a power-mad domina, he longed for trustworthiness and normality. He seriously mourned about his marriage back in good old Germany, while he missed the German mode of being.

However, there was no way back, thus, soon became clear, while contacts with the former brothers were also prohibited. If anything could be tried, than ... however, he didn't even dare to think about that. Still, the idea got hold in his head the longer he mused about it, and became more shiny and more challenging. Thus, he construed fancy frail entities, refused them soon and replaced them by others even odder ones.

Money was still available he knew that. Some number accounts in Switzerland and Andorra as well as on the Seychelles or even in worthy Sydney allowed him to purchase enough funds, he'd carry on for the time being. Later he would have to see.

First, he needed a new identity. This step had to be carefully planned. He cared much about a legal and clean identity.

Any criminal could acquire a new passport, if he had money enough. However, this was not the way he liked it. Roland Waldschmitt wanted a genuine second identity.

Of course, there should not be any reference to the past. Not only the Secret Services were on his trail, not only Interpol and investor-trustees – those folks dumping their dirty money with him to have it washed, and they were the cleverest of all. Their money he had accepted in the beginning in large quantities. A serious mistake, he now realized.

“That damn woman” he growled. Because he was convinced that Viola de Stäel had been the one who persuaded him in accepting all that dirty money, which was given for one only purpose - to have it washed and returned, topped by a crazy interest rate.

Most likely, the avalanche started right here, which could soon not be stopped or kept secret any more. While they faced serious liquidity problems, when he failed to shuffle the funds about, because the moon project had eaten up all means, that is, the money was burnt in fact, while the project failed.

When it was too late he realized that you were allowed only fiddling about with the absolute surplus and not with the substance.

“It was she, no doubt about that. She was to be blamed. She pushed him further and further down on this slide to hell...” he heard him rumble in rage.

Only serious investors were on his line. Those, who were interested only in money hadn't understood the true value of immortality. Such value money couldn't buy, while it ate up tremendous amounts on research expenditures. Thus, only serious investors, who understood and read the signs of time right, were the proper clientele the Brotherhood needed.

Had they only remained in the circle of the ones in the know, and had formed a secret sphere embracing the real elites of this world, they'd now be better off.

This damn woman, how she had ruined everything with her naughty fussy greed – while she as well would now become a serious hunter, whom he had to get rid of, at best here and now.

That would be the solution. An accident in the mountains out there in plain nature - no one would ask for a stranger, not here in Corsica, where witty tourists disappear without trace. The Corsicans were a peculiar little folk with Corsair blood in their vessels and a touch of Bonaparte's megalomaniac unscrupulous grandeur.

Now he had to care not to disguise him. They had looked each other too deep into their black souls. They both knew the abyss wherein they had mused full of sweet horror. They were in hatred no less close than in passionate devotion.

They spied up on each other like luring beasts, and didn't expose on the other, and were both convinced of the bad intentions of the other. Who was doing the first move? Had the first move once done, there was no way back.

Disappear secretly or have secretly disappeared – that was the question he had to answer. If he disappeared, she would stick to his trail with the instinct of a hound-dog, because Viola de Stäel smelled money like the hound-dog smelled blood.

Had he been happy with an ordinary bourgeois lifestyle he would have been able to shake her off. However, it was such a timid life that drove him crazy, and was just ruining their stormy love affair built on power and ruthless progress.

There were moments of scruples. That woman was too much for him. With her quick brain and her female instincts, she always was ahead by the length of a nose. That was why he felt so exposed and without standpoint.

Thus, he hoped more than he believed that he would overcome her in sheer lust of murder, when it came tip to toe, when he pushed her into an abyss.

There were glens enough in the inside of Corsica, but how could he manage to have her fall into one of them? The time for fancy excursions was definitely over.

Whatever he suggested, he was opposed with denial and mistrust. He could be sure about that.

No, he had to handle that cleverer. Instead of tempting, he should manoeuvre her into a hopeless situation and have the reckless deed done - while such an idea made him shudder. Was he the coward in the end, the fierce woman accused him daily to be? She would see who the coward was in the end!

Sometimes, when he was alone the outbreak came and the wildest curses broke way and came him over the lips – he raged in an orgy of cruellest imaginations.

When he came back to his mind he blamed himself childish. Then he mused in cold-blooded calculation, and he wondered how such outbreaks could ruin him: The positive effect stood in no relation to the risk he was running.

Was he looking for an outlet for his fantasies or for an effective strategy to become free? Before this question was not answered satisfactorily, there would be no success.

He needed a definite strategy answering this question. What was his aim? Where was he heading?

He needed a new identity. The old Chairman had to disappear – this – and nothing else was the solution to his quest. There was no other option but striving for a new life.

He carefully prepared a variety of traces, planned them as good and as complete as he could, with his limited resources, and made sure that not even he knew which one he would follow. The decision had to come in the last moment as a last minute reservation, so to speak.

Double gangers he didn't have unfortunately, thus, he had to do with virtual tracks. A lot could be done via Internet meanwhile. Local presence could be faked easily.

Roland Waldschmitt purchased a number of air tickets, granting him to leaving at any day from the airports of Ajaccio or Bastia, where the first tracks were leading, and they could be clear and sound, as this was

unavoidable. For boarding purposes, he already cared for false identities.

While preparing such precarious tasks, he met a very able man, who offered him his help, when Waldschmitt hardly uttered his needs. This man was an expert who was able in the shortest time to come along with authentic travel documents.

It was a kind of miracle – the services could hardly be described otherwise. Even Waldschmitt's appearance could be altered by some simple gadgets and a little make-up, thus, he became Professor Baranasias or the Sales Representative Samuel Fuller, or the aircraft mechanic Adrian vom Berg on business trip.

His lingual capabilities were however not the best, which limited the national question to very few countries, which was by no way a disadvantage. For a Canadian or Australian immigrant his English was sufficient, though, and German was no problem anyway.

The clever Agent of a non-specified organisation settled somewhere in the intergovernmental stage (as he put it) thought of everything. Nothing remained unnoticed or mere chance.

He seemed to memorize the flight plans of the airports, and Waldschmitt had only to mention one of his several ideas and – crack – the mysterious young man came about with a worthwhile proposal.

Did Waldschmitt seriously insist, then it didn't take half a day and the route was settled with everything that has to go with it.

Thus, it happened that Roland Waldschmitt found himself in Sydney, Australia, where he passed customs and passport control as Professor Henry A. Baranasias.

Two weeks stay in hospital – somewhere en route in Singapore - were sufficient to have his appearance suit the title and identity. Even the fingertips were cared for, however, when it came to the DNA even this clinic had to give in. Otherwise Waldschmitt was renewed and overhauled, thus became a new man.

Professor Baranasias was on the way to the Private Bank House Schimmelpfeng, when the eager Agent of the preparatory days joined him, who had arrived the day before. He introduced himself as Rudolfus Catalanius, and also had a new face fitting his new identity.

“To be precise – Dr. Rudolfus Catalanius” he supplemented somewhat highbrow - ...and National Monetary Economist like His Honourable. - We are on the way to an International Symposium” the overcharged person went on. “We’re coming right away from Etobicoke – the beautiful pearl of Ontario – we’re lecturing at the famous McGill University of Toronto.”

Nothing of the false Professor reminded of Roland Waldschmitt, while he was sitting in front of the Bank Director - (his chin rested on the precious silver knob of an ebony walking stick), and made arrangements for several transactions just being initiated via several number-accounts all over the world. Such was handled in seconds, while some years ago, days or weeks, or even months were necessary for processing money around the world.

“Well, well, time is money, and surely will be”, the Professor’s assistant was musing, who hadn’t left Waldschmitt alone all the way from Corsica.

“Until we are that far, we better stick to the money side”, he laughingly added. Who had known better than he had?

“Haven’t we met before?” Catalanius had asked in an air of irony. Cooler it couldn’t be put... In the plane when departing from Singapore they met again with their new identities and their new faces, while the freshly baked Professor had just settled in his chair, and was carefully checking his new documents.

Right then Catalanius took the seat next – offering the perplexed Professor (with a pirating grin) a hand, while the latter finally realized what was going on - thus took the hand and shook it reluctantly, though.

3. The New Professors

“Professors are good for teaching” Tibor declared. “That’s right, however, since the old days lecturing and research were united. You shouldn’t forget that”, Arundle corrected him.

“We shouldn’t worry on the Headmistress’s behalf, I’d say”, Billy-Joe put in. “They’ll make it, as always. Well, I’m happy, what about you?”

The new timetable wasn’t yet distributed while the course was fully booked already, and a waiting list grew longer each hour. They would have to split and install a parallel course. Thus would limit the time of the new Professors considerably, they intended to claim.

Not all their work was destined for the public, not even for the illustrious public of the School of Inbetween. That was why the friends worried about lecturing and researching which had come up, while time was limited, but for both sides should be cared.

“What sense does it make to forcing them into such a dreadful mill right from the start?” Adrian Humperdijk objected. “They won’t accept that anyway.”

“You better leave that up to them, dear Adrian” the Headmistress replied.

“I see that likewise” Penelope M’gamba made herself known.

In a small circle the intimidated ones in the know from sinister times were sitting together, freshly elected to the School’s Board. The students had voted for their representatives right at the first trial with overwhelming majority, while the Headmistress and her representative, Vice-Headmaster Adrian Humperdijk, required a second helping, which didn’t do them much good, and that only because the new Professors weren’t yet eligible.

“Lack of experience” it was said.

“They have to grow into their new role first...”

Dorothea of Griselgreif to Greifenklau or Amadeus Slyboots had been rejected because they were non-academics.

“We’ve got to change that”, Arundle hollered rather upset. “Besides, why should all others be represented in this Council? That doesn’t work. Are they nobody?” Intellectus added to Arundle’s insertion.

He was the youngster and was elected for representing the children of the island.

“Seems to be some kind of caste representation like in the France of the Revolution” his aunt put in.

“Someone’s picked up with might”, Arundle wondered. Then she shook her head angry with herself. What an arrogant thought that was.

The first relevant constitutional reform was showing up, that seemed more than clear. For the time being however, busy everyday life took over. The new term was underway and next to the obligatory basic courses a considerable amount of surplus subjects were given to the choice of the students, suitable for all levels and needs.

The new Professors were not tied in the plight torso, and were chosen all the more as they promised not only a very general but also mysterious theme under the somewhat ridiculous title “The Art of Sorcery in Flowerpot soil” – most students imagined some kind of ikebana flower power. However, no matter what the two Honourables had offered - the curiosity could not be refrained by the oddest title.

Only those who were acquainted with the two had an idea of what to expect: Somewhat fussy, pedantic arguments about matters of little concern such as calculations of coordinates or favourable routes.

However, such could hardly be subject of the seminar. Therefore the ones in the know, that is, Arundle, Billy-Joe and Pooty, were as alert as all others what was to be coming up.

Their Honourables refrained from floating over the heads of the packed audience through the air, (which they could have easily done), but insisted to be carried.

[“That’s somewhat more gracious”, they argued.]

Therefore, it was up to Billy-Joe to be slipping through the tight ranks like a supple animal - with the bow in the quiver over his shoulder, and the Medicine Pouch around his plain neck, wherein the other Honourable resided.

Pooty didn’t miss the show, of course. He took his task even more serious. The newly acquired honour of his protégé improved his occupation as Guardian of the Stone immeasurably. His still glowing head looked out of Billy-Joe’s Pouch and stirred up the assembly to general amusement.

As soon as Billy-Joe arrived at the aim (that cubicle amidst the round of the Hall) he sighted for help at Arundle, who had tried to follow in his pace but got stuck half ways signalling now that he should place all the utensils on the desk and then take a seat himself.

Pooty climbed out of the Pouch and placed the shiny stone close to the glowing red eye of the Magic Bow, and immediately the two newly appointed Honourables began whispering.

Those near by, who became aware, hissed for silence. Thus, the murmurs died soon, and were replaced by an almost audible strain of ears.

The whispering of Their Honourables could be heard by now, but was far from understanding. “Have that damn microphone installed, what the hell is the thing good for otherwise?” voices yelled. However, nobody knew how this could be done. “The janitor’s got to come” other voices sounded.

Their Honourables didn’t mind such hanky-panky, and kept on conversing as if they met again after years of partition, while they lacked the alertness for the flow of time of the earthbound beings, but couldn’t help it, no matter if they knew.

Therefore, they were very astounded when they heard themselves via loudspeakers and stopped intimidated, being faced with such fancy unknown sorcery.

Arundle was asked now to show up on stage, and tried to calm them down. However, His Honourable

Stone was frightened almost to death she learnt from her Magic Bow and was further told, “that any sensible spiritual occupation under such working conditions was impossible – either that thing is shut off or we leave!”

What could be done?

“I recommend something else. Listen to your insides, remain with the instant, stop thinking, have the flowerpot soil take over.” Arundle didn’t exactly know why she said that, especially the last, it had come to her mind out of no-where.

The hearing device was closed down and the Honourables went on with their murmuring – very audible now but still meaningless, though, or filled with inaudible sense.

The listeners settled down and relaxed with the instant, while the few who were unable to taming their unrest pushed for the exits, didn’t manage however, and resigned, because the Hall was packed now and still more pressed in at the doors.

Thus, the most peculiar lesson of all times was on the way and took its pace. The big clock above the desk was heard ticking, while the silence cracked even louder in the cocked ears, and the multi-voiced breathing united in an ocean of in disguisable waves. What an experience!

The whispering Professors kept whispering but didn’t make any noise. Something like sense lowered gradually over the assembly. There was nothing inaudible, they did understand. They understood all too well, and what she or he understood could not be passed on. Thus, many realized ‘the Unspeakable’ for the first time.

Whenever they would hear the word ‘flowerpot-soil’ in future, something would be released inside as well as the circumstances here in that hall, whether they had had to stand or had been seated amidst a packed crowd of fellow students, and that much more being released, but was unspeakable.

“They won’t carry on like that for the whole term” Tika – Billy-Joe’s little sister – wondered. She felt left alone by her big brother, and had she not have found

Tibor, she would most probably have ransacked for good.

“I care for your little sister. I enjoy being with her, and I sometimes feel accepted as well” Tibor frankly admitted, while Tika let her Sublimator friends Tuzla and Patagonia know that she cared for Tibor in return - “He makes me laugh, and that’s a lot more than you can imagine.”

Strange enough - people found each other from the furthest ends of the world, and nobody knew why. The reason could not be found in the colours, as they were far apart. What else could it be?

It was the way it was, and Tika was far too bound by her passion to question their affection.

“We don’t get lost to the future at home” Patagonia and Tuzla confirmed Tika’s musings about the proper handling of emotional affairs. “We do live the moment – here and now...”

Tibor was leaning next to Tika not fully aware of her presence any more, and in a kind of trance almost. Still he enjoyed being with her and definitely didn’t feel like lifting a burden off Billy-Joe’s broad shoulders. Well, not in the state he was right now, whereas Tika was obviously not affected yet. However, you never know.

Where was she? Little could be seen through the mist.

“Let’s have a dance” Tuzla and Patagonia suggested. Sandor joined them now and both brothers from the Mongolian steppe needn’t be asked twice. They took Tika in the middle and before long, a green whirl lifted them off the ground high up far over the borders of the little island.

Scared she held Tibor tight, who kept murmuring soothingly: “Let go, let go, have yourself drop, we keep you, the wind carries you, you can believe in you” – and indeed Tika felt the freedom and the wind, and felt lifted and carried, and filled with happiness. “Thus, it works with the others!” she wondered.

“Flowerpot-soil” she sang “Flowerpot-soil – Flow erpots oil, flow erpots oil, how much I love Flow-erpots-

oil...“ she heard the others singing “...the flow of oil, erpots and soil, what the hack’s such Erpots Oil?”

“Flow Erpots Oil
 Flow Erpots Oil
 Flow Erpots Oil
 A flow all filled with Erpots Oil”

Did her eyes betray her? She saw little rivulets filled with creamy oil flowing down to earth, trickling and dribbling in the bright sunshine above the clouds as if in a sea of diamonds, far above the clouds, where boundless freedom rests.

She felt Tibor’s strong arms when it went down again. His firm grip when settled down on solid ground.

The echo on such a remarkable lesson was somewhat divided. Many, in fact most, didn’t dare to trust their experience, as soon as it lay behind, and only remembered the silly title and the lengthy silent whisper, or had it been a whispered silence?

Only the four Sublimations and Tika knew what they had experienced. Especially Tika, for her, it had been the first time.

“Does it make sense, if I talk with them as well?” Billy-Joe asked on behalf of Arundle, who had been taken aside by the Headmistress. While the latter had become a wink from Dorothea the new Public Relations Manager.

It looked as if children had complaint with their parents about the new Professors and their fancy style. However, this was just pretence. Neither the children, nor their parents were definite – and thus, things should remain.

Dorothea was alert. “There is someone secretly infiltrating our major sponsors, and there are other motivations involved than mere esoteric concern. We could easily rate that fancy proceeding of the new Honourables somewhere between yoga and transcendental meditation – God knows there is worse under way. If you think of things, like – say - Urschrei...

for example” she couldn’t find a better term, and wasn’t familiar either, but had heard most terrible rumours. Anyway, those who were in the secret knew what she meant.

“You just don’t understand what’s going on out there. We’re being sold out, so to speak. Someone’s buying our shares on a large scale basis. Didn’t even know such shares were around, never heard of them anyway, but they are there, don’t ask me from where they come...

Discrediting rumours help lowering the course of course. The more foolish the School’s appearing the cheaper become the shares... it’s as simple as that...

Someone’s taken over already, nothing is ours any more, neither the helicopter nor the Nautilus, in fact, nothing belongs to us any more. All we have is some eighteen percent of the School as such, am I right?” She looked over to the Headmistress questioningly.

When she saw her contrite face, a terrible suspicion arose - things were even worse “You don’t want to say... - no, not really, you can’t be serious, dear Marsha!”

“What could I do? You know what it was like last term. Everything went upside down. I had been a little careless, though.” And after a pause she added in an air of hope: “Now you are here, and everything will turn to the better. I’m sure you have an idea how we get out of this...” Dorothea looked helpless. “...well there’s always a way” she went on somewhat intimidated.

“...Now, if this is starting all over again, we will give up once and for all” Adrian, her husband and Vice-Headmaster put in.

“Don’t say that, Adrian, you cannot seriously mean it.”

“Well, there is an offer. Doomsday hasn’t come. The latest trial of scandalizing our affairs might well have been a kind of door opener, as is well known how closed up we present in public...”

“Someone’s drawing a bow at a venture, if I may say so” Scholasticus supported his wife.

“I think, I leave for Sydney first of all, and see what could be done. Is there anyone here joining me? – Not

all, please...” she shouted while all jumped to their feet. “May I choose my companions?”

“Yes, of course, what else can we do? With you we are in the best hands” the Headmistress said in an air of resignation.

“I’m not taking you, Scholasticus, you are too dominating. What I like at home doesn’t fit everywhere. Don’t be upset, dear!”

“Who’s going to be our opponent? Whom are you meeting?”

“A certain Professor Baranasias from Toronto, a learnt economist, I understand.”

“You are right” Scholasticus made himself known, “I don’t have an idea about the matter, but with Peter Adams you might not be all that lost, he’s in good command of economics either. Shall I ask him?”

“Don’t you worry, dear, I’ll handle that. Besides, I would like to ask Arundle, and if Peter cannot come, I would like to have you, Marsha, on board, - if it wouldn’t be best anyway to have you with us.

- More than three would be too big a party. I’m sure that we...”

Dorothea stopped in the middle of the sentence. She didn’t want to say too much. Instead, she picked the lever and called Peter Adams, who agreed spontaneously.

“Sold out we had been already anyway, even before the scandal and that minority share, which seems to be lost for good. What’s coming up next, has been drifting above our heads for quite some time, and that is not the fault of our two freshly promoted Professors. Still, they may accompany us – they are most welcome, if I may say so!”

“Pooty wouldn’t go without Billy-Joe, and without Pooty the Honourable Stone won’t come either” Arundle put in.

“Well then, we are five then, or six, or eight to be precise. What a shame, how anthropocentric we still are” Dorothea wondered, after having corrected her three times.

“Do let me talk, then we’ll manage”, she said in a self-assured air. “I need you in the background. We

might even have to employ some sorcery, and Marsha knows the school best. She is aware of all secrets. It's a pity though, that we lost our damn obstructive minority... well, it can't be helped right now."

"We do have more than such a minority could grant. We have our research. Our successes are sensational, they mean a scientific revolution, more important than microchip or Internet, and what's most important – they are inside here" Scholasticus knocked at his head while saying.

"Scholasticus, won't you come with us, then? Once in your wife's shade won't harm you, but keep in mind, I warn you – I'm the boss for now!"

"I will stay back, if the number causes trouble..." Marsha put in. "I've lost control anyway, and doubt my own memories..."

"Let's sleep a night before decision, tomorrow the helicopter is coming, and then we will see. May I invite all of you for a drink? Let's go..." Dorothea headed for her home and the others followed.

4. Background Affairs

Instead of executing sinister plans of revenge, Roland Waldschmitt preferred escaping. The false tracks he laid by advice of his assistant were heading to different parts of the world. The man had joined him from no-where, and construed especially designed curricula, Waldschmitt knew by heart now, while he could never be sure when and where to leave. Decisions always came last minute.

All such nuisance because of that woman, he'd love to strangle still, while his assistant meant life would be much easier without bloodshed. He was of course right. No matter whether there was blood enough on his hands. From your desk at home, you could wipe out whole villages for the profit's sake. Still it was something else

whether you made your choice in cold blood or strangled your former Mistress.

He pretended not to care what had become of her, when he changed identity and was now Professor Baranasias from McGill-University in Toronto. Together with his assistant, a certain Dr. Rudolfus Catalanius he travelled about the world from one strong-room locker to the other, so to speak, while care was arbitrary, because such hot spots were under guidance, either by governmental authorities or eventually by her.

One method had been sending a messenger, but when one locker contents disappeared, they thought things over twice before trusting a stranger. A beautiful woman like Viola de Stäel would have been of great help, though. Thus, the false Professor had to take the risk alone or send his assistant.

Who ever were travelling through the world with suitcases full of money ran a big risk. Now, the false Professor understood his former clients better. Where to bring the money? How to make it clean and exchange for something of similar value?

You could only do by secret approach to the nearest private bank and to another strong-room locker where nobody had access but the proper owner, or you relied on a safe right at home in your premises. For that purpose, Baranasias and Catalanius acquired a sleepy hamlet near Sydney where they began their stock marketing.

With great care and in custody they started buying what ever shares they found in the market of the School of Inbetween or related contractors. Causing thus a steep inclination, that could hardly be avoided, though. The market reacted, of course, while those negative headlines in the papers did hardly more but a slight rebuffing for some weeks.

Had they stopped buying, they might have reversed the trend, but there was no time. Baranasias wanted to get hold of the secrets and the chosen way led him straight into the heart of the unbearable competitor.

Catalanius was even worse. "We buy in any case, don't mind the price..." While the pile of valuta melted

like snow in the spring sun, Baranasias had collected with so much effort and great risk.

“Had been a nice time, after all” recalled the beautiful woman with the well built while somewhat severe face. “Especially in the beginning. However, as it was, it couldn’t go on.”

Right from the start, Viola de Stäel felt resentments, and her feeling had been right. The truth came about in small portions.

That disguised spy on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth had in fact been her creation. She had him trained and tamed until he became her factotum. Therefore, he reported to her.

However, she also depended on a Master and wouldn’t have managed without him. Her obligation had been the training only, while the idea had come from another source. She had done her best.

Whenever the Chairman had been on business tour negotiating with potential clients, she hurried into her studio in Soho, which she had never given up, because it was the base of her power and her independence. For her, money lay on the streets, and her equivalent couldn’t be reckoned in figures either.

The Master had been able to fix an appointment of the extraordinary kind, somewhere beyond the endangered zone that showed up in the Southern hemisphere, thanks to those greedy rascals of the Brotherhood, who couldn’t keep on waiting until the time was ripe.

Black magic had played an important part. However, Viola de Stäel was still unfamiliar with the whereabouts. She did her part and didn’t mind the circumstances, she neither cared nor would have understood.

Only that much became clear to her: Her ‘cute huddle cuddle grumble Pooty-bear’ ended up in the centre of a most challenging research mission on a secret island somewhere beyond Australia. While those stupid

brothers almost torpedoed the neat plan, by performing a nonetheless remarkable experiment, setting the whole region in flames, so to speak, by a chain of catastrophes and immeasurable and insurmountable destruction, which then finally led to the end of the Brotherhood.

Viola de Stäel secretly arranged for the arresting of the Brothers in range, who weren't hiding fast enough, while the clever ones disappeared, and were never ever seen, whereas making it a deal in her own case.

As chief witness she was freed from any charge and lived on just like that, while those around her were in great trouble, none the least Roland Waldschmitt who turned into a coward and jellyfish, while she remained seemingly untouched by the prosecution, and poured disdain over him, resulting in his psychic breakdown. Had he not been such a selfish person, he could have been pitied. However, thus he experienced the woe he used to spill out so merciless over others.

5. Queen of Heart trumps

The helicopter was late as usual. It arrived at eleven o'clock instead of half past nine. The weather was bad; it had been a bumpy flight and the passengers climbed pale faced and shaky out of the cabin.

The busy airhostesses still tried to tidy the seats of the worst, while the new load of travellers rumbled up the gangway. There was no choice, it had to work, the young women might think, and produced their professional smile when welcoming the guests.

Marsha had finally stepped back, heavy hearted as her husband proclaimed, while Dorothea realized (with her sure instinct) that this was a mistake. Part of her task would be taken over by Billy-Joe and Arundle (together with the two new Professors.)

It was too late now, anyway. Sending Scholasticus away now would have endangered her marriage and that was not on Dorothea's mind.

In Sydney, they took the bus to the City Terminal. With their handbags, they walked through the streets to their hotel. There they had a date with the Professor from Toronto with that funny name.

At the desk they received a note, thus, they dumped their luggage and then marched on to the little conference room where they were bound to have an undisturbed meeting.

Professor Baranasias wasn't alone either. His assistant Dr. Rudolfus Catalanius was at his side when the guests arrived. The latter took over the introduction and seemed to somewhat dominate his Professor.

Professor Baranasias seemed to be not well. Certain unrest filled him unknowingly, which the assistant realized even more. After a while the Professor recovered however, now making eyes at Dorothea, and was soon devoted to her circumstantially, while she was leading the negotiations, thus enabled him to have his eyes rest on her unblemished.

Scholasticus felt wrath rising, and hardly managed to stay cool. Only after Arundle gave him a quietening touch and the red eye of the Magic Bow kept twinkling, he noticed what went wrong with him and turned down.

Professor Baranasias was hardly estimated for his age as well as for his overall appearance. He was definitely average in any way. Scholasticus didn't refrain from a fierce gazing of such likely opponent.

When Dorothea had mastered her part, Peter Adams took over, and tried to draw out their host. – 'We all came out of a likely premise, being absolvent of the good old McGill University' he uttered in a jovial air. '... had been lecturing there as well, until receiving a call from deep down under, that is far Australia, just recently...'

While trying to refresh joint memories however, he realized certain uneasiness. That man was neither familiar with old colleagues, he should have definitely known, nor with other Professors, Adams noticed. The

knowledge was very poor, not even the clever assistant was better off. While the dubious Professor could hardly hide his immigrant status by the language, he spoke. That man had not been bred at McGill's – no, Sir, definitely not, Peter decided.

With the Professor's assistant, Peter Adams shared a deep antipathy, wherever it came from. - He disliked that man. Had they been together lately, he would very likely recall. The person was a swindler and impostor. Deep inside Peter therefore felt ill will, which tried to break out and could only be tamed with great effort, and the support of Pooty, who cautiously pulled him by the sleeve.

Peter Adams kept on wondering. Where had he come across that man? Had they met at the university, as Catalanius said?

While his thoughts went astray, Dorothea had taken over again and stressed on the remarkable research work that was done on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth.

“While this value cannot be found in stone and wood, or real estate and means of transport” - Scholasticus put in tipping his forehead meaningfully with the forefinger. His remark fitted well this time.

“You had to behead us and replace yours with ours. Ha, Ha, Ha” - he hollered.

“Everything's got its price even the brightest brain” the assistant replied sharply, lacking any sense of humour.

“In your world this might be so, but we follow better rules.”

“What ever it is, we are interested. You are far too precarious. Don't you understand? We only want to help”, Professor Baranasias put in.

“With our help you soon will be able to stand on your own feet again. You need not worry about money. For money is cared. Do your research as you feel. All we want is be part in it. We also run out of time. How can we get hold of the time? Nobody is further than you I tell you frankly - we have nothing to hide, believe me. Let's play with open cards, that's all we want.”

Arundle cocked up. Such tunes were somehow familiar. She noticed a hidden yearning behind those sentences. A desperate longing for the untouchable, for something, money cannot buy.

There it was, here they had to step in. Dorothea seemed to feel likewise. She took the word and played her card with highest esteem, knowing well that she wasn't meant personally or somehow still was anyway. That man's mind was out of order, though. Was he a border liner, worth the effort of trying? Were they prepared for such a task, while a lost soul offered all the world's property, or a great part as it seemed. Someone cared for eternal happiness hoping to knock on the right door.

The Professor's assistant noticed the change in the companion's attitude. Something went out of control. The false Professor gave way to the charm of the Circe. This man was a weakling after all – had he only believed his agent, who had warned him right at the beginning. Baranasias wasn't worth the effort.

“There must be someone coming, and shake her hips – thus the dog's parrying. She's got to have some style and appearance, nevertheless”, the woman had said in an air of disdain, while he didn't believe her and had alleged that she was just jealous.

“Viola, how right you were” he mused by now as it was too late. Viola de Stäel wouldn't hear it any more, even if she had wanted.

Someone was in due train to abandon his disciple. He couldn't allow this. Besides, what was that after all - a whole phalanx had marched up on him. Instead of his acquainted Miseriors, he had that weakling at his side. He should better have avoided the situation as such, right from the start, but he had been so sure about himself. Catalanius, the man with a thousand faces, now realized.

The air was full of magic, but it was not his. Thus, he sounded for retreat. The position of strength he had had in the beginning melted like ice in the sun.

The first impression, that woman conveyed should have warned him. They hadn't neared their aim, the take

over of that damn island was still out of reach. He decided to tighten the screws as soon as possible.

“If they don’t want to listen, they will have to feel” he mused enraged as he was. After all, that island was only the nominal property of the former owners. They couldn’t go on, on their own as they did in the past. They had the law against them, and they knew it, what else had their interest been for that meeting?

He put them in sacks - other than in former times, when his Miseriors took over here and there - rebel rousing wherever likely. All their efforts were in vain, if the fool at his side wouldn’t parry.

Nothing was left – he found himself right at the beginning. What had been was over now and was part of another life, still there was hidden the club, which one day could turn out to be the means for pushing the weakling ahead.

The cover was hard to bear, and grew harder every day. He could feel some kind of invasion in his bowels, infiltrating likewise the windings of the brain, while ensnaring the vibrations of the mind – full of sweet whispering yearning. In vain, he tried to shake such off.

He looked at the false Professor standing next, and felt the big change coming. However, other than felt. The Professor’s face was shining; in his eyes was seen an absurd glance of kindness. He was indeed on the verge of falling and changing the sides. Not an instant longer he could allow this to happen.

Catalanius grabbed the false Professor by the sleeve and off they went in great hurry. At the door, they got stuck and Catalanius lost his factotum, who tried to return - still with shiny eyes fixed on Dorothea, so it seemed - but than was drawn away and passed the hotel personnel in front of the room on stand-by.

Had the scout mission of the School of Inbetween met its aim? Had Arundle touched the stony heart? While she felt the yearning of the man combined with a strange feeling of confidence, reminding her of a scene of former childhood days turning up involuntarily her father’s face, whom she had all forgotten.

“Now we’ve truly earned our food” Dorothea said, while Arundle kept in mind what just had come to her. She waved for the waiter and generously ordered a second breakfast. “We’ll have a bottle of Champagne with it. Put it on the bill of our host, if I may beg...”

After all, they were guests. They had some hours to go before they could take the helicopter. Thus, they dined at length, and then they took off, and walked back to the terminal, where they experienced an inconvenient surprise. The helicopter including crew didn’t belong to them any longer.

Catalanius had done a good job. As major shareholder, he had the right on his side. There was no legal point in it. Thus, Catalanius had fulfilled his prediction. Baranasias’ uprising had been but a quick straw fire. He was fallen back as soon as he was out of Dorothea’s range, and influence of the memories awakened by his daughter.

“He won’t escape us, you will see” Arundle murmured and grinned. “Then we must travel the magic way, alright.”

The Magic Bow had his string snarl; Pooty grabbed for the Magic Stone, and by joint magic the missionaries found themselves right away back on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth.

Dorothea had stayed best back in Sydney because what she intended didn’t allow any delay. Thus, she disappeared right away in her office and vanished in the Internet, so to speak, for all kinds of applications, orders, authorities, and had the slow mills started – down here probably even slower than elsewhere.

She renewed old connections, which could be traced up to the tops of UNO and UNESCO – some even still worked she found out to her big surprise.

“Thus, aristocracy is good for something after all” she growled somewhat contented. Things developed successfully, as soon as they were tackled. Of course, there was irritation about the secrecy, and still some enlightening work had to be done, but in the end common sense and reason succeeded.

Dorothea was very persuasive. Her web-cam was all in favour of her staging, however in the end the Isle itself was most convincing, when a UNESCO team invaded the island. The poor inhabitants didn't know where to hide, while Dorothea was busy showing the team around and stressing on the highlights.

Neither students nor colleagues proved helpful - even those she had expected a more general overall view.

“Can't work that way...”

“Can't go on like that...”

“Can't stand that for one more day...”

Such were the complaints she heard during the week of film making, wherever the film team showed up, and that was more or less everywhere. Last taboos however remained untouched. Thus, the panorama window was kept shut, while the coverage looked like plain rock structure. No hint was referring to the existence of the mer-folk, while rumours were about already.

The idea was to show the Isle as it was: natural and positive like some kind of soap opera at best, following the somewhat extrovert taste of the producer, meant for the public, however still unreachable and unreal in a way. As if the film was made on an other planet or in another time. Thus, the secret remained as well as the hidden dwellers and their location. A kind of squaring the circle, as was Dorothea's ambition, and it seemed as if she succeeded.

By means of a court sentence, she obtained a pending decree saying that ‘no alterations were allowed until further notice. Nothing could be taken away or could be added of the real estate or mobile property.’ The decree explicitly granted ‘the undisturbed functioning of the School and safeguarding the dwellers in full range...’

The decree summoned the helicopter likewise and the crew, thus the shuttle service was picked up again and guaranteed the free flow of man and cargo, as before.

Furthermore, the busy Public Relations Manager started a fund-raising initiative around the globe, stressing on the pending law case and the disastrous consequence. The flow of funds wasn't a broad stream of

money right from the start, but a kind of rivulet spilling in noticeable relief for the time being.

Fees of pupils had been kept back, as soon as the situation became known, but now were paid again. That's the way people were outside, even those you didn't expect to be like that.

The Isle of Wisdom-tooth was on a good track. However, that was not all, Dorothea had up her sleeve. How had she been able to initiate all that humdrum?

"If your product is good, and if you understand your business, such is simple as that", she explained to her husband, who didn't only love her by heart but adored her for what she performed, and realized how deeply he had failed in his judgement.

Dorothea's idea was simply brilliant. How could she create a win-win situation at once? By means of her connections as Countess of Griselgreif of Greifenklau she managed to apply for the status of "World Culture Heritage", and her application was on the best way to succeed, thanks to her friends with UNESCO and the congenial film that had been made, presenting the Isle and the school project in the brightest colours.

The pending state – the application had not yet been approved – enabled her to raise more funds by clever reference to upcoming glories, thus the flow improved considerably. She as well noticed: money was available. People cared for reasonable and sensible investments, and values worth the effort, and this was what the mysterious School of Inbetween promised. The demand for interest funds increased exorbitant. Mad sums started circulating – that is – rumours wavered about a secret investor who disappeared all of a sudden.

Together with the out sale of those important eighteen percent, which had disappeared somehow - the Headmistress couldn't tell how and when this happened – he now kept 49 percent, while the remaining 51 percent were split into tiny fragments, hidden with parents and former school-leavers or had just disappeared unnoticed. The owners might not even know of their existence in lockers and strongholds or safes, not touched for years, slumbering, while blowing up every hour, so to speak.

They increased in value and went straight upwards and no end was in sight. If Dorothea managed to get hold of these shares, she would be able to outnumber the other side. Thus, it was about the School of Inbetween. The pending status as World Culture Heritage together with the mysterious research programme based on an outstanding brain trust of able scientists kept stimulating the finance markets.

“The holder of the majority is running the show, that’s the way things work in this world. Whether we like it or not” the intimidated Headmistress admitted repeatedly.

Had she only opened the many lockers and drawers in her office and on the floors, or looked at even plain piles of dusty papers. However, she had not the faintest idea of what treasure kept slumbering in the hide unnoticed.

Those piles didn’t belong to anybody while the case was pending. As soon as the situation was cleared the way Dorothea intended, things would automatically turn over into the hands of the UNESCO fund. Nothing, no piece of paper, no picture or photograph, nor any trophy and cup would be exempted, but would become part of the ‘World-Culture-Heritage’ – as such it would soon become conserved for the future. It was only a question of time. – So - why fiddle about now? There were more important tasks to be fulfilled, the stressed Headmistress said to herself. While actually Dorothea took the workload from her shoulders, a fact, she seemed to ignore.

Whatever the reasons were, those piles remained untouched or even unnoticed. Dorothea would handle all that and end the administrative chaos, Marsha surely was ashamed of, and found good reasons of not touching the matter. ‘We have it done the easy way’ she quietened herself down, thus, the mysterious treasure remained untouched.

6. Arundle’s Presentiment

Since Arundle had returned from Sydney she was introvert and thoughtful. She and her friends were on the way to the dining room. Flory and her sister Cory felt torn towards the South Pacific site under the palm tree roof, and Arundle was accompanying.

“See, this is Billy-Joe’s with his little sister.”

Arundle had scarcely seen Billy-Joe for days, and if, then from afar like now. When they had filled their trays the three followed the Australian pair and found them sitting apart.

“Clear enough, take a seat, nice to see you” Billy-Joe greeted them with his common gentle smile, when he fetched Arundle’s questioning gaze.

Sometimes the sisters had their secret talks, the three friends knew. Was Tika as enthusiastic as was her brother? She looked anyway less disturbed and hostile. The reason for Tika’s hostility lay several years back in the past, however it was not forgotten, even more when Billy-Joe began to change to Tika’s disadvantage.

Billy-Joe moved into the corner and gave way to the three, who seated them comfortably. “So, you as well” Cory said in a moody air when she noticed the famous Flying dogs on the plates - a wholly vegetarian speciality with the confusing name.

They had their meal first, while the conversation was floating somewhat tenacious. This changed as soon they were filled up. Arundle wanted to know at last whether Billy-Joe had wondered as much as she did about that peculiar Professor over there in the Sydney hotel. While neither Tika nor the two sisters had been with them, therefore they picked up other subjects, and that were, as you can expect with girls of that age – boys. However, not boys just like that, but specific boys. Thus, they let their mates talk over their subject, and didn’t care or listen.

“Strange guy, though, I’m sure he was no real Professor - Peter Adams also said”, Billy-Joe confirmed now.

“Neither did he come from Canada, Peter said” Arundle went on.

“Definitely not” Billy-Joe nodded.

“Besides, his English –haaf yyou herrd ..?” she snarled like Emperor Wilhelm II on pre-war goodwill state tour to the Commonwealth.

“That too – but I meant something else” Billy-Joe went on without caring much about Arundle’s funny interlude. “Has been more an impression, though. He reminded me of Zinfandor Leblanc. They weren’t really alike, still there was something, some kind of likeliness I cannot describe much better. You know, Tibor and I were on that special tour to London, where we snatched that suitcase off our old acquaintance, and then picked him up later and got him out of jail, the poor bloke.”

Arundle thought to understand. Perhaps it had been just that, what had touched her – the panic and inner pain, she meant to have noticed in the Professor’s gaze, whenever he felt unwatched, and didn’t fix Dorothea with his eyes, whom he seemed to adore.

“Like a puppet on the string. Whenever he referred to the subject, he rattled down his message like a well-trained actor. Nothing was real with that guy...”

“Did you see that thin red streak just at the hair-line?” Billy-Joe wanted to know.

“...As freshly operated that looked” Arundle nodded.

“Yes, that was it. He smelled like just got out of hospital, as if he had just come back on his own feet” Billy-Joe added.

“Perhaps his gaze was more exhausted than panicky”, Arundle wondered.

“Anyway, he kind of shrieked when you stood in front of him...”

“soundless, though...”

“Yes, it was just a moment, than he had him under control again, but he couldn’t make the instant undone” Billy-Joe was almost sure about that.

“ Right you are, as if he knew me – but how could that be?” Arundle confirmed.

“It was definitely you that made him shudder - you, and your Magic Bow - as if he knew you, and he knew

you because he was somebody else, than he pretended to be. Or had you seen that man before?"

Arundle fiercely shook her head, while then her shaking went over into a thoughtful waving. "Not really seen, but I felt him – there was something emotional. Just a glimpse soon cut off. We might even talk about that assistant as well, what was his name..."

"Don't you mind names. If you ask me an old acquaintance is hiding behind that assistant, but I don't want to rush on too fast. Anyway, what was your impression?" Billy-Joe wanted to know, not expecting an answer, though, while he went on right away. "I can only say what I have heard from Peter Adams, who is certain about it. You know how he was cheated when he broke his legs."

"You don't mean..." Arundle exclaimed.

"Right, exactly this is what I mean" Billy-Joe affirmed.

"Of course, we will get rid of **him** only in the future. However, the Advisor assured me, he'd be cutting **his** wings considerably. **He** won't change the past, **his** power's got to remain in the given boundaries. This is why we needn't care about Misieriors in the near future. Because this had been **his** mistake, and had been forbidden for that reason, when **he** dared to sent his Misieriors back to us" Arundle explained, well knowing whom she meant – "well, and that a couple of times. Yes, I'm also afraid that Malicious Marduk is back again."

"If we only knew just as well, where we had been in the future. Future is easily said. Was this my future, when I faced the Prince Regent in combat? Guided and protected by the magic of the ancient Shaman, you and all others wanted to convince me that he is I, until I began to believe myself. Well, in fact only almost. Only almost, as life doesn't work that way. Nobody knows his destiny. This is what nobody can, and you can prove it. Ask Scholasticus for Schroedinger's cat."

"I know, I know, Einstein was all against such unpredictability, and you want to claim it for you right now, as this is, what you do. You want to say that your predicted end as Shaman of the Churingas is a quantum-

mechanical impossibility, do I get you right?" Arundle asked.

"Exactly, and this is not only because these things now are past for some years..."

"Some six or seven years, if I'm not mistaken. I was with you, don't you remember? I was holding your head, and all thought you were dead. Without magic, I don't know..."

"The way it looked, I did die then, however not the I that is sitting in front of you here and now, and is recalling the future, but an I of whom we know nothing. An I that was leading a life over one hundred years, a life ahead of me and ahead of us and our time."

"Thus, it works with the future" Arundle agreed.

"...Or it doesn't work that way" Billy-Joe objected. "That's what I want to know without being stubborn or polemic. I just don't know. I don't know what I it is, that I do remember."

"That's it" Arundle put in all in favour. "The most extreme variation would be a parallel world. Because then all paradoxes would be solved – well some at least..." she added after a slight hesitation.

"That would mean", Billy-Joe went on – "What I experienced, I have experienced, however in another world - in a world next to our own. Similar to what happened when we investigated on that island of the petrified giant, without noticing each other, because we were separated..."

"At least we had an idea of each other", Arundle agreed. "Worked out fine then with that potion and everything, when we came together again."

"How this was done, we still don't know" Billy-Joe objected.

"Well, that's kind of magic, though, somehow taboo, because we leave the sphere of reason, which is, we are going to slowly understand, infinitesimal bits from the endless plenitude of all what is knowledgeable... - This I don't mean fatalistic" she added.

"The plenitude of thought is like the ocean of eternity..."

“And we are swimming as tiny fragments of matter on minuscule bubbles of thought, that cover us up like an atmospheric gas some planets procure.”

“A nice picture...”

“Isn’t it?” Arundle looked so agreeably. Billy-Joe felt irritation similar to the scene when he awoke in Arundle’s arms on the battlefield on the verge between death and life.

Then in the far future he had decided for his life, for a life, that he overlooked and was centred on Arundle, whatever life would make of it, as long as it allowed communion.

Never would he allow them to getting lost in Arundle’s Poly-verse (if there was something in it), not she and not he. He would always strive for concord.

Such an intention made the fate of the Shaman of the Churingas somewhat impossible. What, if there were hiding several lives in one? What could happen in over one hundred years? Not twenty years did it take to lead children out into life. Up to five families could he found, if that was what was on his mind, hidden somewhere out of scope.

However, could it not well be that different worlds were guided by good or evil spirits? Full of good or bad will and able to a certain extend to influence the fate of a being, who was playing an unconscious role, and hadn’t won the necessary existential depth?

The idea of parallel worlds embraced a close relationship - it was identical parallel life and parallel drafts of world – thus it was seen by some scholars of this scientific approach.

“Of course it’s worth while researching about the phenomena of parallelism. Cannot be done otherwise if we care for deepening our understanding of Time” Arundle went into his musings as if she had been part of it.

The glittering eye of the Magic Bow indicated highest concentration now, and Pooty climbed out of his home pouch to have a look what was going on. A wave of energy had ripped him off his slumber he had been befallen, while the peaceful conversation was going on.

“The false Professor, a visitor from a parallel world – is that, what you mean.”

“Could well be! However, there had been a different, more important idea, - wait, I’ll have it soon. Yes, right, - what, if that Shaman of the Churingas had been my guardian angel? If he were, would I then get rid of the whole lot of oppressing burden right away? Had I then not my own overall terrestrial life back? A life, with an open end, without predetermination, and without the knowledge about the fate awaiting me once?”

“Such are the questions, you’d better discuss with the Advisor, if he doesn’t dissolve again, as he does, when things are tightening up on him, I’m afraid”, Arundle answered who started musing likewise. Since she had that experience with the entourage and the veiled princess, and since she met everywhere images of her father, she felt the pressure of the future and the burden of the upcoming. This might be the reason why she fled into the theory of the parallel worlds, because they made things easier for her.

The other day in Sydney she had had another encounter of that kind. The false Professor had unleashed a similar confusion of feelings as she recalled from her father, and wherever she found such feelings triggered Malicious Marduk had been near. Was this fact now or was she tricked out by her psyche?

On the other hand, she was well familiar with the ‘good fathers’, and the guardian angels, as she called them. ‘Good fathers’ like Professor Slyboots or General Armyless in a future other world.

‘Godfathers’ in fact, so to speak, protecting and supporting her, and taught her many things, and offered shield and shelter when needed. None the least was the Advisor the truest Godfather of them all. A Godfather of the best kind, if she thought it right.

All the more she was confused by the role he played at court, as he was obviously a member of the entourage, while the Emperor – the bumptious ‘Rolandus Imperator Caput Mundi’ (Rolandus, Emperor and Head of the World) arose no less aversion than the original

Roland Waldschmitt, her father. The late journey to Australia with her parents had been just too much.

Billy-Joe had missed Roland Waldschmitt in London anyway, while both had definitely met when Billy-Joe served as a hotel boy. However, does a hotel guest remember the porter – a guest like Roland Waldschmitt? Most likely he didn't. While the false Professor seemed to know Billy-Joe, or had it been Arundle right away he'd noticed, who sailed in her mate's wide shade?

Billy-Joe had put off the humiliating experience together with his porter uniform. Well, he wished he'd have done so, while those bad white masters still settled in his brain or soul.

Thus, the two adolescents had met while fighting such negative images which threatened to block the process of growing up, and had become an important mode of mutual appeal - a first trace of attraction, though, - weak, while of negative connotation.

Had someone asked, why they felt attracted, they'd become confused. While they felt bound by the unspeakable, so that their outspoken attractions would have shown almost false and definitely limited.

Yes, it was true, they felt attracted, but what it was, what really mattered, they couldn't tell. They felt limited at once, as soon as they tried. Thinking and talking stopped anyway, as soon as they realized the unspeakable, they knew of each other. – Yes, they knew how much they knew. Still such enumeration meant something – their talents and abilities conjured more than once. The singularities counted less, compared to the likenesses, if they won attention. On the second sight, many things entangled. Be it because of the expressiveness or the characteristics and reactions, or what might turn out to become their mutual weakness – their calculability – at least in their enemies' eyes.

They were without malice; they were unable of malicious attempts. Billy-Joe even more than Arundle, because she was culturally further alienated.

They were easily peered through in any encounter. Such impression they gave, and still lay here their best

arrow and was hidden their greatest advantage. A missile, they handled with great virtue by hands of spirit and forces of the soul.

Tibor passed by to pick Tika up, while the other girls listened somewhat fascinated to what was going on between Arundle and Billy-Joe.

The glorious pair employed support from eternal forces, although they didn't understand what happened with them. Thus miracles could occur inside and around them quite naturally, as if it had to be so, while nobody noticed. If there had been anyone able to procure such a comparison, while the wonderful is most wonderful when it seems natural, and nobody notices.

Dorothea called her project 'Reform of Administration' but it was more or less and first a cleansing and tidying process. The Administration lacked of competent experts, while the Headmistress and the Vice-Headmaster weren't capable and didn't want to be. They never tried to get things in order, and as long as the School was running smoothly, nobody even noticed. There was no filing system whatsoever. Instead, piles of files rested on endless dusty shelves for ages and nobody ever had a look, or had an idea what they contained.

"First of all we need archives and a record office" Dorothea explained and asked for volunteers when the Great Council met for the monthly meeting.

"I do recommend to have this important project be installed overlapping the major subjects, thus, those of us who feel called, get a chance to participate" Marsha Wiggles-Humperdijk, the Headmistress, picked up the suggestion – a bit hasty though, as she never shared the call.

"Such archives are the heart and soul of any administration. Shame on me that I didn't succeed so far. Well, well, too much work, other interests and priorities... In the past this side of the whole project was almost non existent, while teaching and research had

highest priority. Yes, I do feel guilty, though. When I took over, things were in a better shape, I must admit. My predecessor on that - chair – ehm (she just recalled that the chair and the chair holder had been abolished, while the chair she was now sitting was an ordinary chair like any other) – that is the person in charge by declamation. It is a juridical necessity by the way to have a person named, I would like to stress. Do not get me wrong. Aspirations of that kind I do reject vehemently.”

Yes, Marsha Wiggles-Humperdijk employed a new openness complying with the democratic reformation of all school structures, and was far from feeling ridiculous.

“Something else would help further” Dorothea added untouched by the servile sermon of the Headmistress – “if all subject sections could participate and form a team gathering all private collections left behind by former students and generations of scholars that have passed this school many years ago.”

The Vice-Headmaster, Adrian Humperdijk, also made a suggestion: “We teachers recommend jointly to spare a whole week in order to have this project started. I don’t think we have to vote on that.”

Pooty who held the chair again, enjoyed voting. Therefore, he had the assembly vote - “just in case” he gaily announced.

As always, the counting of the many arms and hands was quite an act.

- “Adverse votes” – a few hands rose.

- “Abstentions” Pooty asked, and a few less were shown of those who couldn’t make up their minds. There wasn’t much sense in it anyway.

“The motion has been accepted by thirty adverse votes and fifteen abstentions. I do advise you again that the latter will be automatically added to the pro-votes in this case” Pooty commented the election procedure, which he seemed to dislike, no matter of the tremendous amount of pros he gathered.

“Dorothea, would you be so kind and take over the organisation of the practical part?” asked Marsha still intimidated, who didn’t feel like doing it.

“Yes, of course, dear, I’d love it – at best we begin right away. We need, if I see it right, five project teams. One of each colour as well as an overall section dealing with the treasures of the private sphere - that is mainly the material I discovered in the office. With private treasures, I mean all what was left behind or was handed over to the school by former thankful students – that was my impression anyway of what I’ve read so far.”

For the archives, a new floor was arranged. That alone took several weeks. However, the teams didn’t remain idle while the renovation went on, as their main task was the checking through the material anyway.

The first week was used up for the separation of the colour sections, however, more in a psychological than a physical mode. A task, which turned out not so easy at all.

Perhaps they would have been well advised to be starting with the sorting after the archives were wholly installed. However, the project had been started, and thus, many willing helpers stumbled about the craftsmen, who were in a hurry anyway and had now to switch the tricky phases of the construction work into the early morning and late evening hours when the students were away. The schooling as such had come to a general halt anyway.

Thus, the project blossomed no matter of the setbacks, and gained amiable contours.

Dorothea took care of the dominant section of the former students, and what she and her willing helpers discovered made her heart soon beat high and higher.

Many of those lost interest shares were hidden in the piles and had been left behind by the ex-students either of negligence or purposely to do the school some good. Others had left reference to bank strongholds and lockers somewhere in the world. Shares, waiting to be picked up by the proprietor or a person with the proper code or key.

The calculation virus caught on Dorothea. More and more piles landed on her desk, containing interest shares or reference of access to their location.

No wonder that the stock market looked so meagre. They would have to spend not a penny, or cent, or centime, or what so ever on a minority share. Reality looked quite different.

The managing School Board spoke of a wonder. Dorothea reckoned and calculated. Scholasticus calculated as well, and to be on the safe side, the main school server was fed with data as well by the project teams.

Each day the local public was nourished with very varying information, still not so far apart in the end. Problems caused the percentage calculations, as the initial dates had to be considered.

The share values differed enormously over the years and decades. A factual analysis of the overall value was therefore impossible. Only as soon as all papers were set in order and compared date wise, a somewhat valid assumption would be possible. This was not likely or probable, as the competing counterpart would certainly not present their shares for comparison. Thus, they had to rely on estimations of the treasure at hand.

“Surely a save cushion for the future, that is, we do have at hand now, while it is too early yet to decide whether we also hold the majority. It’s some kind of neck to neck race, though” Dorothea summed up her report.

How well she had improved! Once more the old wisdom proved valid: ‘Man is growing with his tasks’ that is, in this case of course ‘Woman’s growing with her tasks’ her husband thought full of admiration.

7. The Archives of the Ex-Students

The moon was on the verge these days and Adrian followed the call of his blood as well as Cory, they took off with the swell of the underground torrent on their return home under the shelf.

They left behind the planning for a great feast celebrating the inauguration of the archives. Adrian Humperdijk and Cory Hare even arranged a Pump the Pummel Tournament as soon as they arrived, and met

open ears, while the young Democracy beyond the continental shelf also cared for some entertainment.

Those sea-sprites were of eruptive temper, overlade with passion and emotion, and were close to their other relatives of the depth, despite of their intelligence. Thus, those in charge needed a fine feeling dealing with their subjects, and sometimes felt overstrained. After all, they were also only water-bound humans!

Such a Pump the Pummel Match was harmless enough while binding a lot of surplus energy – a balance, everyday life couldn't always offer, as it was as dull and strenuous down there as every day life is everywhere.

A lot of work had to be done, no matter of interest and ambition, or thrill and threatening dangers, as huge octopods lured at the edges of seaweed plantations in the lightless depth of their hiding. Wild sharks allied with runaways and formed murderous killer-shark militias. They knew best how humans functioned, and thus ransacked outposts and solemn hamlets –leaving behind a track of destruction and decay, and could hardly be stopped or controlled.

Things even worsened when the army – the former pride of Melisandria – more or less openly began criticising the new regime. The terror of the shark-militias was even secretly favoured while the army was needed as peacekeeper.

“In former times things like that never happened” people growled in pubs and partisan gatherings in the endangered outskirts, where the raids occurred almost every night somewhere in the hiding of the sepia-blue darkness of the deep-sea.

Boetie's Vegetarian- and Women's Party was in progress, not only as a political movement, but also as a social force of change. More and more people changed sides and started a fleshless existence, and soon began feeling better – much better than before - some converts confirmed. Still they had surplus energy inside, which once had been used for hunting, and had often been a question of death or life.

From Cory Boetie got important tips, because old ancient instincts also attacked the drylanders.

“Beasts they are everywhere. Mankind is made of two halves, and won’t get rid of the dark half for good, however they needn’t let the darkness dominate their whole being. Neither here on dry lands nor down in the sea” Cory summed up her musings on that important theme she also was confronted with.

Adrian’s job was it to care for the reforms down there, while Cory was busy with ad hoc problems her minister friend was confronted with, while the most challenging were the raids by those shark-militias. How could they be stopped?

This was the only question on the agenda the young parliament and the two special guests were musing about during that session.

“The wild surplus energy putting into the service for the community is a high art, such taught us our state philosophers” Adrian just put in. “The idea is to employ evil motions into the service for the good. The lust of danger, the ambition of proving others of the own abilities and dominating them – all the surplus potentials that young men feel inside, have mounted into the service for a good matter, that’s where the theory is striving, and theory have such ideas remained. Still, there is something in it. In the end, such practices fail, because the so-called good matter isn’t all that good. Soon you realize that young men are merciless slaughtered in senseless warfare serving a surplus upper class pretending their own sake as the common sake.”

“This is not the case down here. The danger from the depth is all too real and the raids of the killer-shark militias...” the Minister put in.

“Before we concentrate on the Fourierite model, I would like to add another aspect” Cory Hare took the word: “Especially the early settlers and liberators of the young United States employed such model, and managed quite well, at least in the long run. They formed own militias for their settlements. Each man able to defend him - and not seldom women as well - trained the defence, and had their weapons ready at hand. Thus, defence was organised immediately in case of necessity.”

Cory's remark found broad agreement. Without effort, the mer-folk found themselves represented, and a model that had once been successful might be successful again.

The old guns of the pioneers however didn't fit the needs down here. For dry powder, you hope down here in vain. However, these were detailed questions, which surely were soon answered. The first step now was to win the mer-folk for the idea of a militia system on a democratic basis.

"I could imagine that such a system fits very well with us and our nature" the Minister ended the debate and referred detailed questions to the subdivisions, and Adrian was surprised with his beloved Pump the Pummel Tournament, the Prime Minister intended to perform as an introductory starter of the measure.

When the two Convertors were back on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, they reported with the monthly conference what was going on at the bottom of the sea, while the question after the state of the calculations came up as soon as they stopped. There was still no final breakthrough in sight, no matter of the mathematical geniuses amongst them.

As to the one part of the experts, they were approaching the highly longed neck-to-neck race, while voices, that were more sceptical, spoke of a percentage of about thirty, or at best forty percent. Still a remarkable result, and only because someone dared to tackle the homemade chaos.

"Well, in former times there had been no necessity. Who had been interested in such odd themes like money those days?" the Headmistress, Marsha Wiggles-Humperdijk defended herself and her mode of running the show. Facts like that were forgotten all too soon.

"Let's look forward" Adrian took the word – "Yes, shame on me, I commit, and my talents are on other fields. If this is now the new time, then my time is over as Vice-Headmaster. I'm all in favour of a general reform of our hierarchy. The directing School Board should be elected as per the new order, which should be negotiated

soon. What is the use of exporting our ideals only?

We ourselves have to pick them up, and there is no better time than right now.” Adrian referred to the experiences he and Cory had just had, advising the merfolk of the proper understanding of democracy.

Marsha looked stunned, or even disturbed. This was not what she had in mind - not so fast anyway and not from this side. Her own husband proposed a vote of confidence – right now, where they just had won some territory back. Besides, he didn’t bespeak of that with her. She felt hit deep inside in the inner marrow, so to speak. Was she not right? Had things been not all different in former times? Everybody should get a chance to adjust to a changing situation.

The events didn’t overrun her alone. The whole School of Inbetween had been caught in that tricky trap. Instead of being praised for the positive change, she was now blamed for her former sloppiness, her so-called irresponsibility, and for overall mismanagement, and her husband made himself the voice of the accusers and critics.

“Well then, you propose a vote of confidence, I see. You can have it, but before, I would like you to listen to what I have to say” she yelled while her mighty organ vibrated with anger. Then she published her musings, she just had had on her mind, and they showed effect.

When Dorothea – just Dorothea who would surely follow her on the Chairwoman’s chair – spoke in favour of her, the populist revolution was perfect. By acclamation, Marsha was confirmed Commissary Headmistress (what ever this meant). While Dorothea became her Vice and Adrian was set free, ‘and would have time to concentrate in future on his undersea tasks.’ That was surely enough for him; while up here he still had a sound amount of teaching in the School of Inbetween.

This development met in fact his demands, however he felt an itch deep inside. Was he the cheated one? Was he the yokel in an unclean game?

Nobody stood up on his behalf. Nobody asked for his candidature as Vice. Thus, he didn't get a chance to retire in honesty.

The decision as such was right, no doubt about that. He had imagined an even more radical change of roles, when Marsha had become Vice, and Dorothea the Chair. However, the way it was now was also all right. Marsha stood for tradition and Dorothea for innovation.

When the big day was there, such irritation was forgotten while the new archives were officially introduced and handed over to their purpose. The feast was at its height inside, while the Pump the Pummel test runs for the tournament were going on outside in front of that huge panorama pane down there on the last floor, where the audience now proceeded.

Adrian, familiar with the rules and habits, prepared for commenting as he always did when he got the chance. There was indeed a lot of surplus energy used up, either by the players or by the spectators as well - surrounding the turmoil in the cube in tight clusters.

At last, those boring speeches ended. The final match began and Adrian took over, as reporter and commentator. - Forgotten were the worries and queries. A heavy burden had been taken off his shoulders. He had carried it far too long, without asking many questions, such hadn't been good for him. Excessive workload and heavy sorrows were bad advisers. He was full of the best wishes for the newly appointed Vice-Headmistress and wished her many good ideas, and a good solid stand, a lucky hand, and the shield and support of a gracious heaven.

Adrian's role as the grey eminence of the mer-folk was extendable, and his being as a Conversior he was just revisiting, whether he'd better remained for good in the wet element.

Their latest joint project had been the Time difference, when there had been a huge chronometer installed amidst the sub-sea settlement. As a result the

scientists found out about the relativity of Time and the manipulations by the Miseriors. Such research had come to a complete halt. Nobody controlled the metres regularly, some had even be demolished, because nobody asked for the respective data any more. However, the problem was not at all solved. Things like that do not solve them, just like that.

When the war had been going on – the so-called war, because a real war had it never been – the contacts were of course broken off, and might have been even his fault, as he had been the moderator and was up to now the democratic adviser of the young parliament.

Adrian brought himself back to the presence, while the Pump the Pummel Match was on and his obligation was it to report and explain to the laymen audience on this side of the panorama pane, what was going on. The bravest slipped outside either protected by diving suits or naked, equipped only with an oxygen bottle, like Cory, who was in her second element, so to speak.

Doing so was risky in the depth of more then forty feet, and was therefore not allowed officially, but things were in turmoil somehow. Adrian just wanted to ring the alarm bell when Arundle indicated by telepathic means that Cory and Intellectus were both sound asleep, as they were the divers out there.

“What we see are dream images – might be an interesting idea in general, reckoning what we are seeing anyway. Our panorama pane might opens a virtual sight we are able to infiltrate on our way – well that’s just a kind of musing, nothing more...” Arundle added hastily when she met the doubtful gaze of the somewhat impressed reporter, who turned back to the match – a likewise virtual imagination, where elegant bodies were fighting for a piece of matter in foam and steam, however likewise unreal. A dream- and foam-born world for those in the secret, and only those could participate, who were engaged.

Selected representatives of parents and governmental agencies (even UNESCO had sent a representative) had been invited, and therefore the

speeches went on some storeys higher. The guests from outside might not have been able to see what was going on outside anyway.

Still, the room was well filled, while you heard nothing of interest from the speakers, but the general phrases for such occasions, fishing for applause. Repeatedly the School's Representatives were assured that the acceptance as World Culture Inheritance was more than likely.

"Don't count your chickens before they are hatched" Scholasticus murmured close to Dorothea's ear, when she shouted for joy. "Don't ridicule yourself old miser, just trust in me!" she replied.

Scholasticus was the leading head of the mathematicians' branch and well familiar with the matter. While only some selected data of their treasure was stunning enough. However, nobody yet had a foreboding of coming evil that was just gathering somewhere over their heads - and the least expected.

The opposing stock-market party had also sent a representative to the big celebration, which had been easy enough. His task was to check the chances for intervention and the location as such. An attack wasn't planned for the same day, of course.

The false Professor had altered his freshly renewed appearance again and slipped into the role of a former student. The identity he adopted was real, while the person had died some years ago, well off and lonesome. His shares had been offered to the School and should be found amongst the piles, which had been sorted and put in order. Even an answering reply from the school the false double held in hand. So nobody became suspicious, not even Dorothea, who checked those candidates applying for a visitor's permit. Thus, the renewed masquerade wasn't meant to affirm likeness but to disguise the Professor, who was well known by Dorothea and her team.

Even the Professor's voice had been altered, while the original was forgotten anyway. An artificial voice adapter had been implanted, and granted an alienating modulation. Such an alteration was of advantage because

it could be removed at any time, other than the face, which had been transplanted in an extensive operation, thus Waldschmitt belonged to the past. His character however was the same. This new face was his now and had to be altered by mechanical means only.

Professor Baranasias became Holger Hansen, a praised guest of honour, who was thanked by the managing Representative at best and in person, while his interest share was about five percent alone, quite a sum in one hand, he never became tired to point out.

Marsha Wiggles-Humperdijk, the Commissary Headmistress held a laudatio on the generous sponsor and thanked him in warm words for his munificence.

In his short reply, the false Holger Hansen asked for permission to have a look at one of the shares with his name on it. "One is enough. I hope to not cause you any inconvenience..." he bade with his old shaky voice, as false as his beard and bald head.

Marsha looked at Dorothea, who shook her head unnoticeable. The request could not be fulfilled right away. "You have to understand that our treasures lie well protected in a safe place. However, we will be pleased to make copies as soon as possible, and send them to you. Be so kind and leave your home address or even better your e-mail address."

Such advice the old gentleman seemed to dislike very much. He mumbled something about modern bullshit and threadbare excuses, however handed his business card to Marsha who accepted it with a winning smile.

"For the mail your will have to wait some two to three weeks, I'm afraid" she said when she saw the address – "Airmail of course", she hastily added when the old man objected harshly, then added "We cannot do otherwise, I'm so sorry!"

She shouldn't have mentioned such details, because the false Holger Hansen concluded that the security holdings still were on the island, and that had been the only reason for his request. He now knew what he wanted to know.

Professor Magic Stone and Professor Magic Bow didn't feel any guilt when being asked what went wrong during their first lesson. While some complaints had stirred up the scene consequently.

The Headmistress wanted to find out whether the joint seminar was a meditation encounter, which they denied right away. "Had been some kind of exchange of thought in the presence of the students, as is customary. The acoustic side had been the problem, and asked for special attention, however acoustic is not to only level of communication, just a welcome accessory, and a telepathic connotation so to speak. After all, we heard - had been a great success. Even more for the first time, nobody was trained yet, you could notice. - Well, except for some old acquaintance, however they don't count", Professor Bow added after a little pause. Professor Stone could only agree. "From our side there is no need for a change" he went on.

Who ever she asked, she always got a different reply. So she gave in and let things go, while the date was near and the next session was due.

"Those who dislike our seminar are kindly requested to stay away", the Honourables said and Dorothea wholeheartedly agreed. "Let it go, as long as it works, this is best, I assure you" and extracted deeper sense from a shallow pond once more.

Who ever had complaint - there hadn't been many, though, because the Hall was filled again to the last seat.

The time in between had past just like that and almost four weeks were over. First the archives had asked for all their joint attention, and then the big party had to be arranged and celebrated, while other subjects were arbitrary like the basic course 'Get to Know Yourself'.

Therefore, the new Honourables had agreed to a monthly cycle. "What others do in eight hours, we can do in four", they boasted, while their allotment had become stocked up from two to four hours in sequence on that day.

“Go ahead, we agree, such a block is of great and profound help” Professor Stone kicked back the ball.

The organisational chaos of the first hour now showed effect. What ever there was on technical devices functioned well and unspectacularly, thus, no complaints were uttered. No, ‘we cannot work here’ or the fierce yell for increased volume was heard from the students’ side. Perhaps the proper inner state had pushed such unimportant extrovert motions aside.

The Honourables began like ever, talking already while on the way to their desk in the centre. The Magic Bow stuck in the invisible quiver on Billy-Joe’s shoulder and the Magic Stone in the Medicine Pouch in front of the boy’s chest.

The hall was still humming like an upset beehive. Professor Bow and Professor Stone were happy with their company and conversed freely as they were used, content with the own self and the outer world.

They spoke about all kinds of assumptions wavering about the Isle of Wisdom-tooth these days, as everybody did anyway, whereas the difference might be the perspective. Theirs was the bird’s-eye view or something the like, while definitely different from all other views, they ascertained their listeners.

It could well have been the strange way of expressing which made the dialogue so different to others, or was it the not-said, which made the difference and what things were really about.

It was like a talk about the weather, that is - the overall weather conditions of a certain area, while in fact referring to the history of settling of the mentioned area over the last - say - thirty thousand years.

The careless timelessness was stunning and the talk in abbreviations. Time condensed in a tiny instant or blew up and contained the whole world. They cared not about size at all, neither with reference to time nor to volume. Things like that seemed to be of minor importance and didn’t claim their attention. It was more the other way round: they focused on the thinness of the

Nanoverse (inner world of atoms) and the life of the tiny beings inside.

While their pseudo-mathematics was beyond any sound critique, and defied description. No wonder they came across each time they argued about a course or destination, as Arundle and Billy-Joe knew by experience but didn't dare to think of such right here and now, well knowing that the two Honourables were capable of reading thoughts.

Was there anything like a theme showing up? Sometimes it seemed as if something was swaying in on the interest funds. They had been busy with over the last weeks. You could feel as if wild calculations on huge boards with many wings were under way, undertaken by agents invisible to the human eye because of the size.

Dust of chalk whirled about some kind of Einstein-dwarves ruffling their feathers and yelling odd curses, while wiping here and adding there, and didn't come to an end.

The whole set-up was like in a dream, Billy-Joe recalled, while Arundle dived into one of the dusty dunes.

"Don't you forget quibbling", a voice sounded close to her ear and swayed in on the song of the broken Germans, they all could sing, as soon as the public Assman's house came in sight - what ever this meant.

A pale coloured singer club tuned in with crackly voices on the song of the broken Germans: "Ich weiß nicht was soll es bedeuten" ('I don't know what it means') - and couldn't find an end, how could they? Not every question finds an answer. More likely is the other way round. Thus, the Germans made it a canon.

Arundle recognized her father's wide soundtrack she had spotted among thousands. Well known from childhood on and likewise horrible.

"We easily can be envied for all we were saved of."

Arundle couldn't imagine an infant's life in a wolves' pack, and Billy-Joe had no idea of the shortcomings in an unloving petty-family, under specific circumstances.

8. Dream Windows

Who once got lost in the underground labyrinth of the Isles of Wisdom-tooth would take in future a big ball of red tensile string, while the best sense of orientation failed down here.

Although, such floors and passages were made by nature, when the sea had eaten through the softer layers of the sediments, not caring about vertical or horizontal lines, but followed the inner force, still howling through the devastated, mostly invisible empty halls, and left behind gangways, where even bats couldn't dwell, while the air was breathable after all, although saturated by salty foam and mist.

She just had been a calculating math's genius and was now hurrying, accompanied by Billy-Joe, through the socle searching for invaders. – Such was the official mission, initiated by the invader's alarm. Intention and identity of the invading subjects were known, and that meant the stolen property had to be either confiscated or destroyed.

"Zinfandor is a backslider", Billy-Joe told her in a meaningful air, she hardly noticed in the twilight. Still she saw what she knew, and Billy-Joe felt likewise.

Arundle's turn was to unroll the thread. The bow's magic eye spent just enough light to have her notice how little she could see. The horrid breath of the sea sounded fierce from afar, and overruled human breathing quite near and also close to the secret treasure chamber, Dorothea's best guarded secret, the hope and the pride of the School of Inbetween. Such knew the false Professor and his mysterious company, who used Zinfandor only to exercise the might she still had over him. He wasn't of much use, though.

"My wonderful sweet might
Set free by a finger's snap
Slowly comes at night
Or in a day's nap."

The woman twittered of chapped lips. She had to be very careful in her fragile triumph, while love was soaked with hatred, thus endangering life.

Being life forms of the dark - they needed no light to their advantage. They reached the sarcophagus untroubled. Zinfandor got his last chance. Two big packs were hanging down his shoulders, stuffed with piles of coloured papers of immense value.

“The utmost difficulty with such dream images is our ability to differentiate. Don’t you think so?” The lesson of the Honourables had come to a grandiose finish. Out of the plenitude of events, a self-explanatory singular unhidden threat arose, or should they not take for granted what had been exposed?

How could they separate the Time tracks from the levels of reality? Was real, what they just had experienced? Had the robbery happened? Was the secret chamber plundered?

They hadn’t left the seminar in reality, that was certain. However, what did that mean?

In many a case, they had been travelling and fulfilled glorious deeds that way. However, as clear as the dream the past didn’t show, Arundle felt, and Billy-Joe agreed.

“Had been like in the dreamland, I’d say”, he nodded. No matter of their feeling, they had to inform Dorothea right away. She was the only one who knew of the secret site where this sarcophagus was hidden.

They hurried to the office with their suspicion and met there Intellectus who spent his free afternoon with his aunt, waiting for his mother to pick him up, but was late as usual.

“Controlling overrides studying” the witty boy hollered when he learnt of the suspicion.

“She should be here for a while” Aunt Dorothea agreed, thus she was hiding the first threat such news gave her, she couldn’t think of what that meant if this would become true.

However, everything was as it should be. The seven keys shrieked in seven locks. The heavy lid was lifted and swayed open, while coloured paper piles blinked in the beam of the torch.

“There is everything as it was” the Commissary Head Mistress confirmed whose assistance Dorothea bade. - Grisella and Intellectus had joined for solidarity.

Confronting the Magic Bow with such nuisance didn't make sense. Neither Professor Stone nor Professor Bow could see any sense in the situation.

“Should have been empty eventually...”

For once again the lax handling of Time asked for revenge, while the humans were happy with it: if this was future, they might be able to turn it away. Dorothea was decided enough for that – “such future mustn't be in the name of God” she predicted and raised her chin decidedly.

“We bury our treasure elsewhere – simple as that – back to the strong room behind the office” -

“...And have a guide in front, day and night...” Billy-Joe affirmed, supported by the Magic Stone that gave him a friendly knock from inside the Pouch.

“Dreams, my dears” - the Magic Bow chirped - “are magic windows, facing the outer world.”

“What is one's dream is the other's reality, my old Shaman already knew”, Billy-Joe agreed.

“We must ask Zinfandor, who that woman is” Arundle thoughtfully said.

“Doesn't make sense most likely, we are not able to show him a picture of her. Besides, Zinfandor will probably block off. He doesn't want to be confronted with his gloomy past, I'd say”, Billy-Joe replied.

“Well, I did see that woman as clear as I see you now in front of me, although it was dark”, Arundle insisted and went on thoughtfully – “however, I didn't see anything, at best I heard the breathing of the sea and the like...”

“Right - in the dream things were not real. We knew already that we saw things, we couldn't really see. After all, it was dark night and we could hardly see our hand before the eyes, but the sarcophagus we saw and we

saw Zinfandor with his bags full of piles of coloured papers...” Billy-Joe confirmed.

“It’s somewhat strange the seminar our Honourables do offer. Thus, you see the ground of things. We weren’t able to stun anymore. Things are taken for granted. That is, if I may say so...” she paused - “honestly, if we told someone outside – he’d call us crazy, while we think this is normal...” Arundle struggled in vain for the right words.

“The procedure is made clear to us. We see, perhaps for the first time, behind the dream scenery, while I think the most thrilling idea is that you look out into another world, while someone’s looking over here at the same time or even more precise - his dream is my reality and my reality is his dream.”

“Yes, and this you have do imagine multi-dimensional” Billy-Joe picked up the thread. “At the same time an undefined multitude of dreamers from all sorts of worlds dream of as many undefined multitudes of realities at the same time - while another undefined multitude of dreamers gets involved likewise. The functioning of a guardian angel thus probably is established, in which many of us do believe. There, an alter ego (other image of a person) is dreaming for his I, and embraces it in his very world.”

“...and may visit it once in a while in a dream, just to complete the confusion...” Arundle agreed. “Such has to be clarified once, and therefore the seminar of our two Honourables is helpful – well, it did help me. Others might see it different, could well be...”

“With that much run after...” Billy-Joe put in “I’m sure you are not alone with that, nor am I. We are all the same – whether only here on that island or everywhere is still kind of a question, besides...”

Those coloured paper bundles were put into another bed out of the sarcophagus and into the safe, and a watchmen’s service was arranged around the clock. The strong room was equipped with the most modern alarm installation, and was the latest model just as the safe, which had been delivered only some weeks ago. A fact -

those in the secret should have become alarmed right away.

There were guards available for the Convertors' Island who were idle during the intermission of Conversion. Thus the janitor, who was responsible for them anyway, decided to have them take over the duties in the offices as well. Everything was done this way to protect the precious property.

Another lesson of those fancy dream dancers was on the verge, while some were longing for them already. What would happen this time? Would they dig even deeper into the matter? Was that possible at all?

Arundle was hoping for a confirmation and deepening of her theory of the parallel worlds from the previous session. She somehow figured the interrelation between dream worlds and realities to be the key to the secret of time.

Otherwise, there were no sound results, except that potion, by means of which beings of flesh and blood could be brought back into their time.

Everything else was pure magic, they employed of course, without much thinking.

The Anti Petrification Potion was an invention of the researchers from the Isle of Wisdom-tooth. The apparatus was still available and could be operated at any time.

All their activities were bound backwards intending the normalisation of the flow of time. Still the time began to run away. Whether in far Laptopia or here at home in the depth of the ocean. All their different approaches they had put aside for good reasons. Be it the bionic supplementing technology, able to stop or even reverse the aging process, however transforming a living being into a monstrous passionless ogre.

The worst practice of all that was threatening were those 'Time-Exchange-Account-Converters', stealing the lifetime of the masses in favour of a small ruling class. A procedure likely to come as the researchers learnt when they got lost in space by accident.

Was such practice to come or was it just threatening as a possibility among others? Had they been to a parallel world, without sound connection to this one?

Thus, it was their magic that made them so attractive for their opponents over here, Arundle concluded her musings. She forgot about of many a special gift being practised in the School of Inbetween, and might be even a better or truer reason for them to be here.

Perhaps things were interrelated and connected unknowingly a wholly different way – not only with her and her friends, but also with all her fellow students.

That way, Arundle hoped to get further and therefore she was looking forward to the upcoming lesson.

It was her Magic Bow, after all, who opened up for them, and began to talk about his discernments, who had been always closed up, no matter how positive their relation otherwise was.

Once again, Arundle felt like at the beginning of something great. No matter how deep her gaze went, no matter how much she experienced and recognized, - she knew that she knew nothing, and that she was not alone with this knowledge. This was most likely her most important discernment.

The suggestive small talk of the Honourables started – uncaring of the chatting and laughing audience, still looking for a somewhat comfortable seat.

Tables and chairs had been replaced by mattresses. Only the desk remained set and couldn't be removed, thus, Billy-Joe was sitting cross-legged on top while Arundle had her legs swing, holding Pooty on her lap, who couldn't stand the tight Pouch.

As guardian of the Magic Stone Pooty was in his element and held the latter tight in his little front paws, while the light emitting from the stone made him transparent as if a gloriole had grown around him. Had he seen himself he'd been very proud.

The Magic Bow was resting in comfort across Billy-Joe's lap. His red eye was sparkling. Energy was pulsating noticeably and also visibly, when a flow of golden arrows shot off unbelievably fast one after one (how else could Billy-Joe have done it?) - and was thereafter blossoming down from the high dome of the great Hall like a mild golden shower.

All who managed to catch an arrow were shining up as well and became shiny incarnated multiplicands of energy of the purest kind. Tender as if snow flakes the golden messengers came down. The bent heads straightened and enthusiasm replaced fear.

The professorial moaning and whispering turned into small talk, while the arrows reached their aims. They spread with it and formed epicentres building circles, which included everybody and expelled none.

The scenery might have reminded an outside visitor of an anthill or even better of a humming beehive – while this was only the beginning. Arundle meant to see another demonstration of her multi-world theory, however out of a different perspective and with another focus, which didn't deal with the interaction of dream-and reality-particles. That much she had understood, while that ridiculous sentence interfered with hypnotic powers. She became affected at once, feeling drawn into an entirely opposite direction, where she was asked to form a negation.

“Why could such not be said with simple words, people are able to understand? What is the meaning of negation?” Billy-Joe asked upset.

However, Arundle didn't mind. “There is a big difference if someone says ‘I know that I know nothing’ or if someone says ‘You know that I know nothing’ or even ‘I know that you know nothing’ – those are three big differences. It won't be done with some golden arrows. Such little energy can easily be sold as a conditioning drug.”

Billy-Joe wasn't sure, who was talking, he only knew that it was not him, and that he wanted to let know Arundle for some pushing reason he couldn't explain. He feared for her dear imperturbability and didn't want to

risk. Such mode seemed him a very necessary protection he vitally required.

He still didn't want to risk her imperturbability, no matter whether due to his fault, because the true conditions were uncovered in a way, even Arundle could accept.

However, he didn't manage to bow over to her, who was not a hand's breadth away and had the legs swing carelessly, thus his heart opened as if one of the golden arrows had hit him right in the middle. All the more he tried to communicate.

At last she realized, whether it was because of his endeavours or because of her inner drive, he couldn't say. Still her attention made him happy, although the words he heard didn't fit to his mood.

"If you tell me, that you know that you know nothing, than I also know, that you know nothing. Therefore I can truly tell you, that I also know, that I know nothing, thus you can say to me that you also know that I know nothing. Yes, we both then know that from each other, and do know about the coquetry, while nobody ever said that sentence, because he was convinced of its truth. Quite the opposite, if someone says - 'I know that I know nothing' - he says in fact that he knows very much, and that he knows in any case more than others, who not even know that they know nothing."

As if he ever had denied such, Billy-Joe wondered. Playing with thoughts it was - nothing else. Arundle took the pose of a school-master and jumped about in a grey waving coat in a cloud of chalk dust in front of a huge board, scribbling hardly readable signs and letters here and there, until she was somewhat satisfied, and put away the tiny piece of chalk that was left - turning to the audience:

"Two bodies are congruent when they match. They are parallel however, when they are alike in their immanent relations. The relation of size plays an immanent role, and if it differs then it has to differ in any way."

Stunned Billy-Joe looked up, stunned and irritated were also others sitting near. For those further away he

couldn't say anything, because their mimes were swallowed by the cloud of chalk, still not completely sunken to the ground yet. – ready to blow up again at any time as soon as the teaching being was challenged to deliver new evidence.

“With simple bodies the problem might be irrelevant. More difficult it becomes with more complex bodies with an own interior life. This we will handle later, much later. Today we want to understand the difference between congruence and parallelism, while the theory of parallel world implies a most likely false assumption, while everybody starts thinking of some kind of doubling and ask himself rightly where this was going to happen. First, we think of a temporal shifting and a special overlapping and don't pay attention how such behave with past and future. Some kind of river is the basic model for this kind of thinking. A river wherein each drop is identical with any other drop floating jointly side by side. Parallelism can refrain from such equal size completely. While here not dimensions but relations count. All measure, angles, figures must relate only in proportion identical, no matter the scale they are based on. Thus two pictures of the same TV programme on differently sized screens relate identical whether the screen is as small as a thumb nail or high up to the ceiling.”

“Now I do understand why they favour TV over there in Laptopia” absurdly came to Billy-Joe's mind.

“A whole world is being built up in the solar system” Arundle went on – “with amazing parallels to the oxygen atom. Let's assume a complete parallelism then we would get an entirely different idea of what to understand of parallel worlds.”

Signs of disbelief, sounded up: “just absurd...”

“The size alone is the proof...”

“You see now where the limits of mathematics are...”

“Well it's all here on the board” – Arundle pointed to the board, where she had calculated the relations of both sides and came to the same result.

“The relations in the solar system and those in the oxygen atom coincide, as far as mass and measures are concerned, while any other is beyond our limits.”

“Even the Earth we can spot in the atom” she added triumphantly.

“The Earth is the electron in the third orbital or is it the fourth already? Well, doesn’t matter. Dwellings and inhabitants we couldn’t yet discover with our means, neither geographical structure, nor can we escape the time, that’s clear, but otherwise! It’s amazing, though, isn’t it?”

“Such you do learn with the Advisor or is it the close acquaintance with the Magic Bow?” Billy-Joe was thinking, and earned a questioning gaze, which made him to wipe out the negative connotation that slipped in somehow. He didn’t want to devaluate the brilliant spiritual performance, no matter where it came from.

9. The Trojan Horse

It was high time to have Penelope involved. After all, the move of the treasure was Zinfandor’s fault. Arundle’s and Billy-Joe’s joint dream during the meditative late session of the two Honourables was taken serious. They didn’t skip even the slightest detail and compared what they had experienced step by step. Both didn’t know more about that mysterious woman than they had dreamed of her. It took some time and rehearsals with Tibor until Billy-Joe recalled something that might help them further.

“We took that warning very serious, as you can see. Arundle now confirms as well how real that vision was” Dorothea put in. “We went to the secret chamber after you had been visualising the pilferage but couldn’t find anything wrong. “Still, we thought it a good idea to have our precious property move” Dorothea went on.

“Yes, therefore, all that trouble, and guarding-system. Our certificates have been stored in the new most modern vault and are guarded around the clock by now. Only when our watchmen are needed on Conversors’ Island, some students take over the guarding”, Marsha, the Commissary Headmistress, added to what her Vice-Headmistress just said.

Penelope was somewhat irritated. “Perhaps poor Zinfandor has no knowledge of the trouble he is in – at least I hope so... You cannot doubt such clear visions, and I know that my Zinfandor was involved in sinister circumstances. After all, I picked him up out of the dumps, so to speak. There is still a hell of a lot of work to do. Things are by no means settled yet.”

“I’m glad you look at it that way and don’t blame us for what ever, dear Penelope. Let’s hope our precautions prove unnecessary, and the whole affair turns out to be a hollow bubble. We might have interfered substantially into the gloomy planning already, while special attention seems to be arbitrary...”

“That means special care. All our guests will have to be checked thoroughly, more cautiously than ever. Since that big feast we lost control, I’m afraid” Marsha supplemented Dorothea’s remarks.

“I’m going to have a word with Zinfandor, anyway” Penelope said. “Although he closes up as soon as the talk is about his past. He is, but so confused the poor bloke. – I cannot see any danger emitting from his side, thought...” she stopped for an instant – “dangerous he never was...”

“Without him we would have died in the storm or would still be sitting on that rotten island” Arundle confirmed.

Billy-Joe was thoughtfully chewing a tough piece of meat. They were all guests for dinner at the Humperdijks after a strange, somewhat thrilling afternoon with the two Honourables, and were eating with hearty appetite, although Marsha wasn’t well known for her abilities as a cook. Adrian liked it raw, anyway. Still all helped themselves considerably – meditation obviously stimulated the appetite.

“I think what I said was not quite correct”

Billy-Joe mumbled, still busy chewing the piece of meat – “I have met that mysterious woman of our vision before – at least once. Tibor or Pooty might be able to confirm, what I suspect. When we were searching that London Office-tower for the address on Dorothea’s note – we of course didn’t believe that the address was genuine and we would meet that Brotherhood of Infernalialia right there...”

“Right, if you hadn’t been standing in front of that door and dared not ringing, while I did for you...”

“...and there we were standing right in front of that woman...”

“exactly, and this woman could well be the woman I saw down in the labyrinth in my vision... - well, you couldn’t actually see, but you could feel somehow...”

Dorothea was nodding reassuringly.

“...And this was the same woman I was corresponding with. I had her even on the phone and on the screen. She introduced herself as Assistant Chairwoman, her name was Säel or Stäel, yes, right – Viola de Stäel was her name.”

“Would you happen to recognize her, you and Tibor and Pooty, and you of course, Arundle?” Dorothea wanted to know.

“Would be worth a trial” Billy-Joe thoughtfully waved his head.

“Something else – Professor Baranasias announced his coming” Dorothea went on. “You know that person who is keeping the majority of School Certificates, that is - he pretends to do so, while things are not so clear any more. He wants to negotiate, and puts us under pressure, I reckon, and he is coming not alone but is accompanied by a woman, while he seems to have separated from his late assistant.

Since we were chosen for that World Cultural Heritage and found loads of School shares, he obviously sees his position weakening. The so-called majority doesn’t mean that much any more, and that he seems to realize.”

“Do we let him in?” Arundle asked somewhat rhetorical, as she knew the answer.

With a new face and some internal achievements – thus, a widely mechanical heart was beating in his breast and his sinews and joints in arms and legs consisted of best Titan – the man had become someone else, while he still wasn’t used to his funny new name.

The woman in his company did the cosmetic rejuvenation well. Face and body could compete with a well built slender thirty-years-old, while she still spread that diabolical charm, many men weren’t able to resist.

Thus, she had remained more herself, while Waldschmitt became someone else. Even his voice and the eyes and fingerprints had been altered with great care and artistic ability, while those trials failed which intended to isolate and eliminate his aging gene. Still the result was somewhat satisfactory. No one of his former life would recognize him. His new vita as Canadian Professor with emigrational background stood sound and solid, so he believed.

Quite different things went with Viola de Stäel. That little scene in the London office turned now out as an obstacle. She was no ace in the sleeve any more but a threat to the mission. However, the visitors had no idea of this, when they set foot on the grounds of the Isle of Wisdom-tooth.

Malicious Marduk decided to change masks, because the false Professor ran out of control. Therefore, Marduk had Viola de Stäel renovated and overhauled, and made her his wilful factotum, as such he had her attract the former Waldschmitt alias Baranasias anew. ‘Where hatred is lodging, devotion is not far’ was his sinister allegation.

Waldschmitt couldn't stand the dismay of the woman beforehand. This had been the main reason for his murderous fantasies and desires, and was the true reason, why he finally fled.

'Fire must be fought with fire', Malicious Marduk decided, who disliked Waldschmitt's (alias Baranasias') obvious favouring of that island woman, which didn't fit into his plans he noticed, when things almost went out of control again.

To be on the safe side Malicious Marduk had himself proceed into Viola de Stäel's sinister soul – a site rather strange even for him, who could stand a lot. The new location however, made even him shudder, - although he felt welcome and respected at once.

Malicious Marduk parked the assistant, Rudolfus Catalanius, meanwhile in hospital, where the latter got a complete set of new organs. This time, not his appearance was the reason but his lungs needed replacement for heavy smoking, and so did his liver for heavy drinking, while heart and kidneys were in bad shape as well - surely a strenuous cure and not without risk. Either the body could stand the renewal or not – that would be it, then. The probationer would know soon enough.

The transplantations were a branch of research the Brotherhood of Infernalía had been successfully practicing, and was thus taken over by the orthodox medicine right away and one to one, while such operations had been impossible some years ago. However, thanks to the bionic combination of organic and mechanic devices and spare parts, the surgical operation techniques made a mighty leap ahead. The new ways were spreading immediately around the globe, and everybody who could afford it had his or her interior corrected as to the new standards based on the research results of the Brotherhood of Infernalía.

Viola de Stäel didn't suffer under the guest she was obliged to host inside, nor did she mind the tasks he

asked her to perform – quite opposite, she loved it, because such demands were up to her nature.

Thus, the grief in the man's heart melted like snow in the spring sun. Tender cooing and adulating gazes before long caused effect. Soon all sorrows were forgotten and the old passion renewed.

This side of Malicious Marduk's plans worked fine, while a second task had to be fulfilled. Would Baranasias withstand the tempting of the island woman? Soon he would know.

Being PR-manager, Dorothea welcomed the odd guests right at the gangway and helped them through entry formalities and procedures that were specially designed for the purpose - as if the Isle of Wisdom-tooth was some kind of sovereign state.

At length and with care the visitors were informed about their rights and plights while staying on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth. Almost everything was forbidden, if not explicitly authorized. Without guide they weren't allowed a single step, or leaving or entering buildings. Walks were prohibited as well as contacts with the students or personnel, and of course no photographing or videoing and the like were permitted.

"I will be always at your service" Dorothea exclaimed with her sweetest voice. "We will take care for you on your short stay as pleasant as possible. Ay...

I now show you to your suite" she went on and rushed ahead towards the black flat building with the shining roof in the sunlight of the bright day.

Two huge leather trolleys rumbled behind, far too big for an overnight stay.

"Here you find everything for your welcome, and if anything is missing, do not refrain from contacting me. Myself or an assistant will be with you right away.

In about an hour I will pick you up for dinner, and bring you in touch with your counterparts. I think, three hours will be enough to answer all your questions and queries. After that you surely will be exhausted and wish to rest. Tomorrow morning I will fetch you at quarter to

nine and take you to your aircraft” – thus, she spoke and diminished.

Could Roland, alias Henry, withstand that woman? The staccato of her talk had been all too intense – not even the hidden Marduk had noticed anything remarkable in Baranasias’ behaviour, and the coming hours were able to disperse all objections. When Dorothea ringed an hour later, she looked into after-glowing relaxed faces.

The dinner was taken in a small circle. Few selected Professors of the School of Inbetween were invited, formally dressed and very careful with what they said. For tactical reasons Penelope M’gamba was accompanied by Zinfandor Leblanc.

The sight of his former mistress caused great pain to the man. He couldn’t stand her presence for five minutes, when he was overwhelmed by nausea. He rushed away and with him Penelope, who came back after a while, shaking her head when meeting questioning gazes: “My poor sweetheart won’t be coming back – it’s the summer-cholera spreading all about the island these days. I took him to the infirmary, just to be on the safe side, you never know these days with the infection and all that...”

The assembled exchanged polite formalities, without really saying anything, while the guests of course were eager to get to the point.

Viola de Stäel couldn’t refrain from nasty remarks against her competitor, while the latter paid back in same currency, thus their combat was running the show, and made Baranasias look clumsy. Only when the desert was served he managed to close in on Scholasticus Slyboots, and managed to worm secrets out of him. However the false Professor didn’t come about real news. Nothing, that wasn’t known already.

“In matters of the World Cultural Heritage you better see my wife.”

“Certainly, I know that. You see, I’m running out of time. We all won’t become younger. Therefore I want to frankly admit something of great importance to me. I beg you let me participate in your research. For every year of added lifetime, you will grant to me, you will get

back one of your shares. What do you say – is that no fair deal?”

Scholasticus pretended to think deeply. In fact he was wholly stunned and tried to hide. A person who was able to ask such a question, must get his information from somewhere.

No one had yet shown interest in this aspect of their research work. The focus had been on the opposite, they had been searching for measures of getting hold of the fast running time.

How could they comply with such a desire? Scholasticus meant to know the proper way towards that aim, but it was plastered with stones and was leading right into a peculiar wasteland.

“A whole year is by far unreal, you mean perhaps a share a day, that would be somewhat realistic. Who do you think we are? We cannot do wonders...”

“Well, certainly that’s why we have to talk...”

“Your surreal ideas prove your complete ignorance, you do have not the faintest idea of what our research can perform”, Scholasticus said in an air of supremacy.

“Days and weeks we managed years ago” the false Professor went on – “what do you mean by – no idea – we knew very well what we were doing, but had rudely been outnumbered and cruelly stopped by envious competitors who destroyed us eventually. I think of our sensational mice-experiment. We would be much further and the set up would be suitable by now leading to a firm procedure.”

Again, Scholasticus pretended surprise, however, that wasn’t necessary, because this was indeed new to him. He hadn’t heard of such experiments.

“You and your harmless mice.”- he boasted back. “From there the road is sheer endless to the sacred lands. – A beginning it was, but not more. You don’t want to compare yourself with a mouse, do you?” Scholasticus asked in a provocative air.

Baranasias alias Waldschmitt cocked up bewildered. Was his counterpart bluffing? Did he let out too much, while talking himself in rage? He had to be careful. They were here for a much different purpose, and

that he knew all too well. Thus, he tried to give the conversation another turn – away from such fragile subject.

He mentioned the UNESCO-project, knowing well that his counterpart wasn't interested. Instead he handed him over to his companion, who impressed Scholasticus more than he would admit. Perhaps she was able to get more out of him.

Baranasias turned to the woman at last, who was the PR-manager. Dorothea was steaming with anger because of Viola de Stäel for the provocative behaviour. Arundle hardly managed to keep her under control, and didn't pay attention to that man, who once had been her father, and still was, in a way.

He felt awkward in his daughter's presence and couldn't concentrate on Dorothea, although he would have liked. Fatherly pride arose in him, he pushed however aside for tactical reasons. He and his company had in fact to bridge the time, and use it to become informed of the latest developments, as far as that UNESCO business was concerned. – This brilliant coup of that charming person, he had to admit, while he wondered what his witty daughter had to do among the illustrious circle of Professors.

“May I introduce you to Arundle” a voice was heard from the side. “She is like a daughter to us..., yes, like a natural daughter. We do not have any children of our own unfortunately. All the more we are happy to have Arundle. If her mother agreed we would have adopted her.- Well, it's a bit late now, as she is coming of age soon.

“Yes, a real petite lady is our cute little tomboy meanwhile...” a tender gaze met Arundle, thus, she blushed and smiled back.

Such tunes were new to her. As far as she could remember adoption had never been a subject amongst them. Thus, she thought her part and played her role in that comedy.

“A real bit of a tomboy...” How funny that was, but might serve the purpose and cause old Roland losing countenance. Taking a piece of property away from him,

was like snatching the feeding dish away from a hungry Pit-bull, no matter if he cared for her.

Instead of being informed about the UNESCO project, Baranasias alias Waldschmitt learnt what was going on in his former family. Arundle's mother had married again and was dreaming her old dream of a sound family anew, while adoption didn't fit at all into the picture, no matter if Arundle ever came back home.

"Here, there will be always your true home" the former Mrs. Waldschmitt wrote and phoned with tears in her eyes.

Arundle liked Dorothea and Scholasticus very much, but not as father and mother. If she had had the choice she would have joined the Hare-family. They were a real family, she'd loved to be adopted by, as sister and daughter likewise.

Furtive gazes at the watch were indicating that the night was on the march. "Tomorrow will be a long day" Adrian Humperdijk said, who had been quiet all evening and so had been his wife, the Commissary Headmistress, who had to rein her temper many times. They had agreed on such arrangement with Dorothea.

The guests were all too willing to follow the signs of departure and retired with Dorothea, who guided them to their suite, not without a formal good-night procedure.

For the last time the careful PR Manager checked on the watchmen in front of the strong room with the activated alarm system, before she retired as well. She was last anyway.

However Dorothea only pretended to go to bed. Behind the vault in the teachers' lounge there was hidden the secret centre of communication and control. There she went and found Arundle, Scholasticus, and Billy-Joe with Pooty sitting in front of blinking monitors and screens, of many infra-red cameras, which had been installed on each neuralgic point, all about the sarcophagus and the possible paths leading there, well hidden and protected. And to make the disguise perfect, the sarcophagus had been filled with fake copies of those

certificates, while the genuine ones were safely located in the new safe.

The time passed by – toilsome the handles of the clock moved upwards. The twelfth hour was near. Those, who were fashionable among the black magicians saw his or her hour now had come.

Dorothea gave Scholasticus a furtive push because he was on the verge of falling asleep. “I think, something is going on” she said pointing with her chin at the monitor in the middle.

The others rushed by. Pooty place himself right in front of the screen. “Get away, we cannot see.” Billy-Joe’s big brown hand grabbed for the witty possum and placed the protesting carefully on his head right into his curly brown hair.

“Is it better that way?” he asked . “...and what’s it like up there?”

Had there been anything on the screen they had all seen it. However there was nothing. Dorothea must have been mistaken. “We have to keep an eye on each monitor. It might even be better if you returned to your monitor and keep an eye on it, as we concluded.”

Only Pooty remained where he was. Billy-Joe balanced him back to the other end where his monitor was located. “Four eyes see more than two” the little lad yelled – and indeed the next report came from their corner. This time it was no false alarm. Clearly - dark shadows appeared, who were carefully sneaking through the radius of the infra-red camera.

“It’s just like it was in my dream” Arundle whispered, while she stepped to Billy-Joe. “There are the three of them – and now you also recognize them. How did they manage to pick up Zinfandor?”

Then the three had left the screen. The cameras weren’t movable. Deep blackness swallowed the invaders. If they kept pace they soon would appear on the next monitor to the right.. – And there they were! “Holy smoke, they know exactly how to proceed in such darkness” Scholasticus whispered.

“Well, yes”, Dorothea agreed – “They are beings of the darkness after all...”

“Can you take that for granted?” Scholasticus asked.

“Seems so” she answered: “If they go on like this, it won’t take much longer.”

“What shall we do? Shall we initiate invaders’ alarm?” Scholasticus wanted to know.

“My idea is to let them go” Dorothea denied: “We let them go with the falsified papers. They cannot do much harm with them. All certificates are marked on the back as copies.”

“Are you certain, that all certificates have been replaced? Is there no error possible?” Scholasticus had not been involved in the move or the construction work, and he didn’t mean to confuse his wife. He could answer the questions himself. He only caused Dorothea to feel uncertain and uneasy now, and had her rush out of the control centre. She went over to the safe to prove with her own eyes again that she kept the correct papers. That would soon turn out to be a terrible mistake.

For the time being, Dorothea was lucky. “Before tomorrow morning at eight o’clock nothing can happen. The time-lock can’t be opened before. So you have to be patient, but then you can dive in – you know, like Dagobert Duck – ha, ha...” the guard declared and made signs of swimming and diving and couldn’t stop laughing.

Thus, Dorothea missed the raiding of the sarcophagus. She returned when the thieves were on the way back and disappeared from the last monitor. From there, she knew, they could take the elevator straight up to the guest house and their suite.

That night neither Dorothea nor Scholasticus closed an eye. Could she dare to let the thieves go with their prey? Could they do harm with it while here? Was the idea of making copies perhaps wrong?

Dorothea repented of not having involved a reliable expert, because there was no such person on the island. She was no expert either, although she knew a lot by now.

How many papers had they copied? Vaguely Dorothea remembered that question about the dates of

first delivery, that had been an argument with that former student who wanted to see his shares.

When she negated, the man had become quite upset. She had considered his attempt as a trial of getting access to the vault.

What, if something else was behind? Something worth the risk of a robbery? Even then she had been careful and suspicious. What was the matter with such delivery dates the former student was interested in? Perhaps even the knowledge was some kind of value alone.

While copying nobody cared of such details. The students doing the job didn't mind what they copied.

Were these dates in the end precious as such?

"No, Scholasticus, we won't let them go with their prey tomorrow. This snake is not hissing me into the face sarcastically once more, - not me..." she brought her musings to the point.

At best she had rushed right into the suite. However, it was deep night. She had to wait until the daybreak in a couple of hours. - "Alas, nothing though... In the end they are gone for good by tomorrow morning, when I'm standing in front of their door. We must catch them in flagrant, - and you., Scholasticus, are coming with me."

"What do you mean, who's coming?" he murmured half asleep.

"You, of course - who else. Rely just for once on my feeling."

In front of the strong room the changing of the guards took place, thus there was enough personnel. Dorothea advised the watchmen briefly what she intended to do, and the headman ordered his troop towards the guesthouse to take care of the doors and windows. Then a special team invaded the premise, and found the thieves sound asleep, while the sacks with the prey were stuffed under the beds.

The couple remained safeguarded until the morning, while the sacks were taken away. Penelope would have to have a serious word with Zinfandor, the Slyboots decided.

As soon as the helicopter landed the thieves were deported, not really handcuffed but carefully guided by the guards. For protection of the aircrew a watchman accompanied the flight. No information was yet laid against the couple, as this had caused a lot of paperwork and other trouble. No damage was caused anyway, thanks to the future-directed way of dreaming during the recent seminar of the two Honourables.

That same day Dorothea began to investigate what it was all about such delivery dates. However, she couldn't find anything appropriate in the Internet.

Then she examined the certificates carefully and prudently, as soon as the time-lock allowed it. She was sitting like Dagobert Duck amidst the piles of coloured papers in that small strong-room behind a tiny table right in the middle with the necessary equipment like magnifier and pocket-lens. There she sat checking the bills and compared the originals with the faked, she had taken with her, to find out. Had there not been the print-on on the reverse, she'd hardly noticed any difference.

Was that the answer to the quest? If you managed to multiply the reverse of the original and glue them together with the faked fronts, you'd come to an acceptable duplicate, nobody would spot right away. You would need an expert to find out about the doubled thickness. This was very unlikely because those papers experienced considerable changes over the years of printing.

Only those who knew exactly at what time a specific paper was used could notice the falsification, but who was able nowadays? Even the deletion of the print-on would do, as nobody cared of the reverse as long as the front showed everything you expected. Even experts wouldn't be able to tell, which print-on had been due in a certain period.

In the aftermath Dorothea thanked her instinct, for the precautions taken. Otherwise the market would be spoilt with such falsifications, and soon the originators would be spotted.

At lunch she told Scholasticus her conclusions and was highly praised. "Looks like the handwriting of

Malicious Marduk, the guy with the thousand masks. He is well known for his macabre confusions. I'm afraid, we aren't yet rid of him. Thanks to you we might have spotted him once more. Perhaps we even manage to get hold of him. – Well, in fact, I am not optimistic, however, we will do everything we can to push him back to where he belongs. Let us hope and pray that the price we have to pay is not insurmountably high.” Scholasticus referred to Walter's tragic fate.

Malicious Marduk could feel those gates, there were at least four – weaker the ones, stronger the others – not really inviting, but without strong protection. He decided to take his time. The flight attendant was part of the plan. The closer the connection, the easier the transaction. Unnoticed transitions were the safest.

Sudden raids often led to bad results, caused sickness or death, and nobody took advantage. The most convenient transition was when he was welcomed, when he felt invited as a guest. When he was regarded as a present and gift by stressing on available characteristics. The louder the voice of the conscience cried, the more the lost soul screamed, the more difficult the stay became.

Malicious Marduk looked back on a long trail of seductions, and thus, the watchman Will Wiesle became his latest victim, who had been commanded on board of the helicopter in order to guide the deported couple back to the mainland. Had he slept like his comrades, a bad fate had been avoided. However, nobody knew, and that was bad luck. His bad characteristics would perhaps never show up. Like in most people good and evil balanced more or less.

Viola de Stäel felt uneasy. Something precious was taken from her. However, such motion passed – nothing real had changed. Everything was as before – perhaps a little weaker, though, but that could well have to do with the misfortune, they had to overcome.

They well had escaped right away, however passion overwhelmed them after the successful coup, and afterwards they fell asleep.

Watchman Will Wiesle used the opportunity while being in Sydney for visit to his former wife, who was married again. He did so pretending to see his children, which was his right. He was allowed one afternoon per month spending with them.

The children were at school and the new husband at work, thus, he met his former wife alone. He was not allowed to do so, because his former wife was afraid of him and had divorced for being spanked regularly.

Repentance overcame him only afterwards, when it was too late - each time. One word gave the other and before long he was clubbing the poor woman again. Lucky though, a neighbour overheard the attack and called the police. The fierce man was arrested.

That was the reason why watchman Will Wiesle spent his four days off in prison instead of taking leave as had intended.

Lucky him, the assault didn't expand, thus, he managed to be back in time for service, and was right away ordered to Conversiors' Island, because the moon eclipse was on the verge again.

This way, Malicious Marduk managed to enter the life on the islands somewhat organic. Will Wiesle was well known for his excessive behaviour and was employed on a rectification basis only. His violent nature was substituted by a somewhat harmless, well-natured mood, and made him suitable for social behaviour. It could well be that his former wife had been the wrong character, and he would have become happy with another woman.

Unfortunately the service on the faraway island reduced the possibilities to a great extend. Among the personnel there were very few unmarried women in the proper age, and students were taboo anyway. The watchmen weren't even allowed to look at them.

Will Wiesle's hot-headed temper didn't suit Malicious Marduk, but endangered the operation he intended. The mean monster had to work on that and used the upcoming quiet days on Conversiors' Island to do so.

In a time-lapse process he had to show Watchman Will Wiesle the ways of lunacy and the fun of sly malice, to make him gain more satisfaction in what he was destroying.

Otherwise, he was very satisfied with the manoeuvre as such. Despite considerable rejections and slash backs he finally made his way into the stronghold of the enemy. As long as he could operate undisguised, he would achieve a lot – either by collecting information or by confusing the prevailing harmony. He might even be able to pull the whole project over to the dark side of existence.

However, he was missing his army of Miseriors badly. Being all alone on the scene, limited his chances considerably, he had to admit.

There was some likeliness between the good and the evil side of the world. The evil side dreamt as well and wished and hoped and longed. However, it is the opposite of what the good side's intending, while the intensity was the same.

And thus it does happen that beings wake up on the wrong side. And because the power of the good side is finally stronger, it happens to the evil more often. As much as the evil spirits try to improve the evil, they have to consider more than once that they achieved the opposite of what they intended.

While Malicious Marduk concentrated on his task, he didn't realize how his host became penetrated. Amidst the fountain of love no space was left for hatred. Thus, Malicious Marduk himself felt threatened in his existence. His march of triumph inside the Trojan Horse could easily become a trap.

The flames of passion under Marduk's influence diminished with the defeat. The thieves both lost their face in combat with those islanders, - the representatives of the School of Inbetween. They had been too greedy and had felt too sure, while a strange tooth gnawed at them almost like a vampire's, and made them feeble and vulnerable.

In vain Baranasias tried to beat that ugly weakness, coming over him in the oddest circumstances, while Viola de Stäel mourned about that feeling of awareness and strength, she had felt on the way to the island, and missed so badly on the way back.

10. The Advisor descends

"It's gonna start all over again" Adrian complaint. The boat with the Conversiors disappeared in the mist of the dawn. No waving and hollering could alter such fact. The crew or the passengers either didn't want to notice them or they couldn't for whatever reason. To Cory such behaviour appeared somewhat strange. Things like that hadn't happened for a good while.

Adrian and Cory had left Australis in time, and proceeded without delay back to Conversiors' Island. They knew the gap of time by now. Adrian claimed to be able to spot the difference up to the second. For that reason he had acquired a waterproof chronometer he was wearing around his neck like a protective amulet.

Their re-conversion should never hit him in surprise, and hadn't done, so far. This time it had been the other way round, they had been too early. Therefore they did a round around the island, and had a look into those caves, where the refugees had fled from those shark-squadrons. By now you couldn't imagine things like that to happen, but had been real just about one or two years ago.

What could be done? On foot the two reconverted Conversiors made their way towards the nearest outpost,

hoping to find a means of communication there to contact the main base.

The guards had left with the Conversiors, Adrian knew for sure, while they left behind their equipment.

They found indeed a fully equipped rescue station, with everything you could think of, for people in distress. Even a safety raft they found, inflatable and all around protected against the cruel waves of the storm stricken seas.

The sea however, wasn't storm stricken at all, but wavered in gentle waves towards the sandy beach, where they rolled the white ton in order to gain the deeper water. Inflated the raft was soon, but then they noticed that there was no mode of motive power. They could drift with the waves but couldn't direct towards an aim.

"Thus, we could as well remain, where we are" Cory agreed, when Adrian explained the situation. They had spent the whole day, they realized, when the sun settled in the far west. Down here in the South the night came fast on velvet paws so to speak, as soon as the sun sank into the ocean.

"Tomorrow morning we think about something else, if we aren't missed by then" Adrian said.

"We should be missed already by now" Cory Hare answered pitifully. Adrian tried to comfort her and cheer her up. "The best would be if we didn't think about it. It's like it is, after all."

Before they settled in the beds of the guards, Adrian shot some rockets up in the air, when it was completely dark outside.

A few of the many who were having their evening walk over there, might see the signals and act appropriate. As everybody knew that there was no one allowed on Conversiors Island as soon as the period was over.

The two stranded had the emergency packs, they found, for supper then tried to sleep. They were still feeling strain of the last days. It was quite a trip each time still, despite of their deep devotion towards sea and submarine life.

Adrian lit an open fire in front of the gate, to show the rescue team the proper way, just in case. No wild animals were there anymore. Only some seabirds bred in the rocks near the seaside.

Past midnight they woke up by voices. There they were – their rescuers. Flory had alarmed Arundle when her sister didn't come home, and Arundle negotiated with her Magic Bow, who consulted the Magic Stone. For a magic rescue – (yes, the Magic Bow knew at once what all was about!) – the distance was far too short.

Adrian and Cory were well, therefore the rescue team could take its time, and Billy-Joe and Tibor decided to take the boat.

No hour later the absentees reported what they experienced. Nobody could explain how this could have happened.

“Those guards know the amount of Convertors and check before departure” the Headmistress explained. However, she had expected her husband by accident a day later, she admitted subdued.

“Basically such a mistake is always possible. Well, we are going to inquire the personnel and have them instructed again. Who doesn't stagger exhausted out of the bush, doesn't seem to exist. While there are by now sometimes even three getting off the deep sea.”

“We are just too modest” Adrian confirmed what Arundle said on behalf of the sea dwellers.

“Things turned out fine at last” Cory put in. “Nothing really happened, after all. It was just the sudden shock, when we were all alone like on Robinson's Island...”

“Bedtime's due” Professor Stone made himself heard. He had the four-hours block seminar on the next day in mind. When he was going to lecture with his dear colleague Professor Bow. He eventually would interfere into the affairs of human beings, which was not his general intention. However, this time he had a special reason. His advice was meant for the Somnors and to a certain extend also for the Animators still sitting in the round, as they would soon experience a glimpse of what was going to happen, but therefore they had to sleep.

Only a few had had an encounter with the Advisor. That is, they might have experienced him but didn't take notice, because the Advisor was of meek appearance, little more but a vague shadow most of the time.

Not all had Arundle's empathy for the substantial. Thus, such a shadow could well pass by unnoticed.

"The Advisor is near" was the message Arundle understood. As far as she remembered, had she never met him on earth, not on the present earth anyway. Therefore, his visit was something very special, all the more because of the preliminary announcement by the Magic Stone.

Once upon a time, Cory and Flory met Arundle in a dream and thus became acquainted not only with each other, but with the secrets of dreaming as such. However, now the sleep was fleeing them, most likely because of the dramatic whereabouts and happenings. Arundle only faded away in the morning hours and fell into a dreamless deep sleep. However, in the deepest phase an odd little dream cocked up. She was dreaming that she dreamed. She dreamed in the dream of a voice – a voice she recognized as the Advisor's. The words she heard, however, didn't make sense – still they were accompanied by extraordinary meaning.

Her friends, the sisters Hare experienced a similar dream attack, she learned at a late breakfast in the dining room the next morning. They had also been confronted with such a strange voice.

"If this was a preliminary announcement, then we can expect quite something today" Arundle said and the sisters agreed eagerly.

They had skipped the lessons that morning so far and decided to do the same with the rest of the morning, which wasn't the way they usually acted, and get prepared for the afternoon. Thus, they sneaked to their favourite beach and swam out to their pontoon, and had the sun shine on them.

When they returned for lunch, Tibor caught up on them: "You have been searched all over the place,

especially you, Cory. I think it's about yesterday. They need your testimony."

Conscious of her guilt Cory rushed towards the Headmistress's Office, where the whole gang of watchmen was assembled to have their testimonies recorded. "We need your statement as well, perhaps next door with the secretary, then you needed wait" Dorothea suggested and pointed at the door.

Cory's statement was of minor importance. She confirmed in her own words what had been said by Adrian already. Nobody expected anything else of her. If there had been designs upon the incident, they would surely not find out by such an inquiry. However, thus were the regulations.

Cory noticed that it was high time for the block seminar. She rushed towards the lecture hall and arrived just in time, when the two Honourables settled on the centre desk. There was no chance to get there as well. The students were sitting tightly packed, and she had felt bad, if she had tried to make her way up front.

From afar she noticed her sister's face next to Tibor, Patagonia and Tika, as well as little Sandor and Tuzla, the new inseparable couple.

The Honourable Professor Bow was resting comfortably on Arundle's lap, while Pooty looked out of the Medicine Pouch the other Honourable presenting in his little paws, who was shining widely.

"Before we can start" Billy-Joe announced: "Where is Corinia Hare? We ask Cory Hare – if she is present already – to show up and report to the desk immediately."

"She might be still in the Headmistress's Office for her testimony" her sister Flory stated, while Arundle nodded affirmatively.

Cory waved fiercely and was handed over the heads of the crowd, with hallo and ado – thus it was easiest.

"Now we can start." The Sublimations circled the pedestal and started circling light-footed. A few instants later they lifted up to the ceiling, and moved shrieking

and yelling – as a green cloud over the heads - through the lecture hall.

Their joy inflamed the left-behinds and had them participate empathically, joining in with their voices, while many felt the itch in the legs but couldn't do. They had the fever in the blood unnoticed, waiting for the break out, which might come one day or never would. Not each gift became alive, but was oppressed instead, for whatever reason.

When the green whirl lowered to the ground, the Advisor stepped – somewhat dramatic –out of the circle, came to a halt right above the pedestal, and bowed. Arundle recognized him at once. He introduced himself in a low, but still far-reaching voice.

“It’s a great honour to be here” he said “I appreciate the hearty welcome and am willing to handle your problems, however, questions I cannot answer, at best can ask them. Such are the regulations. I have not made them.

My experience taught me that this arrangement is not only useful but also appropriate. Do not imagine the Almighty questionable. Better do not form yourself a picture of him or her.

If everything is possible, then everything is also impossible – that is clear, isn't it? Well, take it as a challenge and prepare your first philosophical discourse. Let's call it ‘The Prize Question of the Honourable Academy of Sciences of the Isle of Wisdom-tooth’ – sure enough with reference to the most famous one a couple of hundred years ago”, he said, and disappeared laughing in the dark ceiling above.

“That’s him, that is the old Advisor” Arundle exclaimed somewhat disappointed again. She knew of such behaviour. Whenever you felt like questioning the hard way, he disappeared.

“Keep that title in mind, take it as a kind of revelation, though” Arundle said in an air of importance, she knew why.

“Can someone write that title on the board eventually?”

“The Advisor said – no questions...”

“I only asked because I ...”

“Those who feel overcharged by the matter, I suggest some meditation. It’s never any harm, though. Have it incorporated into your every-day-life. It’s good for the blood circulation, strengthens heart and kidneys, and the brain anyway...”

Professor Stone presented himself conciliated and open minded as never before in the seminar, intimidated by the illustrious guest. The title might be better recalled that way, while philosophy was lost without proper questioning.

“Well then, get to work, don’t hesitate and don’t delay. A surprise had been promised, a surprise you have got.”

“Surprise you call it, we call it disappointment” some growled. Not all of them were gifted with a nimble quill.

Paper was distributed and time was granted. The two Honourables kept almost quiet for the rest of the session, and before long most students started scribbling. The meditative atmosphere helped a lot, reduced frustration and stimulated an air of eternity somehow stretching with gentle fingertips at those in peace and joyous rest.

One option was to imagine which way the Advisor took. Somewhere, way beyond the furthest depth of the universe – that is - the poly-verse to be more precise, he came to them. He didn’t miss that tiny grain of sand the earth was – so tiny that you couldn’t meet eventually. He had hit even once more on it, when he approached the Southern hemisphere.

He met the grain of sand in the grain of sand – that is – the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, guided by the green whirl risen to welcome him, in order to sway in and have his gentle suggestions delivered, he was good for.

Help for self-help he called his mostly frustrating programme. While he enjoyed sudden departures, like this time again. He wasn’t really after results, however that ‘Eureka’ and stunned ‘Alas’, generally following the

overcoming, pleased his wide heart and raised his fathomless soul. That was his outcome enough.

‘Well, well those dimensions – the overstressed grain of sand. Everybody is using such metaphor. What does it really mean?’

The keywords have been said already:

“Turn up your spirit – and look outside
Into the everlasting starry space so wide.

Deeper that is - more than the deepest eyes provide,

And wider much than to the widest heart’s delight,
While being brighter than the brightest brain is bright,

And longing more than any soul’s yearning ignite.”

If our solar system were no solar system, but an oxygen atom or a fluorine atom – (you can argue about the number of planets and moons, though). On the other hand, nobody knows the true orbits of the electrons, so much depends on: - our lives and everything physical.’

‘Don’t you forget the discourse and the question to be somehow reflected:

If everything is possible, then everything is also impossible.

Good-by for now, Adios, Adieu, God bless you...”

The investigation of the incident on Convertors’ Island ended up no-where. Watchdog Will Wiese enjoyed his prank even more so as nobody suspected him. He was still testing his chances. He could trust the inner voice, he now knew.

The latter asked him to engage and be willing wherever demanded. No time was too awkward, no duty too much. There was no time for holidays anymore. Since his fiasco in Sydney he was fed up with the city, including his former family and wife. Spare time only seduced him and led him astray. He knew his strange desires.

Thus, he enjoyed serving his inner master, who guided him so successfully, and warned him in time. His inner master also directed his thoughts and tamed his rough temperament – steering it into no less evil tracks, however, they were much wittier and more intelligent than everything he ever could think of on his own.

The prank on Convertors' Island was just a beginning. This was the lane he got closer to the aims he could feel inside. Soon he was in charge of the guards in front of the strong-room. However, not even he knew the code to the system and wasn't entitled to enter either.

Dorothea had safe-guarded those stolen sacks. Nobody cared for returning them to the sarcophagus, which was regarded as unsafe since that thievish couple had pilfered it. All the more, because Zinfandor had most likely been involved, although he claimed, he couldn't remember.

Penelope M'gamba confirmed his testimony. "That night in question Zinfandor didn't leave his bed. I just cannot understand how my dear sweetheart managed to become an object of investigation again. When ever they feel like it, they jump on him. You all did noticed, how sick he was, before he finally fell asleep. I can testify."

Of course she also knew that he could have got up again, when she had left for the banquet again sneaking away in high speed in order to get to that far tunnel, he most likely had no knowledge of. – All that was in fact very unlikely.

Anyway, the sacks with those faked papers were resting in the office, until Dorothea locked them up at last. Thus Will Wiesle could use his new talents not only to search the sacks but to reduce the contents by a third, replacing it with other void papers, he managed to stuff to the bottom.

It was very unlikely that someone would check those sacks down to the ground. And even if this happened, nobody would suspect him. First, those students, who had made the copies, would be charged, for not having done a proper job.

Without doubt, meditation had an important advantage. Many participants became somewhat synchronized, and started off from the same level when dealing with a certain problem.

Much different that was with the discourse question, which was in fact not even a real question – while most had already forgotten – or were unable to get the words in proper sequence. Did that read likewise: “If nothing is impossible, than everything is possible?” or “Everything is possible and nothing is impossible?”

“You are not allowed to alter the title” Arundle meant to recall the shrill voice of the Advisor: “...and the title reads after all: **‘If everything is possible, then everything is also impossible.’** – You are strongly advised to have such a causality settle in your mind, before you start arguing with nothingness” the Advisor nodded and was due to disappear once more. This time into a separated oxygen atom of a drop of water.

“I only show you this, to have my disappearing not becoming a cause for arguments” he laughed and Arundle had the strong feeling that he was laughing at her.

“Nothing is, where nobody is well versed. My good advice: Forget about nothing.”

While he said that, he definitely disappeared in his oxygen atom, and nothing was left visibly but a drop of water falling, which sang with a lovely voice:

“All in one, and one in all
is the Advisor’s invincible fall...”

when it bumped through the silk skin of a wobbly surface with a noticeable splash, and got lost in an ocean of other drops – where it would have been lost if the Advisor hadn’t been visiting the third electron called Earth, were he was embraced by the green circle of yelling Sublimations dancing in the air above the desk in the lecture hall of the School of Inbetween on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, somewhere in the Southern hemisphere.

Thus, the non-interchangeable electron in its non-interchangeable reference-grid, which was made noticeable by the visit of the Advisor, and was somewhat evaluated by such fact, while such system would be granted also without the special attention. It was just a visit, not more.

“In the inside watches work different, that’s hard to stand”, a voice said unheard by those in the far, wide space outside. And those inside, who heard the voice, didn’t understand, because they knew little. It might be so, that they were just about to get a vague idea, though.

11. ‘A Certain Something’

Watchdog Will Wiesle noticed that it was more difficult to get the certificates off the island than to steal them. Already the storage caused considerable difficulties. He couldn’t just push the piles of paper under his bed, as he had thought, because the cleaner came every morning for cleaning and did a good job.

Thus, Will Wiesle packed his prey into water-proof plastic bags and buried them near the hangar on neutral grounds. Who should find them there? As long as nobody missed the papers, nobody would search for them.

He arranged for a little garden there and got permission right away. Thus he could dig as he pleased.

On the other hand you could never be sure that one of the witty little-ones (mostly the girls) passed by in their dreams or sent a no less curious soul. And it was quite likely that somebody had seen him digging, without becoming suspicious, though. While such suspicion could well come up in the aftermath. The tiniest mistake could suffice.

Watchdog Will Wiesle had to get his theft off the island, that was as clear as daylight. Firstly those certificates were needed to raise confusion, and secondly he ran the risk of losing his camouflage, and thirdly the papers were of no use on the island, while they earned money on the stock market over there on the mainland.

There was but one solution – he had to find a good reason for regular flights to the mainland and for writing letters in between, as he had done in former times when he had been living together with his family.

And if he fell in love again? He then would have good reasons for writing letters and take leave for the mainland as well.

As there was a diabolical guest sitting in his interior, he had no choice anyway. Will Wiesle was turned over to the fangs of Viola de Stäel. This seemed the best solution – practicable and convenient in one, because Viola de Stäel was in command of the attributes of a perfect seductress.

The limited watchdog was in any way inferior. Such a poor figure she would have ignored under other circumstances. However, Malicious Marduk held the strings and guided the steps of the two puppets in his hands. They met and fell in passion at once. - Here it was again – that ‘certain something’ the woman could not explain but scented at once when a man had it.

Viola de Stäel had returned to her old practice and had installed a little sex-studio here in Sydney, where she could obey to her motions undisturbed. It was well designed for the upcoming liaison with the watchdog.

Soon the stock market was flooded by falsified certificates. In the beginning the man in love wrote almost daily and enclosed each time a coloured slip of paper. It was his personal mark, so to speak. Sporadic checks were still made in the beginning, but were given up soon.

There were more effective ways of passing on information via Internet platforms and secret servers.

Even the passport and customs control relaxed the more often Will Wiesle travelled. He did the trip at least once a month whenever he had spared a couple of days, which was easy, when serving on Conversiors’ Island, because the workdays had sixteen hours over there.

Digging for the certificates behind the hangar was difficult only before he asked for his gardening project right there.

After some months thus, the whole lot of faked certificates were transferred. They were carefully prepared and freed from the print-on on the reverse side. After that they were ready for Professor Baranasias, who fouled the stock market with them.

Dorothea was checking the trade daily and noticed the movements of course. But it was too late already. She purchased all offered papers, regardless of their quality, thus, they increased in value considerably, and found their way back to the island. However, instead of being buried behind the hangar, they were stored in the strong-room, where they innocently mixed with genuine certificates.

The thicker the pile was growing, Dorothea meant to rightly store, the happier she became. Not even in a dream she thought of becoming the victim of a tricky dirty deal. While she could well have doubted where those new stocks came from, seemingly rising from nowhere all of a sudden.

She didn't stop purchasing when she ran out of money. The money was spent for a good purpose. She would soon be able to acquire new funds on a worldwide acquisition tour – at least she hoped.

Who was lacking the “Certain Something” or lost it while in close encounter with Viola de Stäel, got a kick in the ass. Henry Baranasias alias Roland Waldschmitt had had to notice that twice. Whatever the ‘Certain Something’ was, you could feel it, and you could also feel, as soon as it was missing.

Poor Watchdog Will Wiesle didn't know what happened to him. It was as if someone had turned off the light and left him alone in an empty dark room.

His duty was fulfilled. He had no chance of getting hold of more certificates. Thus, Malicious Marduk left him during one of his visits in Mme de Stäel's studio, when the former assistant showed up, who had just recovered from a number of operations.

Freshly renovated and full of energy he presented himself as a suitable candidate. Thus, Malicious Marduk took hide in the assistant's sinister soul and made the latter show at once that 'Certain Something', while Will Wiesle lost it.

The abandoned watchdog became depressive and fell back into the stupid behaviour of former days. He was arrested soon by the police. The Vice Headmistress of the School of Inbetween took great effort to get him free, and managed finally by promising of keeping him away from the city and his former family.

Watchdog Will Wiesle had indeed caused great harm and damage, more than he could pay with one year's income. Thus, he thankfully accepted the help. He was even so thankful to admit the theft and smuggling of the faked certificates.

Dorothea found it very difficult to separate the chaff from the wheat, because both looked alike, in her case, and could only be differentiated by the different storing, which made things not easy. Finally Dorothea came about an indicator and that was the date of first delivery. The false papers were all printed with the same date. Thus, she had a second criterion.

The stock exchange market got nervous – that Professor Baranasias stirred up the scene, with sinister accusations and secret hints to the press. The School of Inbetween was again in danger of losing its reputation, when it became obvious that the faked certificates originated right there. The thief and smuggler was upgraded in the aftermath and was presented as the School's official messenger.

It was great luck for the school that the repentant sinner made a clean breast to the case. Only devotional love had seduced him, he confessed, but was still not willing to charge the seductress.

The financial effect was enormous, but otherwise no further harm arose from the transactions, and Dorothea started for a new acquisition tour to Europe and the USA. This time she made even more and trickier reference to the outstanding research work that was going

on. She thus involuntarily entered a rather similar sphere than had done the former Chairman of the Brotherhood of Infernalina, who stranded as a consequence.

The course of the School's papers consolidated regardless of the dangers. There was money enough again, but the expectations also increased considerably. Scholasticus was upset of having let his wife go, instead of going with her. After all, he had old connections which seemed more serious and more integer than the new ones his wife brought back from her tour.

The world was now looking full of more or less reliable and serious expectations on the little island down in the Southern hemisphere, where marvels occurred and the search for the lost time led to discernments of the extraordinary kind.

Malicious Marduk was frolicking clandestinely and had a good time in the sinister soul of his roundabout renewed former assistant. As long as the system of exploitation prevailed and was taken over by the new world currency, he was on the right course.

Things didn't look too bad, though. It all was a question of time. The paradigm change would come sooner or later. The new principal could be seen on the horizon of world history, while only the least had yet understood.

Would the new system come as an instrument of liberation or oppression? That was the most challenging question for Malicious Marduk, he wanted to have answered in his sense.

The new greed had to be stirred up even further that was spreading already. Only if the greed for life increased insurmountably, there would be enough people willing to install a renewed system of cheat and theft, and murder.

His considerations were simple after all. Time was a limited resource and who ever managed to invent or discover a storage system for the time would make it.

Before the time could be stored however, it had to be collected and discharged from the mass of people, who were bound for a shortened life. While those who

could afford it, were guaranteed unending life. The conflict of the classes was thus pre-programmed and would come along with chaos, destruction, war and misery as ever. And that was in the sense of Malicious Marduk.

The research work on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth fitted into this picture and didn't fit at the same time, because here a different perspective of the problem showed up. The approach focussed on several indices and based on the plenitude of time. Not shortage of time but surplus was its credo ever since.

Only a misbegotten life made people step out of the flow of time beforehand, and have them crash on the shores of death. While this is no necessary evil, but can be overcome.

Still, Malicious Marduk saw his chance even in such an opposing approach. If he managed to push such research hard enough, and have the masses become separated at the same time, he would get closer to the aim of a general injustice and the renewed triumph of the evil.

When the repentant Watchdog Will Wiesle had confessed, he was a little better. However, deep inside he still felt the pain in his love-forsaken heart, while the routine of the duty and the comrades as well as the friendly atmosphere on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth gave him support and soothed his grief.

He was not allowed to approach the students. Only when they addressed to him he could answer, and that they did - well knowing about the matters of his heart and how awful he had been cheated. So it happened that he even made friends with some.

Pooty was free in this respect to do what he liked and told the poor fellow of Walter's fate. He arranged a more general meeting with Billy-Joe and Tibor, who were all in favour of the deprived and the cheated of the world, and Will Wiesle was one of them, they could feel.

Billy-Joe might as well find the trace to Walter's sinister fate and secret being stuck in his interior. He

suspected Malicious Marduk responsible for Will Wiesle's crash, as to the hints the latter gave.

Will Wiesle had survived, but Walter had not (not in the sense of reality, though.) How could that be?

Arundle had found a somewhat strange answer Billy-Joe learnt when talking the matter over with her. Up to her it was the prohibition she had achieved from the Advisor. Malicious Marduk was not allowed to alter the past in his favour.

In regard of the new theory of the parallel worlds this had become a weak argumentation, Pooty and Billy-Joe both found out. However, Arundle re-considered, Walter's death would be not wholly in vain if also looked at it from this point of view.

Since Billy-Joe converted each month, he could identify with most of Malicious Marduk's victims. You felt somewhat strange with two souls in your breast, all the more when they were in permanent struggle. Such inner partition had turned out fatal for Walter.

Watchdog Will Wiesle knew well what it meant not to be the boss in one's own home. In his case a trained teacher had taken over, he told Billy-Joe. And for the first time in his life he felt the sweet poison of power. A great feeling, though. And the more wicked pranks he was successful in doing, the more he inflamed for that power.

Where Walter had been torn to pieces, Will developed a monstrous image of himself, more brutal and wicked than he had dreamt in his boldest dreams.

The question was now why Walter had resisted the seduction and couldn't do but break apart and die. Was Will more honest inside or had Walter been different?

"Are you short of something, while you are alone again?" Billy-Joe wanted to know of Will, but only made him wonder. Self-reflection was not Will's part. He was not like Billy-Joe, who foresaw by now more than he knew, what it had been like with Walter. Will Wiesle was far from such self-reflection. While Billy-Joe knew Walter by now even better than his own self.

"No-one's ever wholly free from fits of megalomania. I think we needn't argue about that", Arundle said just like that, and took a solid base off from

Billy-Joe, who claimed indeed such on Walter's behalf.

"Your view surely doesn't focus on kangaroos, does it?" he argued: "If you think back, it had always been animals who were killed by Malicious Marduk and his Miseriors. Human beings did survive, as far as I know."

"Do you mean we humans all suffer from fits of megalomania, while animals are free?" Arundle asked back.

"Yes, I think Walter therefore died. He was unable to turn his inside out. And because he couldn't get rid of the occupant, that was wholly strange to him and couldn't be stranger indeed, he preferred to be dead than stand the pain longer", Billy-Joe replied and went on: "Will Wiesle admitted that he enjoyed the state he had been in to a certain extent, while he was scared at the same time, but the more he succeeded the better he like it. He wasn't wholly neglecting such overwhelming power, as it helped with the adored woman, he was devoted to. We should never forget that..."

"... and that - even he found out in the end" Pooty interfered.

"Thus, it could well have been" Arundle agreed.

"I think we guess who that person is" she added after a short while before she went on. "It could well be that you Conversiors are far more endangered than others. - Although, Walter had had no idea of what was in him - I mean all that changing and discovering someone else inside and letting him out..."

"Definitely not such a monster..." Pooty agreed, and recalled that ugly farmer who posed on that pile of kangaroo corpses. Sure enough - Walter was torn to pieces.

To Billy-Joe's mind now came that big yellow dingo and his ambivalent affiliation with it. Before he recognized him as the killer of his human mother, he had been rather helplessly devoted to him.

The situation had been similar to Walter's. Still he survived, while Walter died, that was the big difference. The honest Walter broke to pieces, while he put away

with such murderous inheritance. That yellow dingo was still part of him and would always be. He didn't know of a strategy of how to overcome. None that promised success, while Walter might have just offered him the adequate medicine.

For most of the students the Advisor had just disappeared. They meant to have seen him disappearing in a green whirl – same way as he had come.

But the Sublimations didn't show him off at all. Tibor meant to have seen him fading until he was wholly transparent, until he was gone at last.

“This way, it had been the first time. However, the second time he disappeared different.”

“What do you mean by – ‘the second time?’ There was no second time...” Tibor asked stunned.

Except Arundle nobody saw him a second time, not even Billy-Joe or Pooty, who had been next to her all the time.

“Perhaps, it's not important” she vaguely said. “I wanted to focus on something else, and I wanted to know if you noticed it as well. - Forget what I said.”

She went silent. You could see how she was moved. Did nobody notice the Advisor disappearing in an oxygen atom? Such an idea was of course nonsense, she quite well knew. Nobody ever disappeared in an oxygen atom – not visible anyway. Still she knew about such disappearance. It was not just an imagination of hers.

The Advisor had entered the oxygen atom, knowing well what he was doing. He obviously had been expected inside.

Had she had one of these gaps again? As lately happened frequently?

She then felt some sort of wheeling, and then she saw something like the disappearance of the Advisor (it could as well be something acoustic – or even just a feeling) – an instant later things were as before.

Nothing real had happened. For her, it had been a long moment, for the others a very short one (one of those moments you don't realize, because they pass by so quick.)

Now she recalled that special silence, she felt accompanied by a peculiar clairvoyance in due process with the pause, as it had been again this time.

An intense discourse with the Magic Bow might be advisable, she thought, while she notice agreement in the back and then she learnt of a very tricky window in the flow of time, especially opened for her, to grant an outstanding sight.

"Some kind of fainting fit perhaps, in any case something you do not influence, while seeing things not bound for you, because they are not made of the dimension you are in, normally. However, you are not normal. We know that already."

Arundle weakly protested. The Magic Bow was right, she was different. On the other hand she felt a strong longing for normality, and didn't want to sway from one extreme to the next, that was no life.

"In your strong-room you weren't happy either" she therefore moaned.

She knew it, she wasn't locked up in a strong-room. She didn't die of boredom. Perhaps the vain business killed her nerves. All were busy and nothing happened. All research stood still, while everybody was busy in checking for leaks and spies and thefts. They all scented betrayal and bamboozle everywhere, and had to take care of making mistakes. Trust was a foreign word and liberty of research was an empty phrase.

She knew, she was unjust. Many of the problems they experienced, had to do with her and her father, who was suspected to manipulate the school for his sinister plans.

Had he not attacked again, things would run their smooth way, and the enterprise would flourish unhindered. Perhaps he found access to their research because she wasn't able to clarify her relation with him.

While she thought that, she noticed how right she was. On the other hand she knew that there was nothing

to be cleared. Deep inside another conviction was burning.

She was asked to do something, she didn't feel able. – Only that much she had understood. She should solve the task for her father's best.

Henry Baranasias alias Roland Waldschmitt had reached his irresistible end. Finding himself standing in front of blown up dreams and hopes, he felt misused, betrayed and cheated. His familiar world made him feel sick. He realized how impossible it was, and that life wasn't worth living therein, because little gaiety was possible and real happiness was impossible at all.

And such a world he intended to accomplish. In such a world he wanted to spend a very long or even never ending life?

Sitting deep down in the dumps, licking his various wounds he realized that such a life wasn't worth a penny.

The power you gained was a short living drug, he had mixed up with happiness, but was in fact short-lived always leaving behind a stale remainders. This was no happiness, he knew for sure – right now, being so far away from it as never before.

He had looked over the fence, had seen a world of happy beings, and was affected for short moments. This had been no side-effect of his spying matters, and nobody's intention – still the spark jumped over and ignited a meagre flame – always threatening to fade, and the more often it did, the sweeter the yearning became.

Henry Baranasias, alias Roland Waldschmitt felt in his semi-human heart, that was left with him, a great unfulfilled yearning. Now the feeling was even stronger in contrast to the mechanical part of his heart, he had shortly obtained.

And the longer the yearning prevailed the more concrete it became. Henry Baranasias, alias Roland Waldschmitt, was longing for something really great and extraordinary, something outstanding he could hardly

imagine, and something he had never before done in his life.

He couldn't yet put the indescribable into words, he had only a vague idea and couldn't find the proper words for it.

One day then - a long forgotten dream of his childhood inflated like a soap bubble.

And then he noticed all of a sudden the mistaken ways he had chosen. Ways leading him astray, further and further away from his dream. All his strains and efforts had led him further away from his aim. Something inside now pushed him to set things in order, and compensate ill-will and mishaps.

He wrote a letter to his former wife, although he knew she had started a new life. He wrote about his grief and his earnest will of change, and dearly hoped she would understand and would forgive.

Then there was his daughter, Arundle. He had maltreated and cheated her, as far as he could think back and became even worse, since she was on her own – his own flesh and blood! Because she never accepted his paternal dominance and had her own will. And in the end she had been responsible for his change, convincing him that she was right, while he was wrong. What a girl...

He openly adored her now. He loved her and those people with her, all these friendly faces with her dealing so clever with all his dirty tricks. They had the power and he didn't know what it was. Only deep inside an idea had survived, oppressed and neglected – a trace of happiness.

There was a trace hidden somewhere in his soul and never diminished. Arundle's power now stimulated what had been long forgotten. Still full of doubts, he hardly believed his feelings – deep overwhelming love it was.

He started planning as before, but now the plans were different. He planned from a different point of view, and wanted to save his soul and find his better self.

He could have altered his outside appearance, without changing inside. Now he noticed that this change was not enough – quite the opposite – he had been trapped and couldn't escape.

The time for the inner change had come. This was a wholly new track for him. He was underway on a journey into no-where-land towards his most secret dreams. He had no precise idea of the aim yet, or how far he had to go. He didn't know about the stops and hardships. He only knew that the first steps were done, and that was essential.

12. Anonymous on the Moon

Those in the devil's claws have a hard time when trying to escape. Henry Baranasias, alias Roland Waldschmitt, had not reckoned with his former guest. Once more he realized the ties and puppet-strings which held him ever since.

What ever he did – and he did a lot as Chairman of the Brotherhood of Infernalina - wasn't wholly done by himself. A mighty force had taken possession of him and steered his deeds.

As long as he moved ahead on the straight of success, he enjoyed his part of the game, and didn't mind the interior guest who guided him. But kick-backs and back strokes he couldn't handle, and soon came across with that whistler. His self-esteem collapsed like a house of cards. Where he had been big and strong, he now felt weak and miserable, and that woman on his side knew how to put her finger on the sore spot, or even turned the knife in the wound, while the whispering voice inside couldn't be heard.

Thus, the whole construction of his life collapsed. The further down he went, and the more of such back-strokes he had to stand, the more he doubted. In the end, he was convinced that he had backed the wrong horse.

How could he escape that woman, who somehow knew how to seduce him all over again, whenever she felt like it?

His great awakening had many sources. Fact was that the process had begun, and as it looked, it couldn't be stopped or reversed. Roland Waldschmitt started his self-reflection, and no threat or reminder was able to alter the new course of life.

The last who tried to regain him back on the dark side was the renovated assistant after his come-back as his master's darling (which made him irresistibly attractive in Viola de Stäel's eyes.)

So he had a back-firing effect, and raised the old stubbornness in his former - so-called – Professor.

Stubbornness had accompanied Waldschmitt's career ever since and now arose as the power of resistance against any seductive occupant what so ever. Could well be, that he recalled long ago aspects of his true and most inner self that even the most wicked of all seducers hadn't been able to affect, while it survived and slumbered behind the pompous blown-up image of a mediocre self.

The renewed assistant was surely superior to Baranasias with respect to physical strength and unscrupulousness, all the more so as he was furnished in addition with the 'Certain Something'. Consequently Mme de Stäel felt irresistibly devoted to that man, thus, the miserable presence of the former lover became a severe obstacle. While the trade with those certificates now turned out to be some kind of boomerang causing more damage than good. The confusion broke together and the clean certificates also became questionable. An effect that was of course not favourable, when it came to claiming rights and options.

Baranasias had become useless or – even worse – disturbing and had to be made extinct. Viola de Stäel was ordered to think of something efficient and discrete to get rid of him.

Such was the situation when Roland Waldschmitt, alias Henry Baranasias, decided to change sides, and ask for asylum on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth. Time was pushing while the hellhounds were on his trail. Baranasias was in danger of life.

The magic involved on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth referred him to the moon for refuge. “Just for the time being” it said “until things calmed down – this way or the other...”

Grisella, Countess of Griselgreif to Greifenklau-Slyboots, Professor of Literature and Philosophy of the School of Inbetween, became involved. In close correspondence with her (she was unable to visit him where he was hiding, because she was afraid of flying) Roland Waldschmitt, alias Henry Baranasias wrote an astounding oeuvre in only a few months. A somewhat intergalactic confession, which turned out as a “remarkable literary piece of art”, a fact, Grisella couldn’t stop mentioning.

Grisella was even able to find a renowned publisher for the masterpiece, who announced it as “the blunt uncovering of a gigantic scandal of world-historic dimensions”.

Roland Waldschmitt wrote down mercilessly all the misery, and all the sins and crimes he had committed or taken into account. He discovered abysses of the soul, the reader hesitated or denied to look inside – too much was the horror while reading on.

Nobody knew where ‘Anonymous (this was his publishing pseudonym) was hiding, or found out where the insider knowledge came from. Certain interested circles wanted to move the oeuvre into the category of utopian fairytales and fables, however the matter was far too explosive and much too factual for that.

Not necessarily individual elements but the whole composition gave it the immense power and enlightening credo.

“You could hardly find a better founded warning of the dangers of the paradigmatic change underway towards a new worldwide standard of value”, one of the biggest international stock-market magazine wrote, and the Yellow Press even topped: “Is this the dawning of a new race of hyper-men?” or even more provoking “Underdogs - do you want to live on forever?”

A more sophisticated paper wrote: “Sensational discovering in the world of ‘high finance’ or should it better read ‘time-dominance’?”

Another thought “the end of the monetary system has come” or even worse: “Dummies will pay the bill with their lives.”

When asking for asylum on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth Roland Waldschmitt, alias Henry Baranasias, found himself right away dislocated on a secret place in a flat building.

Busy robot-artifacts stood by to serve him with everything he needed for a modest life. Unfortunately he was not allowed to leave the building without the adequate gear, because of the lack of atmosphere out there.

While he had mentioned his wish to write, his secretary was fully equipped, even with a printer – many humans still withstood electronic media.

He had escaped from Sydney without trouble. The little hangar he still had in mind, where the copters landed. And he found one ready for takeoff, when he walked smoothly by the site.

The crew was very helpful and understood his claim all too well. They welcomed him aboard wholeheartedly as if he had been expected, which was not the case. It was just their way of being he soon learnt when meeting a flock of students returning from an excursion on the way back home to their school.

On arrival he looked into known faces as soon as he set foot on the island. His daughter was among the committee, and with her that friendly savage, with a bow in a quiver on his back. This could well be that bow, so much trouble had been caused, he wondered.

“There is no time to waste”, a friendly woman explained. The refugee was not safe on the island either and his life was still in danger, that was why he would be taken ‘away from this world’, as she put it.

“No, no, of course not the radical way your opponents intend, who had been your former friends. Clocks work little different here on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth.”

“Soon you will see...” another beauty added, he recalled as the leader of the committee he met some time ago.

Arundle and the savage took one of his arms each, while his daughter was murmuring with the bow and a hairy something stretched its head out of an ugly, smelly bag around the savage’s neck, followed by a shiny stone, and up they went that the stars went by like spurs of comets or shiny streams of oily liquid soap.

“We drop into a disguised time loop out of time, and steer towards the moon. There you will find everything you need – we checked that out for you, don’t worry” Arundle explained warmly.

“Away now with masks and hidings. I know who you are. Got to get used to your appeal, - somewhat strange, though... Well, we will have time enough for that, I presume, - Daddy. - Yes, the bush drums conveyed the news of your big change. Now you are one of us, aren’t you?”

Father and daughter hugged with tears in their eyes. Then ‘the savage’ shook his hand wildly.

“This is Billy-Joe, do you remember?” Waldschmitt vaguely nodded.

“Roland, this is Billy-Joe, Billy-Joe this is Roland – or do you prefer your latest alias?” She introduced the two uneven men and was happy about their smile, more of that of her father, though, who was overcoming his own nature again..

“Now get acquainted. Let me show you around. This will be your home for the next couple of – weeks”, months she wanted to say, but hesitated as the place was somewhat dull and in fact very lonely.

Waldschmitt would be all alone up here, alone with those artifacts of the latest kind that could speak of course and differentiate human voices. Typing was outdated. Thus, the recording of his memories and musings was done verbally, and what was said could

immediately be read either on screen or print-out.

The artifact secretary even suggested alternatives if asked or the given one was regarded as poor.

So the man got to work. He started at the beginning and told his tale right from the dreams of his childhood and of the many ways that led astray, until he meant to have found the right way.

From the first beginnings of the research work in backyards to the foundation of the worldwide Brotherhood of Infernalía. He mentioned of course the struggles and arguments, the intrigues and rancour, and didn't neglect his own role – quite the opposite. He almost enjoyed showing his badness.

The more he told, the more he recalled. He worked to exhaustion, then sank into bed after a quick bite and half a bottle of a rather reasonable red wine. Hefty dreams had him sleep uneasy, while different ways of the flight were presented. None with the lucky outcome reality had taken.

His former mistress mixed poisoning herbs into his supper, causing his death with terrible pain.

In an other dream a band of killers chased him through the furthest bush in the Australian Outbacks. In vain he tried to hide but was captured and ears and nose was cut off and even the tongue. A flock of savages picked him up more dead than alive and made him alter his mode of being.

A Scud-rocket was fired at the helicopter and had it diminish in a fireball, and where the Isle of Wisdom-tooth had been the horrid hood of a nuclear bombing arose.

When he woke up he looked into the caring faces of her daughter and her friend.

Once more he had dreamed very lively, as often before. The dentist had prescribed him a protective inlay for that reason, he was supposed to put into his mouth, but had forgotten, as often.

He'd ruined his teeth otherwise.

Tongue, nose and ears were still where they belonged, he could feel, while Billy-Joe seemed to have stepped out of the nightmare.

The loneliness wasn't good for him, his daughter decided and together they look for a better solution. The problem was that the track should be kept small which led to the hiding, because Miseriors and their master Malicious Marduk were quite capable of tracing him down, no matter how tricky the trail was.

The dark side had of course noticed his disappearance, and the conflict now extended into other dimensions, and was by no means less dangerous or deadly.

Arundle thought it a good idea to have her father hiding on the moon of Laptopia, because she knew what it was like and hoped for a convenient stay. Without atmosphere the moon as such was not a pleasant site, you'd better skip.

A fragile character could run into severe problems, under such circumstances. The empty width of the surrounding space and the weak gravitation, and the total lack of human beings and human civilisation could cause trouble for anyone.

Whenever Roland Waldschmitt dived off his phases of productivity – that was - working on his book – and sat down for a meal or lay down for a nap, the phantoms of former times overcame him, and taught him the horror in the aftermath he didn't feel at the time. Thus, loneliness was no good.

Those who knew on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth wondered how they could overcome such awkward circumstance, and came to the solution of granting him permanent company of a man of flesh and blood. Artifacts he had enough already. They weren't really suitable for overcoming the problem. Artifacts were not the same, while still better than nothing, of course.

Who was going to stay with the lonesome refugee in the hide for good? Travelling back and forth forbade itself because of the widening track laid that way. While the trip as such was no big deal. If there hadn't been the risk of widening the track, they'd been able to do it daily.

“Imagine such a track like a thought, you keep in your mind. The vaguer it remains, the faster it fades out of your active memory. You simply forget it, and cannot recall voluntarily. Still it remains with you and it might happen that it shows up accidentally some time, when least expected. Quite similar it works with those traces on the time-track leading along side at the edge of time and fade as soon as the aim is reached” the Magic Bow explained rather complicated. Arundle wasn’t sure whether she got him right. Her idea of changing visitors would have been an elegant solution otherwise.

“The more often a thought is repeated, the safer it is available for the mind. A vague trace becomes a solid passage, everyone can follow, and that’s the trouble...” the bow insisted.

Well, yes, I got it at last, I’m not silly” Arundle moaned impatiently. “We shouldn’t sent someone to the moon daily, because of the passage that is going to build up. Right?”

The bow didn’t answer.

Were there other option? “What about asking others, who had been obsessed similarly, like Watchdog Will Wiesle or Zinfandor Leblanc?” Billy-Joe suggested.

“Penelope M’gamba wouldn’t accept, I daresay” Dorothea turned in, referring to Zinfandor only.

“Let’s have it a trial. It’s not forever. Only as long as Anonymous it writing his book or the case isn’t so hot anymore” Arundle put in.

“Will they ever forget?” Pooty wanted to know and made a funny face, thus, all laughed while the subject was too serious and still a matter of death or life.

“Where Malicious Marduk sets his iron heel there no grass will ever be growing again, I’m afraid” Pooty added. “So, let’s ask.”

“On the other hand, do not wake up sleeping dogs” Marsha put in, still the Commissary Headmistress, who still felt responsible for the whole.

Thus, the little sworn in flock mused sitting around the table in the Slyboots’ premise. Grisella joined them

with a big pile of paper. - “The latest news from your Dad” she said triumphantly. “Talent he has, no doubt about that – we can expect quite something...”

“Why not ask Penelope, she knows him best and where he stands...”

“She’s the one to decide, anyway...”

“...and don’t forget to ask him first, because he’s a person with a free will, isn’t he?” Billy-Joe put in, somewhat upset.

“Right you are, what you do is female chauvinism” Adrian backed the boy up, and shook his head in disgust.

“Besides, Zinfandor isn’t kosher. Since that night, you know when...” Marsha intended to lower the tension, she had just caused, but her intention was somewhat backfiring.

“Now, does this start all over again” Dorothea hollered “I try and do what I can and you stick to your fears as if they were part of your skin. Zinfandor is as out as Arundle’s father or that poor Watchdog. They are all clean by now.”

“...still, the evil gets hold of them once in a while, as we experienced, when Zinfandor was recruited again...” Marsha insisted, but nobody wanted to support her. They all felt like she was mixing up things.

“We have to find out if they want” Adrian said after a short while of silence.

“We wonder without cause. The problem however is, that we involve them into the secret, if we send them at last, provided they want to go, of course. Otherwise nothing would happen.”

“Except that my father becomes depressive, and gets hurt or even worse. If we cannot find anyone I will go”, Arundle said “It’s gonna be not forever, though, how long does it still take...”

“he won’t go on for more then a quarter of a year, as fast as he is, I’d say” Grisella answered.

“I do have the publisher’s commitment. For the corrections it might take another month, maybe. However, this could be done by others. But were should he diminish after that? Where are you going to hide our guest in the long run? That is a severe question of

concern. We cannot grant him another new identity, knowing well, how little this alters in fact, we had that already” Billy-Joe put in and Dorothea agreed. “We have to think of a long term solution.”

Arundle had something in mind, but that was too far away, therefore she didn't mention it. She knew of a site where no harm was threatening. However, this site was so strange and unimaginable that she didn't dare to mention it. A tiny trace somewhere in her mind, she had used more than once but seldom enough.

Watchdog Will Wiesle as well as Zinfandor Leblanc spontaneously agreed with the proposal. They knew the inner hell by experience and were all too willing to help their comrade. As a side effect they hoped to get things straightened out a bit on their own behalf. The clever big shot might do them good as well.

Besides, there were connections of another kind between the former Chairman of the Brotherhood and Zinfandor Leblanc as well as with Watchdog Will Wiesle. But this they found out only later, when they became more acquainted.

The idea of taking part in the production of a book also pleased them and made them feel needed, while the oppressed egos even noticed a glimpse of importance shining up on the horizon behind all their mishaps they had to overcome; if it was gone over that way, their suffering might not been all in vain.

The book got fresh impulses, Mme de Stael was illustrated in an even blacker light, that can only be seen by those familiar with the deepest abyss of wickedness. The divided grief made the burden lighter they were still carrying, when the third in the round added his lot to theirs.

While all three of them couldn't quite understand, what had happened to them, and how this woman managed to swallow them with root and branch, so to speak. They now discovered certain characteristics they shared, which once had opened them for the diabolic sensuality of that woman.

The trace of memory on the edge of time faded, when days and weeks passed, while the little community on the edge of the world, somewhere in the future, were left all alone by itself.

The three characters – so different they seemed on the first sight – became acquainted and accepted each other – at least to a certain extent. The joint grief out of the same source made them feel like brothers, who shared the same experience. Perhaps the brotherly comparison wasn't as far fetched as it seemed on the first sight. Perhaps they became devoted to Viola de Stäel on a long lasting track, leading back to their childhood, without knowing, and were therefore so hopelessly devoted, because they didn't have a chance to find the roots and work them over. While the joint work on the report of Anonymous changed that.

The three men soon realized the book project as their joint one. One more, one less, and felt indeed responsible for the indicated development, while often certainly indirect, as far as the research work was concerned.

Because the research work formed only the former Chairman's centre.

Zinfandor became - without doubt - the victim of the infamous Brotherhood. However his tormentors had as well only fulfilled their Infernalian plight, so to speak, while they prepared him for his future task foreseen for him, and that woman was the key to his heart.

She was the opener, and this way, they all became wheels in the machinery of evil. They were promised the most excessive satisfaction and the ruthless outliving of the strangest motivations and musings from now on until eternity. Late enough they realized, that they only had been used, and that they were merely of value, as long as they functioned like little wheels in the mill of horror.

“In such a system you look in vain for self assurance and confirmation” Waldschmitt explained his comrades – “true evil only knows lie and cheat, and is based on oppression. – All promises of happiness and freedom and joy east of the borderline are but lie. Such a project cannot persist, because it is founded on

destruction. When I became aware of that, there was but one choice: the flight. Flight by all means.

Prolong the lines of such a life – we had to lead – into eternity and ask yourself, if you really and earnestly want to go on like this forever.

In the light of reason there is no other choice than to realize that you are straight on the highway to hell. Because it cannot be worth down there. Do believe that we took a look into hell, and I hope and pray that this sight was the last. Perhaps I got away with it – one way or the other...”

This was their state of being, and how they felt, more or less, and Waldschmitt only had found the proper words, because he was a talented man of letters, with a sharp and clear brain.

“The Brotherhood of Infernalía was longing for eternal life. However the eternal life was seen as a privilege of the few. What was taken from the mass was given to the few privileged – that was the basic idea, and was justified by the universal law of energy which says that you only can shift around internally, but the sum of energy has to remain stable and set. However this mechanistic way of seeing the world is a limited interpretation of reality, and doesn’t explain what’s really going on in our universe that is – our Polyverse – to be more precise.

The physical world covered by the limited view of the whole is only a small part of the reality around us.

The greater part of reality is withheld from us. It is the great naught covering the distances between materialized entities. Thus, the naught isn’t just nothing, but the great unknown, containing unimaginable mysteries, far beyond the limits of Newtonian understanding.

The law of energy was a convenient excuse for reviving the old privileges which were tormenting our world for millenniums.”

Zinfandor Leblanc was breathing deep and regular. “He hasn’t fallen asleep, after all?” Watchdog Will Wiesle wondered. While wasn’t wondering too much. The flow of words of that enthusiastic man passed by just

like that, and sounded all too educated, however understanding was something else. Perhaps you had to be a physician or a philosopher – at best – both.

Leblanc and he were definitely the wrong addressees. It seemed to him that this was the point where they had to say good-bye to that giant project of Anonymous. The subject became too scientific and was something for specialists and insiders of another kind - nothing any more for simple ordinary people.

Perhaps it was time for the changing of the guard. Down there, on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth most people talked like Anonymous. People like him were the minority, thus, watchdog Will Wiesle said to himself, and informed the ground-station accordingly.

“Is this an emergency?” Zinfandor asked when Watchdog Will Wiesle pulled the emergency trigger and opened the secret code channel.

Well, yes without notification nobody cares down there. How long are we alone up here? For more than three weeks.”

It took a while until a channel was opened. Via monitor you could see dizzy pictures and faint noise, however no clear announcement. Either there was no-one in the control room or the connection was poor.

You couldn't rely on the time, because the clocks worked different up here. Time was running off, so to speak. Perhaps this was the answer already, while they still felt the time.

Had there been no shortcuts, the guests would have gone on beyond their limits. It was high time for the next pile of manuscripts, they had completed meanwhile and waited to be picked up.

Well, those two ever same faces every day, became some sort of burden, you couldn't stand. No matter whether the shared grief was half grief, as the saying goes. A little joy would have done them good for a change.

“Home base Wisdom-tooth, this is moon-base zero, zero six, over...”

Watchdog Will Wiesle was in his element. He enjoyed further education programmes and had taken part

in a space telecommunication course. Should he even send an SOS emergency call?

Better not, this was meant for real emergencies only, and boredom or loneliness were no emergencies. No-one was injured, no danger was threatening. Dull routine was the only nuisance and didn't really count.

"Home base Wisdom-tooth, this is moon-base zero, zero six, Anonymous speaking - over..."

"Anonymous, this is Home base Wisdom-tooth – read you loud and clear, over."

Finally, that was about time.

"It's your turn, Leblanc. We have the connection. Fetch Waldschmitt, hurry up."

"Home base Wisdom-tooth this is Anonymous, what's the matter down there? Replacement is overdue, over..."

"Press the button while speaking and then let go. It's as simple as that..."

Roland Waldschmitt pressed his finger on the knob: "This is Waldschmitt, Waldschmitt here..." he hollered before he could be stopped. "Need urgent support..."

Watchdog Will Wiesle tore the microphone out of Waldschmitt's hand, who held it tight – still the knob pressed.

"Anonymous, this is home base Wisdom-tooth, roger, over and out."

The reduced way of talking was meant to irritate possible spies, and was part of the whole scheme. Had they been cracks, they'd even encoded their texts. Watchdog Will Wiesle had only forgotten about that. They might not have managed anyway because of the time difference. Codes changed at midnight daily, but it was not easy to decide when a day elapsed.

Out of nowhere shortly later three figures stepped. Arundle, Billy-Joe, and Professor Scholasticus Slyboots, the expert and well-know specialist all over the world.

"We had lost your track. Our only hope was your call" Arundle said and looked at her father relieved. Everything seemed to be in order, so far.

“We better switch of that apparatus right away, we want to stay amongst us, ain’t we?” the Professor asked, and Watchdog Will Wiesle cut the line right away.

The travellers weren’t hungry or exhausted by the journey, because it hadn’t been a journey in the sense of the word.

“What we experienced was some kind of shifting” the Professor explained. This way he wanted to explain the jump along the timeline, and he revered, because he was not sure whether he was understood properly:

“We do not have to deal with a movement in the physical sense, while the fact that we are on the moon has to be considered as well, however in a neglectable circumference, as most experts would agree, although other opinions may be found for such an interesting phenomenon.”

“That’s gonna become funny” ‘Will Wiesle sighed and Zinfandor even sobbed. He immediately became homesick for Penelope M’gamba – how much had he missed that blurry science talk!”

“Home, homeward bound, I wish I was” he sighed, imitating unforgettable ET, Pooty had hardly done any better.

“No problem. Anyone else care to go?” Billy-Joe asked, and Pooty looked out of the Medicine Pouch dangling around the boy’s neck. “Master Stone is with you.”

Nobody was waiting for Watchdog Will Wiesle. - Nobody in love with him anyway. Utmost those comrades of his watch-team. Without Zinfandor he would have felt even more lost up here, thus he preferred to travel with the party.

Magic Messrs Stone & Bow had agreed on splitting their power. They wanted to erase any trace by that. While each had his own signature, that changed when doubled, and vice versa as well.

“Waldschmitt shouldn’t have mentioned his name. Thus it would travel on for ages through space and time. – Well, can’t be changed anymore now...” Watchdog Will Wiesle was stunned when he heard Arundle’s

explanation. He hadn't expected such a long-lasting effect caused by such a minor faux pas.

However her way of looking at things was only logical. What ever was thrown into the empty space, be it material debris or finest spurs of ions, that was travelling along with the general extension until it hit somewhere. However this was very unlikely in case of a modulated acoustic wave.

In the range of the nano-verse things extended excessively. The emptiness also prevailed by means of gigantic gaps, letting pass almost everything that was crossing their way.

"We could try with voice disturbers" Billy-Joe suggested

Scholasticus Slyboots shook his head.

"Wouldn't work anymore the acoustic traces are too far away by now."

"The likeliness that our signal is spotted and understood by someone evil is so little, that the radius of the earth wouldn't suffice to write down the figure" he calmed the Watchdog who felt responsible for the breach.

Up they went – Billy-Joe disappeared as fast as he had shown up, and with him Zinfandor Leblanc, and Will Wiesle, the watchdog.

Earth had them back. Both space travellers felt their limbs heavy as lead after weeks in the weak gravity of the moon. They staggered and even fell at first but after some hours of adjustment and a good meal they felt better.

13. Anonymous and the Wealth of Laptopia

The book was almost ready, and would be published and introduced to the public in autumn on the Frankfurt book fair. And the publisher tinkered about with those in the know on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth for

an adequate presentation by the mysterious Anonymous, Waldschmitt, alias Baranasias - should still remain.

They thought of a new face-lifting, or an alteration of sex, by breeding a clone. However that was impossible because of lack of time – not to mention the cost and the ethic dimension of such a rigorous step.

Meanwhile those three, left behind on the moon of Laptopia made up their own minds, how to proceed.

“I think it would be wise if we showed Anonymous how things go in Laptopia” Arundle suggested.

The needs and shortcomings of Laptopia so far shocked and moved anyone who got aware.

“I think, we show him the same Laptopia we found some years ago” Scholasticus agreed.

“We might as well start with a visit of the secret strong-holds of the palace. The horror you experience there, will never fade. I think, this is the adequate propaedeuticum Arundle agreed.

“Master Bow can you lead us right to the spot and time where we were shown around in the castle by the young prince shortly before he was made Prince regent?”

“No problem, it’s as simple as that. Let’s dive into a segment of time of major importance:

‘Future come back, come back right here
Others wish as well to hear.’

Heavy bodies started driving apart in one - each fitting the other - like when doors opened, and wings kept adding their cores seemingly – melting first than elapsed, while a voice was heard, which Arundle recalled as if it was yesterday – a *déjà-vu* par excellence. But this time she was here with Scholasticus and Anonymous instead, and the Prince showed them around in the castle. He was leading them downstairs to the basement:

... “Down here, you will find the wealth of Laptopia” the Prince said, and asked them to follow him through endless corridors, with safe deposit boxes on both sides. “Behind those hatches immeasurable wealth is

deposited, perhaps not behind every hatch anymore, because things began to change, but still..." the Prince went on.

"Here is all the money, after all" Anonymous asked.

"Who's talking about money? Money has lost importance long time ago. Money is of interest only for historians and coin-collectors. No, down here you find the preserved time, mostly converted into energetic quantum. Because it is not easy to preserve time. In former times, the loss was immeasurably. By ninety percent of the boxed in time got lost by preservation. You have to imagine... Arundle you may recall your space disaster, when you got lost in time. You were led into the area when the business with the time prospered. Then nobody had the faintest idea of what was coming all too soon. Such losses were then taken for granted. Then, when people lost youth in no time and grew older almost visually, things turned into the open but it was too late already. You couldn't stop or reverse the trend just like that. The monetary system had been replaced by the temporal system irreversibly. Some order was necessary to keep the society going, if people didn't want to return to the very basic exchange of goods. And soon it became clearer and clearer that the wealth of nations assembled in the hands of fewer and fewer individuals, to an immeasurable extend beyond all historic comparison."

While the Prince talked, they stepped ahead, still along the corridor and between those rows and rows of lockers, behind which the preserved lives of a countless multitude rested, fading unused.

"Whom do those lockers belong?" Anonymous asked. The Prince gave him a long thoughtful glance then said: "I don't want to lie at you. All you see in this area belongs to my family. My father was crazy about such wealth. The worst was, he bought on the black market whenever his contingent was exceeded. But we will come to that soon..."

Arundle noticed by his look at the Prince, what her dad was thinking. He wasn't very wrong, though. If the Prince had wanted to throw dust in their eyes, he could

have lied or kept them away from that horrid family bank of his.

“In those lockers there are hoarded up values of whole lifetimes, what a waste...”

“And if you give the time back to its proper owners?” Arundle asked.

“If that was so simple... believe me, I had done it. Whatever we do with that” and he waved helplessly around “we won’t solve anything but only stimulate the black market. You can’t through values in, and hope of no effect. What do you think the heirs do with their relatives’ lives? They gamble with them, try to increase their value and of course extend their own lifespan, but that would be the least of all problems...”

Since the great currency-reform, when the exchange rate was voluntarily put up from two to one and the free time-trade was limited, you can’t distribute time, just like that. In former times, there was even a state-lottery, and the winner of the week cashed a check over eternal life, as it was called in those days. Of course, nobody lives on forever, but a couple of hundred years can well do, all the more since the currency-reform I mentioned.”

“What does that reform mean?” Arundle asked.

“When the free commerce with preserved, time became more and more intransparent, and parents sacrificed their own children for their sake, and riots arose not all that different from those we experienced, the Emperor decided to interfere. The Time-Exchange-Converters all over the country were drawn back. The time-exchange-stocks were closed down everywhere. Existing accounts were frozen in, and instead of the time-currency, they tried to install a credit-system, similar to the old money-related system. But things weren’t handled wholeheartedly enough, I’m afraid...”

They had come to the end of the corridor by now, and were standing in front of another huge strong room, the doors of which blocked the corridor completely. This time the Prince used a secret code number to unlock it, and the mighty hatches swung open.

“We are entering now the so-called ‘Workshop of Renewal’” the Prince explained.

“Be careful, what you see is shocking...” The Prince’s warning came just in time. The room was filled with body parts like in a slaughterhouse. Legs, arms, and torsos were hooked up the same way, but here the parts belonged to former human beings - that was the difference.

“What the hell is this?” Arundle yelled. She couldn’t stand the sight, her stomach rebelled. It took some time until she dared a second look. The first impression had been misleading. This was no dead meat, bound to be eaten. Such extremities seemed to be alive and ready for action. All kinds of artificial spare-parts were connected with bones and sinews. Everything looked clean and well maintained.

“From here most hospitals procure the spare parts for transplantations. You find almost everything here, suitable for any blood group and as fresh as on the day of extraction. Those who get equipped here and don’t miss the inspection-intervals, are provided with an almost perfect body, that lasts for ages, so to speak, while the spirit and the soul need some extra service.

My father was a good example. Had he not lost his head, he would have gone on forever. But the price he had to pay, was high, extremely high in his case, from a moral point of view.”

“The corpses look so fresh, they must come from somewhere” Anonymous exclaimed. The Prince nodded. “Those are the victims of the system. They have sold themselves or have been sold by others. The creditors cash those who plunder their account before the time has come. Their executives - the so-called Miseriors - grant no mercy. Meanwhile the situation became better for two reasons. Since spare parts of that kind” he pointed at the disgusting scenery - “became superfluous and have been replaced by more elegant and less cruel methods. The keyword here is cloning.”

“And we wonder, where the aggression comes from over there in Laptopia” Arundle said, shaking her head.

“How come, we didn’t find out? Grisella’s interviewers inquired in any possible way, and asked the people over and over again.”

“I think, it was fear, that made them keep their mouths shut,” the Prince suggested. “If you don’t know it otherwise, you take such things for granted, and you don’t talk about them anymore. You wouldn’t question the daily sunrise, would you?”

“Are they going to be slaughtered while still alive?” asked Scholasticus Slyboots in disgust.

“That’s not necessary. The life-light extinguishes, as soon as a Miserior presents the Proclamation of Exitus (PoE). They then get hold of their victims, who exhale their living soul, which is put into a special plastic bag. This way such life has definitely terminated” the Prince concluded.

“Would they die anyway?” Arundle asked.

“Most likely” answered the Prince – “but it never happened. The creditors have been so keen about corporal spare parts.”

Arundle shivered.

“You spoke of reforms, that followed. What did change then, after all?” Scholasticus Slyboots asked.

“Well, first of all the extend of such practice was concerned. Nobody was allowed to deal with ‘time-related articles’ – (as such corporal human entities were called) - uncontrolled any more. Each transaction had to be registered, and most importantly - was charged. In some cases by an enormous tax-fee, depending on the wealth of the proprietors.

All ‘Time-Exchange-Account-Converters’ were withdrawn, which had been positioned in each supermarket or other public facility of any kind.

Can you imagine, the youngsters spent some ten to fifteen years of lifespan for a trendy glider, just like that? All they had to do, was put their finger into that TEAC – (that is the ‘Time-Exchange-Account-Converter’), and the thing was theirs. That was indeed pretty seductive and you had to have a strong character to resist. However - what does the youth care about age. The bill was then presented all too soon. Those who had chosen this

seductive main road to immediate happiness, didn't do - as a rule - for more than five years or so."

"I see" Anonymous said "and by that way all the youthful corpses came here to become cannibalised. How awful..."

"Disgusting" Arundle, added.

"But that was it - the creditor's executives cashed with 'mind and body', that is, the whole being by terminating their lives. I have to confess, that the corpses were much better off, than the souls. Although there are only rumours spread about, nobody has ever confirmed. The Advisor spoke to me of unbelievable excesses, though. He'd be the one to explain all this much better than I can. All the more Malicious Marduk comes in right here, he is meant to be the Big Boss of the Miseriors."

The mysterious Advisor appeared right at that same moment from behind a pedestal. He bowed politely and greeted the Prince's guests deservingly, but didn't show, whether he recalled them.

"I've found out about that one" the Prince declared and pointed at the Advisor, as if he was an object. Arundle thought him to be almost rude. "Was the Advisor after all no man of flesh and blood?"

"I think, he is something like a virtual image", the Prince went on. "Try to touch him, then you understand, what I mean." The Prince stepped forward and grabbed into emptiness right through the Advisor. "See - nothing but pure air. He's an icon, nothing real."

The Advisor smiled softly and bowed again: "But I fulfil my duty" he said.

"His Majesty gives his regards to the young lady and her disapproving companion." He smiled again and bowed heartily towards Arundle and a little stiffer to Anonymous, who sighted at him somehow confused.

In the meantime, they had entered another room. Here the atmosphere was even denser and more uncomfortable than before. Anonymous didn't find out at first, what the cause was.

The Advisor accompanied them just like that, and even took the lead. "As far as here, even the Prince hasn't

gone” he explained, and pointed at the strange bubbles fitted to the lowered ceiling. The bubbles looked like blown up plastic bags after a second closer look. Each was neatly closed and labelled, and was filled with some kind of milky something.

The Advisor grabbed for a bag, opened the string and softly knocked on the top. From inside a thin screaming was heard. Arundle saw two little hands trying to get hold on the slippery skin, but were slowly gliding towards the opening. Before the grey shadow could fall, the Advisor held his hand under the opening and pushed the being right back. The frightened eyes in the little face, which you noticed between the thin stretched arms, closed. A thumb got to the mouth. The being rolled in like an infant in its mother’s womb, while the Advisor carefully closed the string and fixed the bag back to the ceiling.

“Those are the lost souls,” he explained. “That’s all the better, then up there” and he pointed up. The ceiling, the bags were fitted to, was a kind of trellis. “Behind - something terrible is lurking” he said and pointed at big dark shadows, who made faces at him as soon as they realized, that he was referring to them.

“They know exactly that I can’t get at them,” the Advisor said. The monsters were shaken by fits of horrid laughter.

While the Advisor had opened the bag, they had stretched greedy fingers at the trellis but couldn’t get through. “There is nothing the poor souls are more afraid of than those Miseriors” the Advisor explained – “those emissaries of that Marduk – and there is a good reason for that. In their bags, they aren’t free, but they have peace after all and may find a useful place somewhere. But woe betide them, when they fall into the hands of the Miseriors.”

“What do they serve for, and where do they come from?” Scholasticus Slyboots wanted to know. He cut Arundle off that way because she had intended to ask for the horrible fate as victims of the Miseriors.

“The lost souls originate from the debtors and form the most valuable part,” the Advisor explained. While

cashing the debtors, they are extracted first from the terminated corpse and are caught in those plastic bags, as we just have seen, before they can escape into nothingness.

They are condemned to become victims of the Miseriors anyway, therefore they accept any other solution. They serve as a kind of lubricator. A dead leg for example becomes only alive again by means of a living soul. The soul is the most important factor of the transplantation.”

The Advisor waved around in a circle. “All those souls wait for an opportunity to be used.”

“But is that not dehumiliating? Souls are bound for higher purpose. To become a leg’s soul can’t be it” Anonymous put in upset again.

“That could well be, but such complicated philosophical questions we may discuss somewhere else. You have seen how frightened the soul was, while I tried to get it out of its bag. It has noticed the Miseriors earlier than you did. That was the reason why it didn’t want to be knocked out of its shelter.”

“Is there no way of getting rid of the Miseriors?” Arundle asked and looked uneasy up at the ceiling. One of the monsters just made a face at her.

“I’m afraid, no” the young Prince interfered. “Our hands are bound. We can control the state-official sector and we can try to get hold of the black market as well, but against evil spirits from other spheres, we are powerless. As long as Malicious Marduk keeps control over the twilight zone of the Miseriors, we won’t overcome the black marketeers. There are other means required. Means we expect you to obtain.”

The Advisor nodded: “Nevertheless, what lies in our hands must be done, to get control over the black market and the black marketeers. Otherwise, all our efforts are in vain and devaluations turn out to be inefficient. You see, we came to the factor four by now. Nevertheless, the last word hasn’t been spoken. Our combined efforts may let us focus on factor three again. You never know what’s written in the stars.”

Arundle and Scholasticus Slyboots looked at each other uncomprehendingly. The Advisor - while noticing such glance - nodded reassuringly and declared: "It's like that, - well no, I better try historically." - The matter was harder to explain than he thought.

- "One of the actions that was taken to calming down the riots, (I referred to in the beginning) was to bring everybody back to the same level. In other words to spread the time regularly - as far as possible. The Emperor decided for the first time a general devaluation of time. Beginning with a fixed date, the time was devaluated by ten percent, that meant, the time was shortened by one tenth. Seconds, minutes, and hours - all measures of time were shortened by one tenth. At the same time, the free trade of time was abolished, and was limited to the state-controlled sector.

However, we didn't consider the black market. Just as our actions began to work, the black market began to boom: - time, TEACs, corporal spare parts, souls - everything you could think of was traded on the black market. The demand regulated the supply, and soon the worst possible forms of slave trade revived. While we were still busy, handling that devaluation.

After some ten years or so, we were down to fifty percent. Can you imagine - the night has only six hours - at night people couldn't be cheated, the body required its rest, while during daytime at work we could have easily quartered the quantum" the Advisor smiled.

"No matter how often we devaluated. New secret strong rooms were installed uncontrolled. (The one we are in right now was of course authorised.) Greedy bumps were purchasing and dealing under cover. The consequence was that people died again earlier and earlier. The average age was sinking dramatically again, while our plan figured the average age of seventy earth-years.

The black marketeers caused confusion in many ways. They initiated slave trade and headhunting on the one hand, and satisfied the most primitive and cruel notions on the other, - they found clients enough for their dirty trade.

Again the underdog youngsters had to die far too early. It was like a pandemic plague. This development led to considerable obstructions. Riots and upheavals were the consequence. First of all the youngsters, - who couldn't lose anything but their chains -, rioted and terrorized the quarters of Laptopia-City, and even got them under control, while the Miseriors didn't miss such opportunities to stimulate chaos and cruelties of the worst kind."

"And always one name appeared: Malicious Marduk..." the Prince added. Again, the Advisor nodded:

"Malicious Marduk became the big opponent of the Emperor. The Miseriors, you must know, are mentally very limited beings, although full of malice. Without guidance by Malicious Marduk, they are easy to be seen through, and we managed to keep them under control."

"What terrible things are they actually doing?" Anonymous wanted to know.

"That's a good question. All I can do, is to refer to the lost souls" the Advisor answered.

"Amongst the living no-one knows for sure" the Prince interfered – "and from the souls you wouldn't get an answer. Nevertheless, the pain must be unbearable, otherwise the souls wouldn't clamp to their plastic bags. Although, it is natural for souls to roam. If they prefer to stick to their bags, while Miseriors are waiting outside, there must be some good reason, though" the Prince explained. Again the Advisor agreed, but not all sincerely, perhaps the Prince was simplifying a much more complex matter.

14. Anonymous in Frankfurt

The former Roland Waldschmitt twinkled. Had he dreamed? His daughter and Scholasticus Slyboots were busy in the little kitchen, they were cooking a meal.

What had happened? Well, he had never experienced anything like that. Had it been a day-dream? Had he really been sleeping? He couldn't remember anything else but the dream, or had it been a very lively vision?

Had he needed another push, there it was. If that was the future of mankind, then good-night, and fare well brave new world...

Like in a distorting mirror he visualized what would come if people like him ran the show. He and his kind – all those so-called brothers, who praised egotism and selfishness as the true virtues of progress, stood at the beginning of such a nightmare. Everything had to be done to make this not happen. Another chapter had to be written. He decided to start right away while the impression was still fresh.

He wasn't hungry anyway, and was fed up with all those tins. He wondered if he also could get something fresh, once in a while.

Right now he felt strong enough to stand the challenges. The more as so he was not alone. However, he had to become active, that nobody could do for him. In his daughter and the Professor he had the best partners for his ideas, he was sure about that. Perhaps they had to wait a little longer, perhaps they needed more careful planning. However, the fight had to be taken up, there was no way out of it.

They had to stop Malicious Marduk, at best right now and here, if that was possible, lest that such nightmare never become real. He still resisted to believe that what he had seen was a vision of the future world – the earth they lived on... – not right now, however some-when and somewhere (while he had been moved temporal, he was almost certain) – the good old earth down there, he hoped to see soon enough, as well as he hoped that it would be the earth he left some weeks ago, in order to write this prophetic book of warning up here.

He couldn't be sure about that either, had he himself become his alter ego and was not the same anymore, but a new man.

The old I had died. He had left it behind. And he strongly wished to have this become reality. Because it is said so easily that an I has been replaced by a better one, while the body was still alive and more or less the same, and so was the memory. So what was this death like, then?

He felt the itch to test that out, and go into the lion's cage, so to speak. And what would be more challenging for that than the stage of the world, a public performance at the Frankfurt book fair?

The book should be promoted anyway, and without author this was a tuff business, no matter how worth while the subject was.

First he talked things over with Scholasticus and Arundle, after having found out, that they remembered his nightmare likewise. "Kind of mirror, though, opened up for you" Arundle confirmed. "We were there in fact some years ago, that is, I was, but for Scholasticus it was as uncommon as it was for you, I presume... Both of you took part in my memory in a way..."

He'd better talk things like that over with Grisella, Scholasticus objected, because neither he, nor Arundle knew enough of that business. Thus, the three decided to move back to the Isle of Wisdom-tooth.

Grisella was all too happy about that decision, because the responsibility for the book project was almost too much for her. They could weigh and consider the pros and cons of such a public affair, and speak as well of the risks.

In the end they came up with a surprising suggestion. The publisher agreed right away, thus the idea was built into the marketing and advertising strategies.

"Who is hiding behind the mask of Anonymous?" you soon could read in the appropriate magazines, expecting a sensation on the upcoming 'World's biggest Book Show'.

In the Deep South the winter just said good-by – in October, spring broke out with might. The Isle of

Wisdom-tooth was glowing in a double fever of awakening.

While everywhere flowers and grass raised their subtle heads, a plan built up to have Anonymous burst into the Frankfurt fair by sorcery. "...as precise and media specific as possible" Grisella put it " – "...and also somewhat oblique and not quite legal" Dorothea added.

That would heat the media humdrum even further. However the probationer required an extra lot of discipline. "I think, we do it that way..." Arundle fixed the strategy. And then she presented to her stunned father such a tricky double strategy, that he bowed in admiration literally.

"...and now get to work, what you are missing, is definitely the routine. A talent like you has to be trained. However there has been little done from your side, so far. Besides, you are not the youngest. – well, don't you worry, we'll make it. Flory and Cory are with us, after all..."

However, the training went on and successes remained meagre for indulgent Arundle, who started panicking: "Things got to be visualised" she kept yelling at her assistants: "Visualising is our declared aim. Everything else is secondary..."

The sisters looked at each other and shook their heads softly, what on earth was meant by 'everything else is secondary'? However, they refrained from bothering their exited friend with such check backs. Her father was stress enough.

"And don't forget about plan B, if plan A fails!" Again the friends didn't quite know what was meant by that. Well, plan B did mean something. They had to talk with Billy-Joe and Pooty about that.

"...and be aware of that grass harp for heavens sake. I cannot imagine what's going to happen if we stand up front without a grass harp..." she yelled and stumbled over her own feet.

"Arundle, you need a break. Have a break and let us continue. We will go on the way you want it, just trust in us..."

Former Waldschmitt, the object of his daughter's endeavours, was also stressed. While stress was the least they needed. So they made him break as well, and then continued with some relaxation exercises, which miraculously led to success right away. While the visualising still was some kind of a problem. The probationer more than once started flickering or even disappeared as a whole.

"Wouldn't look all that bad, after all" they nodded at each other affirmatively. "Let's see what the others say" Cory wondered – "I think they'll like it, just the same" Flory agreed.

For the exotic part Pooty and Magic Master Stone as well as Billy-Joe were responsible on a wholly different stage, so to speak. Still, Arundle insisted to participate and found her father's agreement, who still was a little afraid of the 'savage' he still addressed Billy-Joe secretly – and that outlandish fury thing with him likewise. Such a hint could show how far he had managed in overcoming the old Adam – not really very far, though.

The date came nearer, while the excursion into the Australian outback consumed a lot of the precious time of theirs. The probationer lacked twofold of mobility and flexibility.

Being stuck for years in a rigid ideology turned out to be as miserable as the chronic lack of physical exercise; in spite of the radical vocabulary he procured, thus now turned out to be nothing but empty straw.

A beginner's training right from the start seemed necessary, while those spare-parts, which had been implanted, turned out to be disturbing or even became severe obstacles. Only the organs could prevail and did a good job. That was something, after all.

The sensitive side of his personality had also severely suffered, and it seemed very unlikely to bring here some green to blossom, but Billy-Joe didn't give up so easily, and indeed after some days they achieved somewhat acceptable results.

“We may not need that part at all” Arundle commented, who wasn’t convinced yet, when she realised how deep her friend involved.

“You never know” he just said. He wanted this part done as best as possible. Despite the fact that this part of the performance was of minor importance in the oeuvre that was going to be presented. On the other hand, it would raise attention, and that was what the show was about, anyway. The basic idea was to stir up as many people as possible.

For the publisher any event would be of help and the press would jump on this one, for sure.

“What ever we do, by all of our measures your father gets an exemplary lightness, thus it really doesn’t matter whether his bones show a little stiffness – might even be a nice effect, though” Grisella put in. She claimed for an end of the preparations by now. Everything else had to be performed live on stage anyway.

The telephone kept ringing for a little while – so unusual over here, until Dorothea finally answered the call. “It’s for you, Grisella” she shouted through the office – “it’s the publisher...”

A minute later Grisella came back with a bright smile on her face: “The decision is out” she yelled into the round where all in the know were assembled.

“As we learn from well informed sources the price of the German Book Trade this year goes to – well guess to whom – to no less than to ANONYMOUS...”

“Now our efforts were not in vain! - congratulations and thanks to all of you. We wouldn’t have done without you...”

“Slow down, dear sister-in-law, don’t you tear off the rabbit’s skin before you caught it. There is still a performance ahead...”

“You and your awful comparisons” Grisella answered quite upset while being vegetarian and animal rights protector – however Scholasticus only shrugged.

“Let’s stay cool” he murmured somewhat intimidated, but still didn’t see the point in his offence. To him it was just a kind of proverb.

They all knew it, the first performance was the most important. Conditions favoured the sleeper down here in the South. Right in the middle of the night he had to dream himself to the Frankfurt book fair, while the accompanying crew travelled by means of Masters Bow and Stone and were supposed to meet at the publisher’s stall in Hall II G3 precisely at ten thirty local time.

“By all means, be punctual” Grisella pleaded, who couldn’t overcome her aero-phobia and was represented by her sister.

Anonymous had a beer for the night in order to gain the necessary mood and to overcome a certain nervousness. He punctually slept by half past ten and dreamed himself straight towards the book fair, the same way they had trained it during the preparations. He knew the site of course, but had trouble finding Hall II at first.

When he did it at last he was greeted by his team, who checked him over again of his transparency, but were satisfied, so far. The passer-bys shouldn’t notice before hand what was going on.

By car they then went to the Paul’s-church for the price. Speeches were held, the price was handed over, and now it was Anonymous part to say thank-you. At first he did so with brave words, but then he pulled a grass harp out of a Medicine pouch around his neck under the busted shirt, threw away shoes and jacket and started one of the monotonous Australian singings.

While doing so he began to lift off the ground – first up and down than had himself wave through the rows so that the last noticed the condition he was in.

A sigh went through the hall. Those who were seated apart pressed in. Rough press-guys pushed for the best shooting position. It didn’t take more than five minutes and the photos went around the world, and Anonymous somewhat thin singing had half a million

clicks in the internet and promised to become a world hit. The publishers didn't know what happened and weren't prepared for such ballyhoo.

The book as such seemed of minor importance, while his author was some sort of Aborigine. That was the sensation.

"Anthropology has to be rewritten" titled a yellow press paper and disguised as Euro centric.

While the rumour of the gifted Aborigine kept roaming: "Einstein from the outback", it said in the evening news. No dements could do – those photos were just too cute. "The resurrected amongst us?" questioned another yellow magazine showing Anonymous with his grass harp some three feet above the ground swaying through in Paul's Church.

The paper was accused right away for blasphemy by the Holy Chair, who sent his highest representative next to the Holy Father himself to Frankfurt to find out what was going on.

The idea had been another one. The esoteric performance was intended to protect the endangered author, and that fear was all too realistic.

Like hellhounds a mean couple was on his trail: Viola de Stäel and Rudolfus Catalanius were present, however realized soon that nothing could be done, because the author wasn't present in reality.

Such a phantom could neither be chased nor executed. The original could be anywhere. And even if they had known were to find him in person, it was too late by now. Anonymous and his book were already well known. The author had achieved what he wanted: worldwide publicity was his lot. He could sit in any corner of this world and enjoy his oeuvre, while they were the blamed.

Both agreed how dubious Waldschmitt had appeared ever since, when they read his book – they didn't doubt for a moment who was hidden behind the pseudonym.

It was the bleak and somewhat merciless accusation of a traitor and renegade hiding behind morals, and presenting his - 'supposed to be' - mellow heart with in-surmounting stupidity and the naughty arrogance of delayed puberty.

The most secret plans and most hidden intentions, and darkest secrets this man discovered. Such a book was dangerous, because it assembled the stupid band of good-doers and world-improvers, and put the finger on the weak side of the new time-economy.

With gnashing teeth they had to witness how this renegade was hailed by the plentitude for his hollow talks of love and justice.

Malicious Marduk knew the sources very well, Anonymous referred to. But how could he achieve such detailed discernments? The appropriate chapters proved him witness. Thus, a grave complaint was due with the highest authorities. Such an unacceptable interference into the past by future means could not remain unanswered.

However, complaints like this didn't suit the spontaneous spirit of evil, for him they seemed to be the most boring endeavour you could think of, and were meant for his heavenly opponent, the so called Advisor, an arrogant self-assured bastard, who aimed to be something special by resisting the temptations of power, while rejecting torture in disgust.

Malicious Marduk was bound by a similar codex and was thus separated from his hellish company. A circumstance he was more troubled with, than he had thought he would be. As a result the humans he became under control remained weak characters in general. The best example he was just experiencing.

Malicious Marduk could as well count two and two together, so to speak. Behind Anonymous nobody else was hiding but the former Chairman of the Brotherhood of Infernalialia, who had changed sides, just like that!

Those human beings remained for ever an insolvable secret for Malicious Marduk. At the bottom of their hearts you could find all those demands and

temptations of his taste. However, they were full of weakness and scruples, and broke in on the funniest occasions, only to throw away everything they had achieved or had adored as their elixir of life before.

Can a book change the course of the world? That was the most decisive question. Anonymous asked the question over and over again, and a sweet tickle got at him. He'd be better off if he hadn't swayed in on the hubbub about his book. He could feel how the fangs of power played with him again, which were creeping in through the back-door while being dismissed at the front door.

It was high time to wake up. His dream had been a nice dream, no doubt, but a dream, and dreams you had because you were able to wake up again. And because all things that were happening in reality, hadn't yet happened in the dream, or would perhaps never happen – and what was perhaps most important: In dreams things could happen, which would hopefully never happen in reality, thus, functioning as a kind of warning.

That's so nice while dreaming. Dreams aren't real, as long as they last, what ever comes out in the aftermath. Think of that ancient dream of flying, almost everyone knows. Without it, people had perhaps never had the idea of leaving the ground. Being free like a bird meant to be outlaw and had been one of the worst punishments you could think of. However, the inner drive, the dreamt experience of flying overcame the fear and the dangers of free flight.

Anonymous started musing again, while he intended to wake up only. Waking up was hard to achieve, though. Would all be just a dream he had experienced in Frankfurt, as soon as he woke up? Then he didn't want to wake up.

All the perpetrators of the world couldn't harm his dreamt appearance. He enjoyed for being honoured for the sake of the bettering of the world. That meant a lot for him, more than all the terror meant he had been spreading in former times. If you could compare that at all!

Now, the sweet lust of power tickled as well, but it was a different kind of power, and came from passion and respect, where he formally was spreading fear and horror and have his self being raised and also somehow respected in a negative way, though.

He couldn't help it, he had to wake up, thus was the quest of life. Those, who never woke up again were handed over to death, and that was something else.

The crew was just arriving, when Anonymous stretched his stiff limbs and yawned, after a long rest and sweet dreams. While he was in due train to tell the others they just waved him off "we know, we know" they said smiling. "We were there ... great experience, though, congratulations ... well done..."

What should they do now? Sooner or later the persecutors would pick up. They also were in command of forces of the other kind. Wrath and sudden rage paired with malice and cruelty governed their misdoings. The cloud of revenge wavered by like a threatening thunderstorm. Those sensible characters on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth could almost smell them. And while they were able to arm themselves, they couldn't guarantee for their guest, who was the target of the combined wrath of all forces of darkness.

Especially since the formal protest had been accepted, Malicious Marduk had raised. Thus, the doors of hell stood wide open while the band of Miseriors were gathering and was approaching now like a dark huge cloud, mighty and deadly towards the Isle of Wisdom-tooth.

"This time it'll be serious" Arundle meant while she looked at her father really scared. Billy-Joe agreed – "There is but one choice - resurrection!"

Pooty got Master Stone off the Medicine Pouch and Arundle employed her Magic Bow likewise, and had his red eye twinkle.

“I think, we go the straight way – no diversions, no temporal or local target this time...” Arundle and Master Bow agreed. “At best we steer right towards the virtual hyper-station amidst the crossing of all galaxies and poly-verses.”

Master Stone agreed right away. There was no time to lose. Arundle, Billy-Joe with Pooty, and the real Anonymous this time vanished from the surface of the earth, while stars and comets passed by like neat little coloured lampions in time.

For Anonymous this would become a long trip, a very long trip indeed, whether a voyage without return, was written in the stars. For now he was in their middle, like a lost sheep that was coming home after a long void journey back to the herd.

Arundle’s fare-well faded in the empty space. A last wink and Anonymous was on his own.

The magic carriage turned in on an elegant slope about the time-scale, and than returned the passengers to the original position, where their friends hadn’t been void in the meantime, and were prepared in order to stand the upcoming evil.

Like Moshe once erected the iron snake in defence of the deadly attack of the fire-snakes from heaven, stood now Scholasticus like a rock, firm and sound on the ground, and tuck his iron staff into the ground as Moshe had once done.

And the staff endured! Endured for a good while, when Scholasticus staggered and threatened to fall under the impact of the attack. Billy-Joe saw it and rushed towards him. Mighty energies rushed through the iron snake and disappeared in the ground, where hell opened its mouth. The Miseriors disappeared one by one to where they belonged.

When Malicious Marduk realized his mistake, it was too late. His army was lost. His mighty force faded in the senseless attack. In boundless wrath he rushed behind. So mighty was the push that went through the staff, the iron snake busted, and burned the hands of the holders down to the bones.

“Are you sure, this was hell’s gate, they went through?” Pooty asked and looked into stunned faces in the round, while the two heroes, holding the staff, slowly noticed what had happened to their palms.

Arundle rushed towards them and got her first aid stuff out of Master Bow’s invisible quiver.

Master Bow then examined the wounds and knew right away, what to do: “It’s gonna take a while, though. Lucky them mostly the palms are burnt and not the fingers. That’s good. Put your hands into ice-cold water for the next twelve hours, and then we’ll see” was his advice, the two heroes followed without comment.

Thickly muffled up in warm clothing they sat in the kitchen in front of a bowl of water wherein ice-cubes were swimming.

Many of the ones in the know had gathered for company, but that was not the only reason. Cory and Adrian were in severe sorrow for the mer-folk. “What, if the Miseriors are going to attack them again?” Cory asked and Adrian added:

“Was that really hell’s gate, you saw them disappear? How do you know what hell’s gate look like?”

Scholasticus and Billy-Joe looked at each other. “Such you feel” said Billy-Joe after a short while, and Scholasticus nodded “You know that in the instant” he said “afterwards you ask yourself how did you know...”

Now, they weren’t all that certain anymore. What Adrian and Cory feared was not all that unlikely. By experience all inhabitants of the area knew that simplifying the whereabouts was no good advice. Who had been attacked by those Miseriors, knew how the personality could change under the impact of the evil force. The first notion was just to lie and ignore what happened: “That’s kind of logical, though. Who wants to admit that he or she isn’t his or her boss anymore?” Pooty said with tears in his eyes, while he thought of Walter.

15. The Nanoverse

“Has been just false alarm - thank God, my feelings were mistaken” Adrian reported after his visit at the bottom of the sea, and Cory could only confirm his impression, who had gone with him.

Both had been on very different sites, but didn’t notice any remarkable difference. The mer-folk was as usual. The trip to hell had thus been real – Those Miseriors had obviously disappeared.

“Sometimes they are in their own way” Cory sighed somewhat desperate after her return from her monthly visit. Her sister picked her up from the landing-stage where the boat landed after a stormy trip over the passage from Conversiors’ Island. One of the few summer storms moved over the islands since that morning.

“Is that not the same everywhere?” Flory answered.

“Could well be – still...” Cory objected.

“What are you after?” Flory didn’t quite get her.

“Well, nothing special, it’s just kind of feeling” Cory said, while alarm-bells starting ringing on Flory’s side.

“...and Adrian speaks of false alarm!”

“Do you mean...?” asked Cory.

“Don’t you think so?” Flory replied.

“While you say so” Cory thoughtfully put in.

“Just remember, nobody sticks a label on his or her forehead saying ‘here lives a Miserior’,” Flory insisted.

“I see what you mean” Cory nodded. “Yes, I think the feeling is enough. I mean that awful feeling – nothing works by itself, everything is delayed, things don’t fit as common. It’s like wading through a swamp and you don’t get ahead. While normally you meet happy faces everywhere, they all look so sad and hopeless” Cory explained, and went on after a short while: “Perhaps it’s the lack of lightness. They are all so tough...”

“You and Adrian should mention that as soon as possible or even call for an extra meeting” Flory recommended.

Her sister nodded somewhat bleary-eyed. She was tired after the swim and longed for her bed. “Such a week under water is quite something, you know...”

Flory couldn't imagine her little sister's life any more and felt sad about that. They weren't the same any more, a shadow stood between them and had torn them apart. But perhaps life was that way, and perhaps the change didn't pass by her as well, while she didn't notice it.

When her little sister had left, she went on to the ‘great afternoon’ as the seminar of the two Honourables was called meanwhile. In fact the semester had already ended, but the hard core of students didn't accept and didn't want to miss the energetic push they always perceived.

Messrs Stone & Bow were only too delighted, though, and needn't be asked twice.

They then started their monotonous singing and squabbling as usual to the students' delight, who didn't want to miss it. Such collective daydreaming was of an entirely different quality than any other lecture or what Flory was able to achieve on her own or with her sister. (Cory was as good at that as she was.) They were well-trained Somniors after all, and were at the end of an endless chain of ancestors on their mother's side.

The hall was packed as ever. Flory slipped through hardly noticeable openings, and put her small feet into the tiniest gaps. She wanted to get to her friend Arundle, who was sitting at the desk with Master Magic Bow on her lap, while Billy-Joe was sitting cross-legged on the pedestal, and Pooty was fumbling the other magician out of Billy-Joe's Medicine Pouch.

Master Magic Stone soon gloomed in the brightest colours. Master Bow answered by the nicest red of his magic eye. Billy-Joe took over the introductory singing this time, and sang a song of his ancestors. It was the great song of rain-making, while outside the storm roared, you could hear through the centre shaft.

“Rain-making’s kind of easy, though, while the storm is raging outside...” some might mock and get an ice-cold shower in the neck for that, which made the mocker squeeze like his mouth did when sucking a lemon. Those forgot about the telepathetic base that prevailed in here.

Such little sanctions were done smart and precise and nobody with a clean mind experienced one single icy drop.

It was not easy to clear the brain and get rid of the wild mixture they had in mind. Flory tried very hard this time. She had been pushing towards the centre, because she thought the energy strongest at hand. Besides, her friend was sitting there, she wanted to be near, because the alienation from her sister was aching, and she hoped for relief. While being here she couldn’t feel the wall, she meant to notice between her and Cory, when they were alone. She panicked whenever she became aware.

Something was going on, she couldn’t grope, and might have to do with Cory’s excursions into the ocean. Although she had made excursions before ever since, and nothing happened.

Billy-Joe’s singing increased and mixed with the hollow howling of the wind in the inner shaft. Since Anonymous’ great success with his Australian out-back interlude at the Frankfurt book fair – Billy-Joe thought such performances very suitable by now – right here and in the lecture hall! Far too unquestionably his folk ignored their own folk’s soul and spirit or even denied it.

What did those whiteys think they were? Judging and measuring the value of the original Australian culture for the good of mankind. Would they at last know for once what they missed, lacking of the capacity to take part, first of all. They didn’t even have a sense of noticing their shortcoming!

Yes, this was said just like that, very right! If it was said just like that, than it wasn’t worth while and would forever be closed for those who lacked of courage and

patience, while this was needed if you wanted to dive into the true secrets of the world.

With axes and halogene beamers you better not tried. And perhaps did a symphony orchestra not fit either, while a grass harp would do, by means of which it had been tried for thousands of years to imitate the chirping of the cricket.

“What’s that worth while?” was the stupid question of the whiteys, who knew the answer beforehand.

The whiteys know, that the substance of the cricket is not worth while, that the chirping of the cricket isn’t worth while, just like the little leaf of grass of the monochrome grass harp.

And now they even know that their own wealth isn’t worth while, because they have invented a new worth, they believe in with the old fervour – they call it the time.

But now the cricket comes back into the game and the chirping of the grass-harp, because the secret of time is enclosed in the chirping of the grass-harp, and what it needs to find out.

“The value of the grass-harp chirping is the de-acceleration of time.”

“Hear, hear” a voice sounded. “Just like the life of a cricket prolongs a short summer into an aeon in the Nanoverse, the play of the grass-harp takes us out of time and into the Nanoverse” the Advisor made himself known.

“Chirp, chirp, chirp” the grass-harp said. Foreboding, woeful sighing – The audience split into those who understood and those who didn’t. Billy-Joe was asked to continue until all changed sides and understood.

Billy-Joe hoped for the power of the grass-harp and blew with might. The weak sound combined with the howling of the storm in the shaft, indisguisable. “Take your time, take your time, take your time...”

He couldn’t do more in the presence of eternity.

The Honourables packed their stuff, that is, they let pack, and waved off in dignity through the centre gateway that opened respectfully.

Flory popped in on the suction of the departing and remained on Arundle's heels, who held the Magic Bow high over the head, when an almost soundless orchestra was heard playing some kind of gay defiling march.

"Let's have a bite, I'm starving" Arundle suggested. "What about the South-Pacific buffet? What do you think? We didn't do for quite a while."

"Not together, anyway" Billy-Joe agreed – "Flying dogs and the like, ain't it?" he grinned and pushed at Arundle, because he knew what she liked in any respect. Those so-call bats were her favourite.

"...and if the storm lets us, we could have a swim afterwards" Billy-Joe suggested.

At half past seven the sun was setting and the night came. Now it was about six o'clock. There wasn't much time left.

"Let's see" Arundle replied smiling. She didn't want to refuse his wish just like that. He might have something in mind after today's experience, she didn't know what to think about.

So they indeed went for a swim after a short supper. The water was still upset and rather fresh. They headed at once out to their platform. The low sun was hardly able to warm them up, while the last gusts of the storm made them shiver.

They didn't feel like hanging on and soon decided to return. Trained swimmers as they were, they usually did the distance in a few minutes, but today the course stretched uncomfortably.

They hadn't figured the suction of the low tide – which was heavier after the spring floods of the storm than usual, and – when driven back - had almost missed their pontoon in the twilight that was lowering.

They just managed to get hold of the rail and climbed up again, as they were, that is – Arundle, Flory, Billy-Joe, Tika, Tibor and Tuzla.

Arundle called for her Magic Bow and Billy-Joe for Pooty, but in vain.

In dim light of the lowering evening the beach was greeting a last fare-well. Would they have to stay out here all night long? They would chill, no doubt.

A left behind towel of former guests was their only cover. So they crouched and held tight shivering. While fear mingled with the cold.

Billy-Joe felt ashamed and guilty. Arundle was ashamed too, because she blamed him, Flory was ashamed because of her ill feelings towards her sister - Tuzla and Tibor were ashamed, because it should have been easy for them as Sublimations to wave over to the beach, they could even have taken a passenger with them. But instead of talking things over, they just sat there shivering and quaking in silence.

Billy-Joe started one of his songs after a short while, which all sounded alike to outsiders. This one was the warming-up song for cold days, and was meant to warm you up, as the title said.

Soon Billy-Joe felt indeed warmer, Arundle noticed, who was squatting next to him. And she also felt revived, as soon as she tuned in on the singing.

A simple solution for a big problem, it seemed to her, and she felt very content, and so did the others.

Again the time stood still like once before the same day, and the Nanoverse opened, where time doesn't mean the same and seconds eventually become years, and minutes decenniums, and hours millenniums, and weeks – millions, and months billions - well roughly in some kind of reality - yet unknown, so to speak.

Who professed the proper eye, might look inside like into a goggle box and have a convenient look at world history in a kind of parallelogram, or something...

“Thus, we'd end up with “Spoeken-peeping” Flory wondered. Her father was a Hamburger (not the one you can eat, but born in Hamburg) – he loved the saying and employed it in order to circumscribe the gifts of his wife and daughters, without knowing in fact how far such “Spoeken-peeping-reality” was away from dreaming. That didn't mean much on the one hand, any good dreamer should know. Perhaps she doesn't know exactly

what she eventually sees, still she experiences things nearby.

“No matter where you log in, you can find your time anywhere in the Nanoverse. It cannot be otherwise, while this is eternity” a voice was heard “I say this without claiming permission, though” the voice went on.

In reality no ten minutes elapsed. He had had an argument with his colleague Arundle’s Magic Bow let her know for excuse. “Did last a wink longer than expected. It’s not going to happen again...”

“We didn’t see anything, at least I didn’t. But we know now how it works properly, after having found access once. There are most likely safer procedures for that” Tibor wanted to know. And Arundle was rather stunned how cool he did see the matter – it seemed to be for him like one of those new computer games.

“Well, yes, after supper taking a swim out to the pontoon, then swimming back, and try in vain to fight the current; then getting hold of the rail before drifting away, freezing and gathering while singing a warming-up song and feeling good for that, and than you can take a look into the Nanoverse – is that so?” Arundle mocked. “Is that the procedure?”

“We could have left at any time, if we wanted to, am I right, Tuzla?” Tibor objected.

“Well, yes and no, the wind wasn’t favourable, and it was almost dark. If a gust had caught us we would have been in trouble” the so addressed replied, and Tibor shut up. He knew, she was right. In reality they had preferred to stay with the others, this was how he recalled it now anyway.

As soon as the rescue operation was closed, the Magic Bow had a word with Arundle and the Magic Stone likewise with Pooty and Billy-Joe.

They talked about responsibility and that sorcery shouldn’t be wasted, because it was too precious. After all, they were no taxi-cap you phoned or whistled to pick you up.

Arundle excused herself with the Nanoverse. However, the experts didn’t accept.

“If you still have questions, you better come to us. However, those dreamers are so clever, they pretend to know everything.”

Arundle protested – swimming hadn’t been her idea. Blaming Billy-Joe however, didn’t suit her either. Where had that idea come from?

In the dark waters of the bay strange shadows had appeared. A new kind of jelly-fish or left-over of a tanker leakage, the storm had pressed in? Who ever approached those shadows felt awkward right away without noticing why.

After that failure on the pontoon, water as such became distracting for the youth during the upcoming days. Instead of swimming or sailing they stayed ashore chilling in the sunshine.

A lot had been mused about the sea and its many facets during men’s history, Arundle wondered while she relaxed on the beach. All people of the coastal areas around the world were devoted to the sea somewhat ambivalently. Love and hatred for the wet element were closely related, as it was taking their sons while delivering life likewise. Either soft and seducing, or brisk and demanding when driven by storm and gale.

To them the sea was peopled by all kinds of fable beings, and couldn’t be otherwise. In the deepest depths all kinds of titans, guardians and hell-monsters kept on dwelling. The sea could become hell as well, when the shipwrecked died with thirst amidst the blinking water.

However, by all that general musings Arundle’s rejection could not be explained. There was something else, more definite while still undetectable. Normally musings of the former kind didn’t hinder her from splashing through the waves. Even accidents, as had been many, didn’t refrain her from the wet element. There was something else, a more concrete threat, you somehow noticed when entering the water now.

With Cory she had become aware of first, Flory said, when she spoke with Arundle about that new phenomenon they all experienced. Such, none of them

remembered of former times. They all agreed while dwelling on the beach and wondered why they preferred to walk some 300 yards to the shower instead of cooling off right at the waterfront before their noses.

Thus the golden October came, and the summer arose with might deep down under. Adrian felt the monthly uneasiness approaching, still no joy came along with it this time, and Cory wondered whether she should go at all. Intellectus had given in for good already the month before. He said he had to make up his mind very basically. “Those steaming waves are showing an all too rough face, and the mer-folks don’t like us dry-landers – not the way humans like humans” he meant to know, while he was limited to his family and acquaintance, more or less. He was still young and disappointments of such kind would surely follow soon enough, ashore as well.

Cory went to bed with migraine, and had the doctor to look after her. However, he didn’t find any significant failure. He spoke of hormonally caused psychic ups and downs and suggested homeopathic hot and cold fomentations and light gym exercises and massage. While avoiding introspective experiments of all kind, as well as extreme strain and conversational role-changes.

Cory’s aches didn’t lessen, thus Flory asked Billy-Joe for advice, who employed the Magic Stone soon enough. While the latter contacted Master Bow, who was present anyway, because Arundle didn’t leave her friend alone, of course not!

“A classic case of exorcism, I should say” the Magic Stone explained and started right away an argument with the Magic Bow on that - about the pros and cons of certain methods.

Then Tibor was employed for his opinion. He would bring the decision, if the experts couldn’t agree. With the negative experience he and his Shaman had with the pigs and first of all with that huge boar, Tibor stayed away from asking his Shaman again and have him show up here. “Had been kind of negative experience for him likewise. That’s why he just doesn’t want to give it another trial over here.”

So the girls asked Billy-Joe, but he refused right away, and said he wasn't prepared yet. His teachings had been cut off by death anyway, when his mentor disappeared. However, if there really was no other Shaman at hand, then he wouldn't steal away from responsibility and give it a trial, even more because it was for Cory's sake.

"This would be my first case" he said in a meaningful air. Cory, who unfortunately heard the whole negotiations felt even more awful than before, and wished she hadn't asked beforehand. While she had to listen to that whispering mean voice inside, growing more definite and louder any minute, and couldn't be pushed aside.

Admitting that something was wrong inside had been a great advantage already. Many others never came that far, but pretended not to hear. Her friends admired her outstanding courage.

"Had only Walter once been so frank and free..." Pooty sighed and gave her an admiring look with tears in his eyes. Cory stretched her hand out for him to comfort him, but an uncontrollable impulse had her push a fist right into his face. The poor fellow didn't know what did happen, while the nose was bleeding.

Had there been need for a prove, here it was. A cry of disgust filled the room, and Cory's light voice was the loudest and most disgusted. Pale in the face she pleaded for bondage.

"Unfortunately, we have to do without narcosis. I can only give you a little of that hallucinate powder if you like. You might feel a little easier with it. It's not gonna be a nice walk, though. You should know. Are you ready?"

Cory nodded bravely, her hands cramped in Arundle's hand on the left and in Flory's on the right.

Billy-Joe waved with all kinds of bushels and smoke-tins over her body murmuring as he should be indisguisable, and hoped to impress not only the spectators but also the evil spirit.

Wholly unexpected - things worked out perfect. The evil spirit emitted out of Cory's wide open mouth

and made faces before he fainted and disappeared like a black veil into naught.

“For this round, that one is really dead and is not allowed back on the battlefield” Arundle commented. “By the way, this was one of the main mistakes Malicious Marduk made last time. Out of the pigs and into the sea-sprites, as it went, do you remember? If we didn’t have the great idea of re-education, things would be still the same” Arundle explained when Flory interrupted. “and if it’s been that way all the time? You see, what happened to Cory, that is, what was with her, she was infested down there, I’m sure...”

“So do I” Arundle agreed: “I do recommend we all have it an investigation. The water lately hadn’t been kosher, we all did notice, didn’t we...”

“Oh, yes, collective ghost busting, hush, hush” Pooty yelled, who had been the only one without contact with that water. While Billy-Joe put him off together with the Medicine Pouch and the Magic Stone inside.

Cory soon recovered and assisted, and had Billy-Joe explain the procedure, because he also wanted to be examined. “You never know...”

“If you were haunted, you wouldn’t have managed the exorcism with Cory” Pooty said, while Billy-Joe shook his head and said somewhat unfitting “One for all, and all for one” and didn’t know rightly what it meant. Perhaps he referred to another proverb – ‘caught together, hanged together’, while this didn’t fit either.

The joint exorcism done by Cory and Pooty was more successful than expected. At least three of those mugs became extorted and disappeared in an invisible hole in the ground. Thus, they had been in the water. The marvellous lightning conductor Scholasticus Slyboots had erected and held with all effort – now lost a good part of its miraculous nimbus.

“No highway to hell had that been, - instead - they’d done the mer-folk a backfiring disservice, though” Cory realized.

“We didn’t do purposely, we didn’t know better” Flory wanted to pull her down, However Cory didn’t

accept. “Such a learnt Professor should know better than that” she complaint. “The whole Force might be assembled down there again. If so, we ain’t better off than some years ago, can’t you see that?” she looked with a sheepish grin into embarrassed faces.

“We still have our strategy – It was successful once and will be successful again... however, we don’t have to decide on that alone. First we have to inform the management and ask Adrian for his opinion” Arundle objected, who hadn’t been infected, same as Billy-Joe.

“Black ticks don’t jump on white dogs either” Pooty explained the outstanding phenomenon, which was a big compliment for the two, and probably was right, anyway.

“Mind your words, little friend” Arundle answered. “The situation is far to earnest, for mocking on anyone.”

The double strategy had required a great effort and took several weeks. Besides, things had been clear, and defined while now you didn’t know who was friend and who was foe.

The Miseriors behaved more like parked sleepers this time than like hostile warriors, awaiting their hour to come. Little was achieved by stirring the individuals up, who weren’t open and resisted the efforts by listlessness and indifference. The former double strategy might therefore be of little value.

Only a few swimmers had been tested positive, and so far none of the mer-folk, while listlessness was a strong hint.

Adrian wanted of course to find out for himself, but was tested negative. The procedure was simple meanwhile, and fast, still you couldn’t test the whole sub-water population. They might not agree anyway, proud as they were. The only possible way was to raise their own ambitions. And without a simple method of testing and curing, the chances were limited.

During the upcoming general meeting many things were on the agenda. The most curious application referred to Anonymous. And demanded his surrender as

he was claimed to be responsible for the situation in general and for the problems of the mer-folk in specific.

Without authorisation the School's Management had granted asylum and publishing of a whistleblower of the worst kind, thus caused the uprising of the dark forces again, thus the reasoning went.

"We should negotiate about the retreat of the Miseriors, and offer the handing over of Anonymous" it further said in the application.

"I would like to have the applicant tested" Billy-Joe whispered into Arundle's ear. They were steaming with rage.

Who else but Moschus Mogoleya raised his voice in favour of this application.

(He would of course never agree to voluntary testing.) Arundle and Billy-Joe were sure that he was the grey eminence in the background, who arranged for that application. However, they couldn't prove it. The matter had been brought forward too clever: Nobody but Tika, Billy-Joe's little twin sister had put that application on the agenda.

"Moschus Mogoleya would by no means agree to a test voluntarily" Arundle whispered.

"Let's have it a trial. The test as such is of minor interest, it's the result we are after." Billy-Joe somewhat mysteriously answered.

"Yes, as a result of the test the exorcism should be included" Arundle agreed – "Thus, we do them a favour. Nobody enjoys hosting a Miserior. Surely not!"

"Be it, that he belongs to that sinister breeding..." Billy-Joe objected.

"Even then, I doubt it... - People can change, think of my father, he is the best example."

"Courage you can't learn, I'm afraid."

"...And that's missing here, no doubt..."

"Surrender – what a nuisance. First of all, they must find him..." Billy-Joe shook his head in dismay.

“That’s what all is about. That’s the trick. They want to find out which way my father took. That’s the new strategy of Malicious Marduk...”

“Not as long as I live...”

“I’ll be with you, sure enough, if it comes to the worst”, the brave girl added.

The decision was delayed. Such a basic controversy was without parallel. An investigation would be necessary to find out about the motivation that was hiding behind the application. For that purpose an open study group was founded, inviting each and everyone to take part, while Arundle and Billy-Joe registered first, sure enough.

The leading question was whether the motive for such an application was fear or something else. – Was more behind, was it intended as a tricky trap to get hold of Anonymous?

Tika’s shy and naïve air of bringing forward the quest favoured the first assumption. If it was her own, and that was the big question. Without help she would scarcely have managed, even Tibor admitted, who had been hanging up with her regularly, since she made friends with the Sublimations. Tika enjoyed Tibor’s company and had changed to the better. The green whirlwind had set her heart in flames, so to speak.

Did she hand in this application in order to do him a favour – that is - his Dean?

For Tibor it would have been easy to convince her. Had the Dean set him under pressure? The fact, that Tibor was his friend and Tika his sister, didn’t make things easier for Billy-Joe.

Arundle should have a word with Tibor, because Tika wouldn’t talk to her openly. She still was somewhat upset and resisted any approach so far.

Tibor wasn’t sure either. Fact was, that his Dean had talked thing over with all of them – including Tika. Since that time fear was the girls’ lot, while he and his brother manly fought such feelings.

After some days the girls turned up with a paper that turned out to be the application and was blaming

Anonymous to be responsible for the hullabaloo, and resulting in the dubious demand.

“I think this is a new strategy of Malicious Marduk”, Arundle thoughtfully commented on Billy-Joe’s report. “He seems to have learnt from his defeats. Moschus Mogoleya is the key, I’m convinced. Tika and the girls are only the scapegoats. The man in the background is, I’m sure, the Dean himself, and I doubt whether he is still wholly on his mind”, she went on.

“Who shall we test then?”

“Well, of course Moschus Mogoleya, that’s quite clear, or do you think there are others still behind him?”

You don’t think of poor Penelope or Zinfandor again?”

“Not him again, he had just been with my father in closure for several weeks, so I can’t see him fit into the frame...”

“And if we are totally lost the way we are investigating and Marduk isn’t the initiator this time? As a matter of fact we do have quite a different problem we should tackle, instead of wasting our precious time with bagatelles.” Arundle concluded.

“How did we get about Penelope and Zinfandor in this context?”

“Well, there’s still the suspicion in general and has to do with Mogoleya’s character. He is craving for recognition - makes him open for all kinds of influences by admired authorities.”

“Is he admiring Penelope?”

“Well, let’s start all over again. We want to know who is behind that application, because we suspect the applicant to find out the whereabouts of Anonymous. Right?”

The others agreed with Arundle.

Purposely she didn’t speak of her father in this context.

“But don’t we all wish to know where he is? I for my part would very much like to know how he is and what’s it like where he is...”

“Malicious Marduk wants to know his location for another reason. He wants to punish him for his desertion and disloyalty – as he sees it...”

“That’s the way we see it. Perhaps he just wants him back...”

“Bullshit, my father said it, while being Chairman, he only was a nuisances and as a spy he failed...”

“Besides, that woman comes into the match, the one for whom he left my mother” Arundle went on. “That was so mean after so many years...”

“Each third marriage is being divorced nowadays...”

“But not my parents...”

“Sometimes it’s even better that way, also for the children...”

“Still, when I marry one day, which will most likely never happen, I will never divorce – no way...”

Thus, the debate went astray.

The question, whether the application was based on a fundamental right or was an eerie conspiracy didn’t get any clearer. While things would definitely be settled during the following meeting. Where the application might even be accepted, a hair-raising idea for the opponents.

“When Anonymous already went through the light, than Malicious Marduk won’t have any access, no matter where he is. You see with us, or didn’t you realized that we were the only ones unaffected by the threat in the water?” Billy-Joe said, looking around into stunned faces.

“You might mix cause and effect, though” Arundle admitted rather sphinx-like.

“What do you mean?” Billy-Joe asked back.

“Could well be that only those are allowed going through the light, who are prepared – and that does mean something, after all, I would say”, did she make herself clear.

The others didn’t look at it that way yet. “Then this is indeed a kind of privilege” Pooty proudly announced.

“You can say that” Arundle nodded - “However, it’s just an assumption of mine...”

“And you think Malicious Marduk knows all that and wants to find out, whether Anonymous went through the light?”

“Sounds logic, if he were logic and wouldn’t be screwed up the way he is. I think stirring up people is just fun for him.”

“And how do we find out, whether your father is safe indeed?”

“Let’s go and see, Master Bow knows how...”

“This might be more effective than hanging on with this discussion. Somehow we are moving in a circle, I’d say, and ain’t getting any further...”

They all agreed and Arundle and Billy-Joe together with Pooty and Messrs Stone and Bow headed towards the intergalactic virtual centre of all Poly-verses where they hoped to meet the Advisor, while some of the passengers might be sent through the light, though.

Again the fascinating light show extended before the eyes, while they were in no time at their aim – the virtual space centre.

Arundle remembered faintly the teachings of the Advisor when it came to defining the location of the centre.

“The centre of the universe is at the same time on any possible location, depending only on the time” she heard him say, as if anything became clearer thereby.

“Do you mean all-about and no-where?” she heard her asking back and was highly appreciated for that.

From afar she noticed that Anonymous had gone through the light as well. He was shining like an angel and the aura dignified his appearance, thus she felt pride rising inside. While pride wasn’t quite what she felt. Perhaps she felt something like satisfaction for never having given up the old squabbler for good, but kept in mind something of the old storyteller of her childhood, and his fervid dream.

The satisfaction referred to the fact that he had now come so close to his dream.

Would she be able to take him back home?

While she was thinking, the Advisor shook his head, who just tuned in. “Anonymous is needed here” he said.

“While his testimony he is leaving behind guarantees immortality. And immortality can only the mortals achieve. Looked at him that way then your father has passed away, and his dream is fulfilled.”

“Perhaps I should start reading his book. Although I think I know what’s written inside” Arundle thought while fighting the tears, when she realized, what really had happened: her father’s life had terminated.

She would see him no more, she thought when she saw him swaying in and coming to a halt next to the Advisor.

“Now we are alone at last, just you and I” she heard him say with the voice she faintly recalled from the early days of her childhood, Arundle had missed ever since.

Pooty pushed for departure. Some opening was soon closing they had to pass through.

“Over here in the Nanoverse nobody knows what’s going on” the Magic Bow snarled unwillingly, hurried then however to take position.

“I thought we were somewhere in the universe” Master Stone inquired.

“You’ve got to imagine the following...” the Advisor commenced, but then interrupted himself.

“See you another time – take care of your opening – hush, hush...”

In the background you could see again those luminescent stripes. The wild whirls of time arouse all about them and pushed them right towards the proper gap in the space-time-continuum, and back to where they belonged.

The news of the early death of the author who just had come to fame and fortune stirred up the public. The sales figures rose into the immeasurable. The publisher wasn’t able to answer the demand and couldn’t have printed as many copies as required. Commercially seen the success couldn’t have been greater.

Still, the death was a pity despite the fact of the increasing sale. A living author could have produced on and on, and the time wasn't yet ripe for letters from eternity, which were neither unlikely nor impossible.

Grisella held on stock still many more manuscripts all written by the busy man while prevailing hidden on the moon. Arundle assured her that Anonymous wasn't all that dead. He might come for a visit sooner or later, however in a virtual version like he did at the book-fair.

Arundle's and her mates' excursion to the inner space-centre did bring some clarification at last, while there were now even more secrets than before.

The opponents of that application, which was asking for Anonymous' surrender, could sit back now and relax. No matter what the vote would turn out, a workable trace to the disappeared could not be laid, he was not in the range of any human pursuer, but under the protecting roof of heaven.

Esoteric circles soon began hailing Anonymous as a saint. Somehow they got notice of the mysterious circumstances of his disappearing. He was put in one row with old Moses and the prophet Elias. Even the Catholic Church hurried now with their internal procedure.

The infestation by the Miseriors however could not be handled as easily, while there was now at least one clean institution, and that were those who had gone through the light. By means of empirical data Billy-Joe and Scholasticus collected, there was a 99% likeliness that those who had gone through the light were immune against Miseriors.

Thus, the commission was found that could be nominated for carrying out the tests and doing the exorcism.

Members were all those who had lately gone through the light, and that was quite a number. Scholasticus and Billy-Joe, as well as Arundle, Tibor, and Pooty were the activists, while all others participated on a kind of free lance basis, though.

The debate, whether testing on a large scale or not, didn't come to a definite result, while the search for the

appropriate serum – intended to shortcut the exorcism procedure – was nevertheless going on.

The mer-folk however, so it seemed, would be left alone with their uncertain fate. Adrian was deeply ashamed and Cory was in tears when they couldn't find a majority for their proposal, and were faced with such cruel shortcut. Unfortunately the two sub-water activists had no idea of how to proceed otherwise, the more as so most tests down there came to a negative result.

16. Holidays

Time went by. The summer holidays were coming up, and other aspects of life pressed forward and pushed such notions aside. Flory and Cory would be picked up in Sydney by their parents in two weeks already. This time they wouldn't go to Egypt but to the desert of Gobi in the middle of Mongolia – home of Tibor and Sandor Khan. Both didn't know yet of the big surprise Professor Hare had foreseen for them. He asked them to become guides, while the Professor intended to follow the tracks of the greatest Khan of all times.

Arundle had intended to follow Billy-Joe to the outback, but wasn't sure whether her mother would do the long trip again. The sensational turning her former husband's fate took, moved her more then she could stand, and her present mate turned out as some kind of loser in her eyes now, comparing the former with the present.

Mrs. Waldschmitt was a free lance accountant now, and well off, but the work ate her up.

“Come over here and have your soul relax. Deep down under the clocks run slower. The people have more time, especially in the outback. We can read Daddy's book together or go on a photo-safari, or we can lie on the beach somewhere...” she suggested to her mother and had convinced her more or less already.

Money was no problem. And relaxing would do her well – now at the end of November when the sad time came and all the grave musings of separation and death.

She had gone to see him, of course when performing on stage at the book fair, and had seen him on TV as well. He looked much different, though.

However, it hadn't been the time alone that made him change, she knew from Arundle, and was earnestly thinking of heading for such a beauty surgeon as well. Her friends had done – some even twice or more.

Had been good looking, her Roland! However, Goodman Death can't be cheated. So, he was dead now, just when he got caught by the wave of fortune. There wasn't even a grave yard.

"He just disappeared" Arundle reported, who cared not to say too much. Her mother wasn't yet far enough. The resurrection-tale would have been definitely too much for her.

"Well, and how do you know he is really dead?" Mrs.. Waldschmitt asked.

Arundle said she didn't know better than the media, and was somewhat ashamed for cheating her poor mother. However, the truth would have been too much for her.

ANONYMOUS: THE FUTURE HAS BEGUN

Thus was the publisher's title of his book. Mrs. Waldschmitt bought it for the journey. At home there was no time for reading.

The paperback edition that was out by now, did it, she decided and cost half the price of hardcover. Besides, it was handier and lighter. Still it was a rather thick volume. "Who's gonna read all that?" she asked herself and began leafing mindlessly through the pages.

There were no photos... might be a dry dull abstract – something for men, she wondered.

“...and if you come with us, instead of I’m coming with you?” – Arundle asked the twisting poor boy. The idea of meeting Mrs. Waldschmitt again made him shudder. However, Arundle wasn’t much better off by now, when things became real and her mother was approaching. “I need you” she pleaded, and indeed did.

Sooner than later she’d run into trouble, Arundle knew now. They never had managed without mediator for more than five minutes, but her Daddy was gone and the two women would be alone for almost six weeks. She’d have liked to join Billy-Joe on his trip. However mother was underway and couldn’t be sent back, and this had been her own idea.

“We read Daddy’s book, and you can explain it to us. That’s fun for you too. And in the evening Mom will depart for her hotel and we do what we like. I can sleep outdoors like you, why not – and your clan we can visit as well – why not? We rent a mobile home and call our tour a photo-safari. I’m sure Mom will like the idea.”

Malicious Marduk wasn’t present when his sinister troops were trapped, but resided still in the soul of the former assistant Rudolfus Catalanius from the McGill University in Toronto, Canada. By that way he participated in the dark passion of Viola de Stäel. Thus he was distracted from his real intentions, no doubt about that. Therefore he was steaming with rage when he realized the dimensions of the fiasco.

Instead of conquering the island finally and take in the bastion where the refugee had hidden all the while, he had now to accept the triumph of these people. While his headless troops were erring through the depths of the ocean or had even run stuck already in the mount of hell, wherefrom he had just bought them free. In his rage he punished the couple, who didn’t know what happened.

Catalanius was castigated with deprivation, with the consequence that Viola de Stäel lost her passion at once.

The relation broke apart. However, Catalanius was not the man to stand dispossession. He lured for the woman in a dark night near their former joint flat and stabbed her to death when she showed up with a new lover.

“If I cannot have you, nobody else shall get you” he hatefully hissed when she was dying in his arms. The man’s throat he cut. Then he disappeared and didn’t leave behind anything but a golden trace of certificates, still under way and noticed in the financial world – while the demand was mostly initiated secretly by the clever Public Relations Manager of the School of Inbetween.

Certificates were thrown on the market at a stunning low price. Dorothea had them all bought for a sum of half a million US \$, she was able to give away just like that. Money was no longer a problem since the great success of Anonymous’ book.

This was the way Catalanius took bloody revenge on Malicious Marduk, who was impressed by the outstanding wickedness of his former companion. While that damn School of Inbetween triumphed, and the secrets of the time lay open and could be read by anyone, no matter which way he tended or engaged. There was no more competition. Who ever cared and wanted could bring the evolution forward. But when the time had come, he - Malicious Marduk - would take care that enough rascals were about then, steering the course of mankind the weird ways, and have exploitation revived and prolonged indefinite.

“When you got used to the complexion this man turns out to be a rather amiable and clever person, well educated and also gifted with a sense for the real things” - Mrs. Waldschmitt was highly attracted.

She spent pleasant days in her daughter’s company. Right now they were underway in a mobile home way out into the red Australian steppe. Adventurous was their outfit – suitable for the purpose: Arundle and Mrs. Waldschmitt were dressed in safari khaki from tip to toe,

while Billy-Joe wore a brand-new loincloth and nothing else.

Gaily whistling he steered the mobile home through the glowing heat of the noon. The little air stream wavering inside like from a hot stove through the open windows, didn't make any difference. Sand was everywhere, even between the teeth, and you couldn't drink as fast as you felt thirsty.

Nevertheless, they were all in good mood. They didn't have a declared target – if you didn't take the cooling off in the evening as a target, you could be looking forward.

Mrs. Waldschmitt did well. The nature-bound lifestyle in down-under and in the outback made her blossom. The scarce landscape charged her attention and kept her thoughts and feelings busy.

The fussy quarrels with her husband had ruined her life. She now could feel how ridiculous they had been, on the background of her new experience in the scarce landscape. In a grandiose scarceness like this, mulish quarrels of their kind became absolutely ridiculous in the after math. She asked herself how a reasonable person could have participated in such a farce.

“Yes, right you were. ‘The being defines the consciousness’ you recited your favourite philosopher, and now I begin to understand what you wanted me to realize, Roland. Where might you be now?”- she said to herself.

Arundle gave her the one or other hint, which radically altered the view on that man. And while she understood his book only to a very limited extend, she was surprised about the enormous knowledge that was laid down in there.

“Who had thought that such still waters were running so deep?”- she wondered all over again. She couldn't praise it high enough when Arundle told her about the joint days on the moon, where Roland had to hide and found rest for his writings.

She also liked the respectful way Billy-Joe addressed to her former husband. ‘Anonymous’ in his

mouth was like a title of honour. His sophisticated way of commenting what they jointly read, also did her well, when they sat in the dim light before the tent, reading before nightfall.

The first chapters they had done by now. They had been full of hidden discernments as well as of the alienation that got hold of their marriage unnoticed by both of them – in their married life and on the job likewise. An avalanche of untouched subjects was rolling growingly and unnoticed for a long time, and buried their marriage at last, while the longing for freedom became overwhelmingly strong.

She wondered in the after math how little she had noticed of such inner fights, while sharing life with a stranger, her husband remained all life long.

Still, she was somewhat proud, because the book also dealt of her, and was read now by thousands of people, some even spoke of Millions or yet Billions. And if it was indeed true, than this book would change the course of this world – either to the better or to the worse – that was the question which had to be answered. Good and evil - both were laid down in the tracks leading ahead to the future, the book kept warning.

One of the most realistic chapters dealt with a discernment into a horror scenario that would hopefully never become real, and still was realistic as one of many thousand possibilities the future of mankind could choose.

Billy-Joe had discovered another chapter closely connected with that nightmare, dealing with the problems of predictions.

“...while the greatest secret remains the future...” he read. “The last and decisive grain of sand falls to the ground at a certain time and starts an avalanche a vacationing minister gets killed by. He thus cannot realize an application deciding on the paradigmatic change of energy-politics.

Had that grain of sand fallen a second later, the avalanche would have been delayed by the decisive second, the minister would have been rescued. The law would have become real. The change of the energy

politics would have been executed. The Nuclear power plant XYZ would have been shut off just in time, and the mega super nuclear fall-out would have been avoided, and a region of the size of a state would not have been poisoned, and 3.5 Million people would not have been contaminated. A genius without genetic failure would have been procreated, who would discover an inhabited planet three generations later...

Thus, you could go on and on without end. And this would only be one string, at any given instant while other strings commenced at any time and anywhere anew, anywhere on each time-bound location in space.

An idea that makes you dizzy, if you let it settle. May many parameters seem to be fixed, the bed of history present itself solid and stable, though. Fact is on the other hand, that there will be (in each spring and on any morning, no matter how they look alike) - fresh leaves replacing predecessors, however, all a little unlike, and never ever identical. That's amazing, isn't it..."

Mrs. Waldschmitt's thoughts dissolved. She began to dream. The monotonous murmur of Billy-Joe's voice became somewhat suggestive, and said more and others than the words - while she had passed the border and lay in Somnia's arms who was delighted to welcome her on a trip into the dreamland of the Aborigines, where she remained.

Adrian Humperdijk felt left alone with the problems of the mer-folk. The research work for the infestation test and cure was stuck half ways. The test was far too difficult, besides, it hurt the feelings of the probationers. Such could probably be done with drylanders, but didn't work with the proud sea-sprites.

"If they deny our suggestions they have to find out on their own" Grisella said, who stayed behind because of her fear of flying. All other teachers had gone, and so had the students. Beside Watchdog Will Wiesle and some

of his colleagues the Isle of Wisdom-tooth was deserted like never before.

Was that providence or coincidence? – it was so, after all. Only Marsha was coming back from Europe soon, and in three weeks things would look different anyway. There were only a few lonely days ahead.

Grisella’s logic didn’t convince Adrian – “Why should they? We ran them into trouble and we have to help them out again, and can’t make them responsible for any shortcomings in our eyes. We can’t say – you have to face the music now, while we are to be blamed.”

“What would you suggest then?” Grisella asked back, when Watchdog Will Wiesle asked for the word, who had his own experience in this respect.

“You feel different, believe me, and I think, I can speak for all...”

“Very right” Adrian agreed – “so, it depends how many are reporting. And as many as there are, we have our medicine ready.”

“And if that little prick is too much, then they get the serum the oral way by means of a sort of tablet with whale-flavour, by all means. Shouldn’t be too difficult, after all”, Grisella agreed, when she found out, that things were much further developed than they thought. Even the serum was available in sufficient quantum for a start anyway.

Since the first extortion of a Miserior, Corinia had been infested with, the procedure had become much simpler. By accident the researchers came about the anti-petrification potion, that was developed for the freeing of Penelope M’gamba and Zinfandor Leblanc. This potion was totally unacceptable for Miseriors, and only seconds after the vaccination with that serum, they departed right away.

“We might think of a general vaccination for all – under water and on dry lands – for those living here on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth” Watchdog Will Wiesle suggested.

“We have to find out with our friends under water. They have to agree”, Adrian nodded. He was highly pleased by the unexpected turning the matter took.

“We can’t indoctrinate from outside, that’s clear, the more as so the young democracy was established only lately. On the other hand, I think the proposal is acceptable, and I will present it as soon as I have the chance to do so.”

Watchdog Will Wiesle blushed of joy and timidity. Since that discriminating rule, that was prohibiting service people to address to students was given up, some of the service people proved themselves as clever contemporaries. Such, they had been before as well, but weren’t allowed to show.

In those long solitary hours on watch the thoughts kept wandering, and thus, it was unavoidable that the one or the other man started thinking about the flock they were safe-keeping. They then came about the closeness of men and animal, which was even more obvious with the mer-folk.

Other watchmen saw their job differently, for them it was mere money-making for a comfortable living. The monthly agony of the creature on Convertors’ Island, when such beings pushed their inside out, didn’t bother them.

They might as well need a dose of the serum, his engaged colleague now recommended. Because he knew by experience what it meant to be taken into possession of an evil spirit, and assumed such ignorance as a proof of contamination.

Cory sent a postcard from the desert, addressed to Adrian. She missed the water very much, she wrote, and was looking forward to come home and see their beloved in the depth.

Right now, while conversion sent first forebodes he wouldn’t have liked to change with her. For once she might manage in the dry, because she had a strong will,

after all, and conversion didn't mean too much for her. Theirs was a mild form of conversion, anyway. As a naiad or nix you were more or less the same, except for fins and the flipper.

Those big beasts or the tiny ones were different, though, and ran into great trouble. They suffered a lot both ways, and should know if it was worth while. They could be freed from their lot to a certain extent. (Some treated conversion like a disease.) You could reduce the effects of such attempt as far as the length of time was concerned. Instead of four days you could do in a couple of hours with some strange physical alterations. You had to stay for a couple of hours in a darkened room, threatened by a terrible headache, but that was it then. Life went on as usual after the attack.

Watchdog Will Wiesle was not only an experienced guard but also familiar with attacks by Miserior, the worst of all had taken possession of him not long ago. Because of his experience he suspected the conversion as a mild form of such an attack, because the symptoms were very much alike. And indeed helped the treatment with the new serum a lot, if you consider the chopping off of your second nature a success.

Because of that treatment Cory was able to come along with her critical days rather unharmed with her family in the desert. Her animalist nature was pushed back and reduced. Shortly before she left for Mongolia, she had had a vaccination even after the successful exorcism, to be sure she wouldn't run in trouble while abroad.

Her second nature might not be pushed back each month, mostly because of the lung – gill alterations which seemed to be a necessity in the meantime. As long as the initiating stimuli were blocked off, she could do well.

For good reasons she didn't want to become cured. Such an idea was wholly out of her range. For her it was a sacrifice first of all, rather than a pleasure that enabled

her to stay with her family, while the idea of never again meeting Boetie made her sick.

What so ever - some liberty got closer for those who suffered more than enjoyed their lot. Watchdog Will Wiesle trusted in his observations. Sometimes he felt like seeing further than the people concerned. While most of them accepted their fate in dignity and patience, however that didn't necessarily mean that they were content or even happy with it.

The photo-safari in the Australian outback came to an end. The mobile home rushed through the steppe. Billy-Joe was steering well, noticing holes and obstacles just in time, and stayed away from wandering dunes. Thus, they took their time. They weren't in a hurry. They had four more days to go before Mrs. Waldschmitt's departure in Sydney.

She still wasn't through with that book of her former husband, but she had now access and good advisers she could always ask when in need. She was all in favour of the good cause and meant to notice time-thieves everywhere, whenever she ran out of time.

Brave and true Billy-Joe was reading each night with his soft melodious voice and commented or interpreted tricky passages. Arundle helped as well as she could, but avoided confrontations between daughter and mother. That was new to Mrs. Waldschmitt who remembered otherwise, the more as so when Arundle's father had been involved.

The book couldn't be stopped on its victorious rally around the world. Daily there was news of translations. Some hundred languages were involved already and still more were to come.

The message of the change of values and the decline of the money-system spilled huge amounts of such unworthy means into the pockets of those, keeping the copyrights, and that were without doubt the family-members of the author.

17. Heal with Patience

“What about a Nautilus trip then?” Adrian asked the group of returnees who had joined in order to discuss the troubles of the mer-folk still pending. “After all, we are responsible to a large extend by sending those foes down there...” he argued.

Nobody objected. The Nautilus crew was available so far, only the engineer and the navigator were missing. The ordinary crewmembers were watchdogs while idle.

Before they set sails those pads had to be prepared, they had agreed on, while vaccination was regarded as a too cruel form of healing, and was definitely disliked by to probationers. Besides, filling jelly pads turned out to be much easier, and could be applied very easily either, because they had to be simply swallowed.

The filled jelly-pads were packed into waterproof chests, fifty in each box and had to be used up under water in one day after opening.

Being first rate sailor aboard the Nautilus Watchdog Will Wiesle had come up with the idea of involving the submarine.

There had been no objections. Such an excursion would strengthen the solidarity as well of the students but also with the sub-water acquaintance. And those in the know could find out about the state of the threat, while the Nautilus as such always rose the curiosity of the mer-folk, the more as so it had been the life-saver for the freedom fighters.

None of the returnees wanted to miss the adventure, the more as so the school had not yet begun. So there were lots of volunteers. Each of the crew members was allowed to choose three volunteers. So they ended up with twenty four, that is to be exact with twenty seven souls on board, because neither Pooty nor Messrs Stone and Bow lacked a soul, while they had to be aboard in any case.

Not all were chosen for their abilities, but for more personal reasons. Adrian, who was in charge of the medical programme, was optimistic and trusted in his volunteers. All they had to do was handing out those jelly-pads and marking those who got it, in order not to mix up things later.

There was a lot of serum on board, and thanks to an alteration of the sluices you could now hand out the pads without problems they found out in a test run they had had.

Medical knowledge was not required at the sluices. Only the marking was essential.

Cory, (who was just back) and Adrian had figured out something nice – at least they hoped the naiads and nixes would like it. Each female probationer was marked with a beauty-plaster a la Pompadour on the cheek, while the male were spotted with a red blotch on the forehead. (similar to the dot Cory and her sister had) – or vice versa, as per gusto. And for those both marks seemed too womanish it could be a stamped scull instead.

The boat set sails and was diving close to the base of the islands almost to the ground. All outlooks were manned, because there were steep riffs and clefts out there.

All those surplus passengers tried to find a spot from where to look outside. The view was grandiose down here, and all kinds of sea-dwellers could be seen you could think of – glittering swarms of fish rushed by, myriads of the most beautiful jellyfish wavered about, while sharks lured in the seaweed drifting in the low current, not to forget the little sea-horses or sea stars, the sea cucumbers, sea hedgehogs and octopods here and there between adventurously growing corals.

Soon, the first hidden hamlets showed up, almost invisible, fitted into the sub-water landscape. Regularity only allowed conclusions of artificial interference by intelligible constructors.

They had arrived in the agricultural zone of the city. In former times a most dangerous area at the edge of the sub-water civilisation (as far as you could speak of

civilisation.) – nowadays still dangerous but was attracted now by several incentives. Thus, each settler was guaranteed a completely equipped home base, while a swimming school cared for the little ones, when the parents were working on the fields.

Patrolling guards prevented attacks of all kind, be it by outlaws or the murderous shark bands still somewhere out there in close alliance with former soldiers of the king, and wilful victims of attacks by Miseriors. They allied once in a while and there were rumours of conquered settlements without survivors further away.

Most farmers had changed sides now and were part of the vegetarian coalition. They looked at the outlaws as cannibals eating their own kin.

The closer you approached the inner city, the more vegetarian the scene became, and sometimes turned into unacceptable rigorousness. If you were caught when thoughtlessly swallowing a crab or grabbing for a passing swarm of fish, you risked being battered by enraged vegetarians. - The formerly needful aggression once required for chasing and hunting - altered into wholly unacceptable ugly forms of violence.

Such was the state of public affairs, and the visitors from the surface hoped to be of help by means of the vaccination, because it resulted in a noticeable reduction of aggressive desires, no matter whether such impulses originated within the individuals or were obtrude from outside by raiding marauders infiltrating the souls of the unprotected.

The fact as such was against a decent democratic development. No community could handle eruptions of that kind. Therefore those in charge grabbed for every straw and almost hoped the obtrusive cause to be found in the infiltration by Miseriors, because that could be cured, whereas genetic failures of the race were out of range.

Getting access to the followers of the new democratic offspring was easy in the centres. The Nautilus hadn't yet stopped and soon the volunteers came

by from all sides in order to become vaccinated and get the appropriate mark. The aids at the sluices had only to take care that the cushions were indeed swallowed in front of their eyes. Otherwise the job was easy and both sides had a lot of fun with those markings.

Two sluices were in the bow and two astern, one each on starboard and port. The naiads and nixes put their heads inside and a jelly-cushion was placed in their mouths, and while they swallowed they were marked either on the forehead or on the cheek. The whole procedure took only seconds. Then the probationer dropped out and had another one take his or her site.

The people inside worked as if on a conveyor belt, and managed almost three hundred vaccinations an hour, that meant about two thousand every day. If they went on like this they would be ready in one week.

“We have only nine thousand pads available” Arundle objected. “As soon as they are used up we have to leave anyway...” Pooty added unnecessarily because everybody was able to figure that out.

“How many of those nixes are there down here in Australis?” Flory asked her little sister, who should know.

“Nobody knows the exact number, and nobody tried to really find out, there has never been a census, and there won’t be one soon, I’d say. However, we might take our vaccination programme as a kind of census too.” She answered.

Before long the current ceased. Fewer and fewer probationers strove for access, while the boat was on its second tour around the inner city, for those who had missed at the first place for whatever reason.

They still had almost half of the jelly-pads on stock. “We do another last wide turning and then give up” the Skipper decided. “With so many people on board we use up more oxygen than we produce. The air becomes sticky already.”

Adrian and Cory put on diving equipment – their time hasn’t yet come so they had to manage the traditional way – and were now stepping clumsily

towards the seat of the government, where they hoped to meet the Prime Minister, who rushed by as soon as she realized how they were armoured. The Prime Minister highly appreciated the amount of vaccinations, and couldn't tell how many more there were likely to come.

The two ambassadors thus returned and reported to the Skipper as well as to the medical chief in charge. They decided to cut off the mission right away and return home to the protective docks of the Isle of Wisdom-tooth.

It was somewhat likely that they had vaccinated the wrong ones, and all those who should have been caught had slipped through their net, as it often was. However, nobody blamed them, and that was probably the most encouraging outcome of the undertaking.

The conflict between the fraction of the Vegetarians and the Meat-eaters had other sources and nobody down there saw a connection to the Miseriors.

The conflict had existed ever since, while there was now a clear majority on the vegetarian side, there were still thousands who followed the old way of life and also the old days' values. The opposition was therefore strong, not only by number but by impetus.

"Hunter or prey, what's inside us? Surely those fail who make up their mind for one of the sides, and those are right, who figure that we stand on each side with one leg, that is with one flipper-tip each..." Adrian summed up the tricky situation down there.

Cory picked up the thread right away and stressed on another aspect that had to do with their mission: "The conflict caused by Miseriors is much more effective on the Vegetarian side and might even cause casualties. So we might have done a good job after all, by getting access to the endangered clientele."

Her discernment wasn't new at all, because Walter's death led to similar assumptions and conclusions. His death was another proof for their proceeding, while the truly endangered became protected by the vaccination and that was of course very good.

Things were somewhat different when you changed perspective and looked at the world from the meat-eaters' point of view. They felt limited and reduced or even existentially threatened. Therefore, the meanness of the Miseriors – if they had entered the carnivore souls – would only enforce the given aggression and unscrupulousness, which was already present there.

Looking that way on the matter, the islanders had become guilty somewhat different, by causing mean developments for parts of the mer-folk population, which had been noticeable already even before the attack of the Miseriors.

The conflict was part of their nature. Those who were unable to tame the murderous element inside were soon overwhelmed by killer instincts. There were no Miseriors required for assistance, though.

Those, who switched between their natures, and had to stand the attacks of a murderous nature, while normally decent people, were deeply ashamed, and threatened by a bad consciousness. For them the infestation by a Miserior was helpful in a negative sense, because it helped them getting rid of their scruples. At the same time they lost their humaneness, because they were pushed back into the mean bestial state, they had left behind to a certain extend. They became a kind of sharks again, and sank back on the primeval stage of a beast and gave up their humaneness completely. Being treated with the serum, might have helped, had they managed to get access to the sluices.

The most important group were the intermittent, who couldn't make up their minds which nature to favour. They found help with or without Miserior attack, by turning to the peaceful side in any case. Access to those therefore was the prime aim of the mission.

Adrian dreamt already of a general vaccination for the newborns, and have the bestial instincts controlled right from the start. Because such instincts had to be trained like everything that was human. The instinct alone didn't mean that much, he argued. But Grisella saw

a grave problem. You should alter neither a population nor an individual by applying chemicals. If you did, you played God. And the vaccination was indeed an appeasing drug that changed the nature, not so unlike and in a way even comparable to chemical castration.

The original cause of the argument went out of sight while a hot discourse developed with many other aspects being put in. Arundle, who took Grisella's side, questioned the whole civilisation with the final aim of pacifying the human society by manipulation. "True progress can only be achieved by democratisation of all – really all – aspects of life. - Democratise all modes of being and you alter Man as such", she concluded.

"...And because this is so, therefore the human beings try to help out, however on the false end. They wish to manipulate and breed the ideal type, by interfering into the genetic programme and even begin to alter the DNA. - Cloning and the like – you name it. – This is Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*", Billy-Joe assisted his friend.

The Aboriginal young man was very interested in the subject for good reasons, while having the tribal culture in mind where his offspring was.

"In the end nobody knows and good advice is dear, so to speak, when things extend nightmarish. And then you step back and look for connections of a successful life, and may end up with the so-called primitive cultures..."

"Very right" Scholasticus interfered. "Think of Laptopia. Those in charge promise improvements by adopting the tribal lifestyle in a way – well, could be seen that way somehow, anyway..."

It was a nice summer day and the study group met outside in the park near the little airport.

A helicopter just landed and a bunch of merry chatting youths got off, and were welcomed likewise, thus, the discussion came to a natural end. However they had a full term ahead to continue.

The responsibility for the mer-folk became a fixed position on each agenda of the School Board Meetings and the appropriate sub-committees.

The beach was tempting. Arundle, Billy-Joe, Flory and Cory as well as Tibor, his brother Sandor and Tika, escorted by the Korean twins Li Mei and Li Chang with two newcomers in their company, whom they had just picked up from the helicopter – formed a gay and merry flock that was heading for the seaside after lunch.

The decision, whether to sail or swim was taken out of their hands, because all boats were gone. Others had had the same idea on such a beautiful summer day.

“Then we go swimming – let’s see who’s first out there on the pontoon...” Arundle yelled and got started right away. The others followed and soon the water was foaming by the wild strokes of the swimmers, all heading in straight lines towards the target that was gently swaying in the soft swell of the inner lagoon. The scary days when they’d feared the water, were gone for good

18. South-Michel of Capricorn

‘How nice is life’ Arundle wondered while handing herself over to the instant. She noticed the low motion of the planks underneath, listened to the mysterious gurgling of the water from below. The rough wood was pressing a little too immediate against the back. However, such was just bearable, and was compensated to a certain extent by the gentle breeze that was undermining the whizzing heat of noon. However, beside the breeze something else offered unexpected relief and took away such overload, which had meant too much in the company of the hard pressing wood, and might have caused even uneasiness, had there not been the warm vibrating body right next to her, well able to recompense such negative attempts just like that.

‘O Billy-Joe, o, Billy-Joe, how nice it is to be with you.’

For the whole lot of the wild bunch the pontoon was too small. Tibor just turned on the back and his wet thin plaids clashed against her belly, and made her scream.

The ban of the instant was broken. She now felt in the aftermath an almost eternal sweet joy stretching in time as if time stood still just for them.

The Korean twins chatted with their Korean friends they had picked up from the helicopter. Melodious strange sounds wavered over to her. She let it be. The moment of panic was long gone. Arundle was looking forward back to the instant again, you couldn’t hold tight and was still somehow endless.

Was it because of boredom or wantonness – they didn’t know, had someone asked them – the Mongolian brothers started pushing the pontoon in rhythmic swinging motion. The waves under the planks were gurgling more than they smashed while turning into splashing, that was accompanied by fierce yelling and laughing – however soon intermingled with panic, when in vain the shaken tried to get hold on the steeper and steeper swaying planks.

A definite sign for departure, no doubt. Last in the row the two troublemakers jumped in - following the bulk. The sun was setting and was almost gone behind the horizon. Soon the wind would turn, thus it was high time to return. Besides, supertime was near and the girls wanted to have their hair washed before. It was indeed high time, though.

The swimmers struggled hard but finally made it, just like that, and thanked the two marplots in the aftermath.

They arranged for a joint meal on the South Pacific side of the buffet, where they met again under the palm tree leaves, where you found mostly vegetarian delicacies.

For quite a while it hadn’t been clear at all whether the two Honourables would go on with their lecture.

They didn't have anything in the backhand, they said – anything suitable for such an audience, anyway, they argued.

The two Honourables had been invited to the planning-conference where the curriculum was discussed, altered and fixed for the upcoming term, and each teacher had to publish his or her priorities.

- Could well be, that they just disliked the idea of planning. Many things you cannot plan, they argued, in fact most things you can't, and if you were most precise there was indeed nothing that could really be planned. Planning was one of the hypocrisies of the human race. By planning, people hoped to get power over the future, and the outcome could be seen.

Thus, the two prevailed in mysterious insinuations instead of laying their cards open. Perhaps they wanted to become pampered and pleased.

Grisella argued that you didn't fix the future in such a curriculum but only the quantity and quality of the achievements. Of course there could always happen other things, still you could have intentions, no matter whether you fulfilled them.

Everybody noticed that they didn't meet on the same level. While the Honourables fought against the disenchantment of the world. They didn't want to participate in such attempts, they said. Whatever the people understood, lost its value at once. Many former mysteries lost that way and were devaluated down to nothingness.

They were asked for examples and were told to present facts instead of faint assumptions, nobody knew or had in mind.

So it happened that the two became the centre of the session, while they noticed that the matter began to interest them because it won profile as they put it. Perhaps that was it already. Only after they had taken over and dominated the situation, they were happy.

Without further argument they accepted the terminus and set date – it was the old one anyway – and also kept the four-weeks-sequence, thus the time was

available for other subjects the other three weeks. The whole trouble had been in vain.

The human colleagues decided to have such arrangements done differently, and have them develop from inside out, while for many the Honourables had been spokes in the wheel.

The criticism of the two Honourables had a grain of truth in it. The curriculum wasn't ideal – sure not – all of them admitted more or less, if they were honest with themselves. Such planning was always frustrating and never met the satisfaction of the colleagues. Why should the students feel better?

The idea of questioning such planning wasn't new either. "We had that for ages", Grisella started. - "Such debates are not new, for sure not. But when it comes to realisation, then nothing is left. Each and every one is throwing his or her bread on the water – like in former days, and is hoping that enough eager fish snap for it, as it used to be before the great avalanche of reforms. - I'm sure, we all remember..."

"We indeed do" picked Marsha Wiggles-Humperdijk up the thread: "How nice it had been in the days of the good old academic freedom. I don't want to miss it and remember it with pleasure. The prevailing so-called principle of discretion and pleasure we all remember well, the more so as we began to work on a new order. And thus we began creating it by disciplining ourselves first of all, I'm afraid, - always having the so-called best of the students in mind, while our best had rested in the freedom we experienced when we were due. That's the real scandal and I thank our two Honourables for reminding me."

"Of course we noticed the weaknesses of our anarchic system and therefore tried to fix a clear course. But who decides what is important or even absolutely necessary? How broad must the curriculum be? What is essential and what surplus? Do we need a curriculum at all? Can we stick to the discrimination of those who know and those who don't?"

"Dear Marsha, you are right in a way" Grisella agreed. "What you excavated from your profound

memory is well known. This was the Northern Tropic of the reform – I would like to put it – with all the difficulties, we now know and fear. We have escaped from that system, when we retreated to this island here. We live here on the Southern Tropic and I would appreciate very much, if we did better than that. Therefore, I welcome it very much that the two Honourables managed to remind us on our overall aim. Are we aware of our own approach? We are not. Therefore I thank the two of you, and hope we won't forget and keep in mind, - and learnt our lesson", Grisella exclaimed somewhat emphatic.

She felt a glowing passion inside, and wondered whether they might have the capacity of writing a similarly noteworthy book than the one Anonymous had contributed. Perhaps with a different approach but similar emphasis. Right now she felt capable and courageous:

"We must stage self-reliant, dear Marsha, we do have a lot on stock, while we also carry with us debris from our past and shortcomings in character – each of us without exception. -"

"Research is nice and dandy" she went on after a pause – "however, our own approach was left behind, we lost the most precious out of sight."

Scholasticus agreed with what his sister-in-law said but he didn't quite get what she was after right now. In the last year there had been turbulences enough. There were times when things went almost higgledy-piggledy. There had been neither time nor space for elementary musings and basic ideas. While the threat from outside formed not only and glued the people together but also stressed them more then bearable in some cases or instances. You became dull and indurate and resigned while doing your thing, as well as you could. Where should pedagogical impulses rise under such conditions? Basically they agreed of course, however, even that - Scholasticus dared to doubt meanwhile, while they differed surely in detail.

Too far the needs and requirements of the different departments were apart. The colour scheme alone was differentiating enough, where else could such be found?

Right there they had to start, right here you could find the South Tropic approach to reform pedagogy.

Right here, deep down South the clocks worked different, and other priorities and subjects were found back-slashing on the contents, which was essential.

‘If you speak of miracles’ he mused, ‘then of wonders of form more than of contents. While discovering other realities you came about the differences. Nowhere else the abstract observer was looking in from outside, and was analysing without participation, doing his cruel investigation, not even knowing whether it was cruel.

While the world pressed inside so real and lively like with them on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, and introspection all of a sudden became overall view of the world again.

The thoughtless and unconscious musings contained no less mistakes and mishaps of mankind Scholasticus concluded. The more fixed people are, the less thoughts they make about the aim. Looked at it that way, thoughtlessness isn’t worse than wickedness.

How much grief, how much fear on the one hand, however, how many efforts on the other hand - arose Mankind from thoughtlessness of others, who didn’t mind doing things to us (or we to them), they wouldn’t be doing purposely most likely – is there no end in sight?

The majority of the peoples may have understood by now – at least in the tempered zones of the Northern hemisphere where despotism is claimed to be overcome. However, is thoughtlessness therefore also overcome? Does it not come along hand in hand with insurmountable systematic requirements?

So called ‘factual issues’ – however in fact – side-wing turnings of despotism were no less cruel by effect, or less arbitrary, or destructive – in fact even more of it all. Yes, it looks, as if the so called factual issues are twins of despotism, despite the fact that they may look differently or wear other clothes.

The sun was turning punctually calendared on the twenty first of December shortly before the beginning of the New Year. This was the day when the sun stood vertical above the Isle of Wisdom-tooth at noon, and who ever dared to step outside into the sun, noticed that practically no shadow could be seen of them.

A few marks southerly of the Tropic of Capricorn they were situated, after all, however that did hardly matter. Covering the head was arbitrary, since the ozone hole was gapping above the Southern hemisphere. While the whites better cared for shelter, and exposed better not at all to the sun unprotected.

The warming good old sun soon became a monstrous messenger of death - threatening Man with poisonous rays and horrible disease.

However the sun was not in question. The attitude was the problem, that was connected with it. The mistake was basic, and could be found in the fundamentals of the dominating culture of the whites, was – so to speak – the base of basics.

The more Billy-Joe studied and the more he learnt from them – he always tossed at that strange barrier, and there was no way of how to overcome. The mistake had been built in a long time ago, and the further this culture developed the trickier the basic mistake was hiding.

The mistake appeared in different shapes, it altered its gender and colour – its smell and being, but remained still somehow the same. Because it was the initial mistake, and remained the initial mistake, although nobody was able to touch any more, and which couldn't be bettered later any more.

Had it to do with left or right-spinning yoghurt? Yoghurt was like yoghurt and was it not at the same time. Everything with these two yoghurts seemed the same, nobody was able to notice the difference, except when you followed up the consequences of the probationers who either blossomed or faded in a long range study.

Ran the clock of life on both hemispheres the same way? And did the clock of life turn the same direction? This question had been raised once with Arundle and

Billy-Joe, and what had this question to do with the question for the basic and cardinal mistake?

“We don’t want to learn how to manipulate the time, we want to heal the world, and while we do, we have to learn and understand the world, that’s arbitrary...” Arundle put it and Billy-Joe saw it likewise, however the other way round.

The hour of the Honourables had come. Messrs Stone and Bow enjoyed the fancy ritual. Billy-Joe stepped ahead. Pooty looked out of the Medicine Pouch, dangling before Billy-Joe’s wide chest and Pooty was balancing the Magic Stone in his far too little paws.

The Magic Stone was shining in all colours of the rainbow, and seemed to risk falling, while in fact held by invisible forces, so it was Pooty who got hold with him.

Billy-Joe was followed by Arundle with the invisible quiver, wherein the Magic Bow rested, as well as a never-ending supply of golden arrows, as had showered over the assembly during the previous meeting.

Attentive silence lowered while the enterers arranged at the desk. Billy-Joe got seated cross-legged on top and Arundle on a chair beside – they did so unconsciously meanwhile. Would Arundle have the arrows once more shower down over them?

For the human eye invisible the arrows purred one by one off the bow-string and swirled in formation over the heads. However this time they didn’t lower but returned to their quiver after a short cruise.

Perhaps the flying arrows were meant as a distraction, because a little man was sitting next to Billy-Joe when the assembly came to rest. The little man’s head was covered by a red hood, while his upper trunk stuck in a green waistcoat, and the lower in a tartan kilt. His legs clad long yellow boots.

The shorty introduced himself as South-Michel of Capricorn. For his introduction he raised, then crossed the legs, waved his right hand with the hood wide and

bowed low to all sides at the same time, which was of course somewhat impossible, still he did.

Thus, the students concluded that he was a magic dwarf. Very likely a colleague of Messrs Stone and Bow, from somewhere deep down under and subsoil. Rumours went of immeasurable deep clefts and slots around Uluru where humans disappeared (Preferably whole forms of young girls on Valentine's Day when picnicking, as was done more or less regularly since that movie.)

Those, thus disappeared showed up in the Bermuda triangle, years later, but that's a different story!

South-Michel of Capricorn had Northern roots despite his name, that said otherwise. He was a singular appearance, because he had overslept the Cardinal Mistake (in short CM) of his inherited culture. While sleeping deep inside the deepest depth of the earth, protected against heat by a magic armour, and supplied with fresh air by a pipe to the surface.

In the beginning, there had been only the pipe back to the Scottish Highlands, from where he immigrated in the first place to the New World; however, later also the other way towards Uluru and the dusty red air of Central Australia was tunnelled. (A masterpiece of dwarven craftsmanship, no doubt.)

In the hall and above the heads South-Michel of Capricorn had his film roll. No silent movie in fact but rarely bespoken, too rare to become synchronised. The New Year's song of Auld Lang Sine weren't worth the effort.

As a proof the students fell in with the song and some even ran tears out of their eyes as was common. All hugged and made in friendship, although they scarcely knew, while the semester was still young and many newcomers were present. Here they settled after all, instead of sweating in their basic seminar, 'Get to know yourself', to find out about the other way of seeing. However, they might do anyway, but not now.

South-Michel tinkered as main character in the background. He was not alone. Hundreds of stunts and

aides were swarming about all in dwarfy outfit. The film showed what was going on in the underground and that it was the truly mirrored equivalent of surface life. Everything, however the other way round, a most sophisticated piece of art with great technical effort, almost like in real life.

Arundle was always amazed again how the two Honourables managed to fascinate the audience, and stick so closely to the pulse of time.

“We have understood” resounded a wordless unsolvable contradiction all about them. Like through a monocular a huge eye stared into the tiny film-world as if it was a goggle box. A cut through the earth all in halves: corridors and caverns in halves, mice-nests and foxes’ caves all in halves cut in the middle.

Indeed a tricky technique had been used with quick and short cuts, enabling to visualize things, that wouldn’t fit into any continuum. Still a wanted effect was achieved, Arundle was sure, while the agreement all about confirmed her impressions.

“A film gets great when a director manages to involve the spectator and take them into the inner world of his, to even indoctrinate himself, leaving them without tool of protest or denial.

That is something else then stimulate them making up their own minds or getting emotionally involved”, Arundle thought and realized broad agreement again from all sides.

Whether this was right or questionable was written on a different page. Perhaps such was only necessary. Perhaps he had to proceed like this, because a new perspective had to be taken and old habits questioned.

The eye disappeared into grandeur. The eye rushed off in time-lapse pictures and lost contours the further it grew. While the spectator didn’t know, whether the eye was growing or he was shrinking. He was forced to ask exactly this question, while questioning his conviction as to the convention of the linear direction of time, as if there only was one way. As if the suckling only grew or the seedling began small and grew big.

“From the old peoples’ homes we hear it differently”, the fine thin voice of South-Michel of Capricorn was heard. Arundle agreed: “The arc of a circle of earthen life – is good old Greek cultural inheritance, no doubt. The riddle of the Sphinx of Thebes, if I’m not wrong - Oedipus only solves it, because he knows the answer”, she heard herself think meaningfully.

She started general confusion by that. Nobody wanted to make up his of her mind. While South-Michel’s short pass play wasn’t under control yet, but ended East of the centre line. There the ball couldn’t be reached by the all too moderate inside striker on the one hand, and on the other it didn’t seem worth while for the outside defender, who started building the offside trap instead.

“When it comes to old peoples’ homes keep the ball low”, South-Michel’s thin voice was heard once more in the movie-dream. Arundle didn’t want to differentiate between dream and movie. At last she decided that falling asleep wasn’t impossible in the cinema, while dreams were stimulated intensely, though.

“About the missing fourth leg in the evening nobody wondered?” South-Michel pushed, the thinking became all too creamy and stiff, and in fact Arundle could feel his impatience almost physically.

“Once again, for those who want to copy. Who goes in the morning on four, at noon on two and in the evening on three legs?”

“What a nonsense” Pooty interfered at last. “In the evening senior citizens sit either in a wheelchair right away or move about with their rollator.”

“Thus, we are getting nowhere. Your relation to the classic is poor. You exhale a clear-cut ignorance, while you are principally on our level under several aspects. Rollator – I’m laughing, have you nothing more attractive in mind? I only say running-wheel - what now? Now you are stunned, aren’t you?” South-Michel breathed disdainfully.

“And if we put the whole riddle on wheels right away?” Arundle suggested willing to mediate. “Who

goes in the morning on four wheels, at noon on four wheels and in the evening on four wheels?”

“Sounds kind of monotonous, but it is not easier to solve than the original. The more as so a Laptopian robocoptesse is the Sphinx at the court of the Prince Regent of Laptopia” – Pooty was all agreement. Finally a common playground, and up to date.

Appeased he wanted to speculate down from the top, when he remembered something that annoyed him only a minute ago. “Did that dwarf refer to height?” Pooty wondered. While he could have hugged South-Michel because of that.

“Was that necessary – a small spirit in a small body?” he asked and could take the best liked out of a flood of answers. Only South-Michel who was the one he cared, didn’t answer.

“Perhaps Arundle has her Advisor and I have someone of my own, whether I like it nor not. Arundle argues often enough with her Advisor. Why should I be better off with my South-Michel?”

Pooty was not able to hang on moaning and grieving for long. Himself the dwarf wouldn’t think stupid, he wondered. In fact he hadn’t been called stupid but uneducated. That hurt, that hit – deep inside. Perhaps, because it was true. Walter had also had his trouble with him in this respect.

South-Michel had fallen through the hole, connecting the Northern Hemisphere with Uluru. A colony of dwarves was living under the ocean in an air-bubble, still below the Sargasso Sea close to the Bermuda triangle. The colony kept on dwelling there for ages. The offspring was unknown. - only rumours were underway. One said that the predecessors of the dwarves had been buried with the downfall of Atlantis, while working in the mines.

Today nobody could tell why the dwarves survived. Perhaps the early dwarves only meant to be the only survivors. They had survived, for sure. By means of an air-bell on the ground of the sea and by means of tricky drillings and a specific secret technique, they had

managed to reach the surface, where they supplied their air which was cooled down to normal temperature by a special cooling system.

The procedure hindered the centre-heat to contaminate the tunnels by absorbing the energy and transforming it into vital functions. The dwarves were very proud on that.

In former times when they were cut off (Cut Off - they called the epoch of the downfall of Atlantis when the continent sank and took with it a whole culture, later becoming the mystic base of ancient Europe.) After the Cut off, the former ancestors swore to never repeat the Cardinal Mistake of the Atlantians. Never to plunge in on the whirls of rational egomania, but do their own thing, and start right there - where things had still gone right. That is, before the big Cardinal Mistake was first done. Because they knew, who ever had internalised the Cardinal Mistake wouldn't get rid of it.

The colony was located below the mainland shelf of the Australian continent, close to where Australis had started off. Thus, the Bermudian dwarves were living in the Australian area close to Australis. As a matter of fact they did so in an air-bubble still below the mer-folk. Therefore, they knew the mer-folk very well, and were acquainted with their rites and habits, while spying on them through the roof of their cover.

South-Michel therefore was well acquainted with the coming of age and the first democratic aspirations of the young democracy. His duty was it to safeguard and observe what was going on and to be of help when necessary – shorten the processes and overcoming shortcomings like the outbreak of aggression or the change in nutrition habits.

South-Michel was not able to interfere in person directly. This was one reason why he appeared to the humans on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth. This was a privilege only given to a few gifted persons. But the urgency and the needs of his disciples forced him to do what had to be done.

Still he didn't appear live in front of all those witnesses, who hadn't been tested yet, but virtual.

Therefore Pooty had been right who compared South-Michel spontaneously with the Advisor, who also was a virtual projection.

“The root of us is all the same” South-Michel explained. “With Atlantis the blossoming part of the early western culture failed. The Atlantians fell, however the Cardinal Mistake, which enforced or even caused their destruction, remained in the world. They didn’t take it with them. And perhaps it was a wink of a mercy fate that the miners of Atlantis found a way of overcoming the downfall. Because they were no part of the culture, but only servants and slaves deep down in the mines.

There they developed what was required for survival, right there, sub-soil, where no sunlight ever gets and the air is bad.

Thus, it was essential for the dwarves to develop an airing system. While they were good at mining and tunnelling, and thus they kept on digging and didn’t bother much what was going on above their heads.

While there, dramatic chances were going on. “In order to understand how such development was possible, I have to explain. The Atlantians were in their majority arrogant high-brow feudals, who had slaves do the work. However they were also intelligent. They enjoyed the sciences and philosophy. They were the first high culture of mankind.

They were living on their island far away from the rest of the world, where people just began to replace stone tools by metal. While the Atlantians already founded democracy and even a theory of relativity of time, by means of which they discovered the secrets of the atoms, and how to split uranium cores. They might even have ignited the first atom bomb which caused their destruction, most likely.

The thirst of knowledge didn’t stop before the people. The Atlantians – so closely related to the sea - also experimented with all kinds of sea-dwellers and also with nixes and naiads, whom they felt related to.

In short, the ancestors of the mer-folk - whose offspring is now living under the shelf -, go back to half-breed Atlantians.

Therefore the fact that the colonists settled right where they did is worth while mentioning, while the dwarves built their air-bubble. In my capacity as emissary I brought my disciples the values you need for a humane living. It took a good while until moral standards became accepted.

This is why we dwarves are observing – (and before-most I, as the official emissary) - with great sorrow what was going on lately. We are happy about the progress. However, we do see the price that has to be paid, and we ask of course, if we can witness that without intervention. As it is our task to safeguard the well and prevent the woe of our disciples. We, as keepers of the heritage of Atlantis - carry great responsibility – that is, I do, because I am the one and only emissary.” Thus, spoke the Emissary South-Michel of Capricorn and disappeared.

Hesitative the students returned from their trance, or what it had been. Some felt like waking up from deep slumber. And all had the feeling of having witnessed something meaningful. They felt disappointed in a way, because they had consequential questions on the tip of their tongues, so to speak, and didn't accept delay. Too much had there been surmounting them, and had to be digested, and put in the right order as far as possible at all, which seemed not very likely, though.

Only a few had a faint idea of Atlantis and the whereabouts and doom, and could stand the noteworthy lecture. While the proportions had been laid open, and the scientific approach was appreciated. Sure enough, all worlds knew that already the old Greeks had wondered about atoms. However, that had been on a different level than what had been reported by the Emissary South-Michel of Capricorn.

The Cardinal Mistake upset the moods most, which had been referred to several times, but not defined. Nobody knew what it was like or only just to name it. Each could think his or her part, however, that was not enough.

Did nuclear fission cause the destruction of Atlantis? Had this high culture blown themselves up? Was that the Cardinal Mistake, the whole Western culture and civilisation threatened to fail? South-Michel's explanations arose more questions than he gave answers.

"And just like the Advisor he disappears, when it's most challenging" Arundle quarrelled: "How should that work anyway? Drilling a hole through the core of the globe, what kind of technique is this supposed to be? He himself wouldn't believe..."

"He doesn't need, he was not real. Therefore he doesn't need a real hole, you know what I mean?" Billy-Joe objected, who was strongly influenced by Pooty in such matters, who was all in favour of the dwarf. After he had decided to like South-Michel. Now he adored him and his lecture.

Pooty was glowing with agreement and so was Master Stone, thus, both pushed themselves up against each other. Billy-Joe took care not to intervene or become involved in a tricky argument, while he felt great sympathy for the little lad either.

"His world was not all that virtual, after all" Billy-Joe said. "They were striving for real air and real craftsmanship was needed, I'd say" – Arundle also agreed.

"And if there is really a material, a kind of protective umbrella, standing the heat? Theoretically it could be some kind of energetic grid, or something..." Billy-Joe vaguely put in. He surely knew that his argument was no trump in the sleeve.

The hall still buzzed and vibrated, hummed and drummed – nobody cared for leaving. Self-forgotten, bereft of time and space, so to speak, the students got

hold at each other, and surprised themselves with more or less ripe constructs and ideas most of which already acoustically failed. But that was not the point. Except when the character took over and outed the inner state of being. However, that was another matter. Fact was that the scene lacked of analysts, therefore such attempts passed unnoticed.

They all could feel it. There was something in space about. They all had their ear on the pulse of time, which opened up for them, and granted discernments of such an immeasurable dimension that nobody quite got what was heard.

19. The Homeland of the Magic Bow

Scholasticus Slyboots and his sister-in-law, Grisella, Countess of Griselgreif to Greifenklau-Slyboots were quite upset when they learnt second rate, what had been going on lately. Scholasticus would have been deeply devoted to his colleagues, if they had given him a wink, whom they invited. Because they did invite South-Michel of Capricorn, no doubt about that. He wouldn't have come otherwise. The question was however, if he had come, - had he known who was awaiting him, but that was a merely hypothetical question by now.

Adrian Humperdijk was even more upset of not having been noticed in advance. After all, South-Michel was a being of the higher kind for the mer-folk. Why had nobody given notice of such fact?

Adrian knew the mer-folk for ages but nobody had spoken of South-Michel. Did they take him as an atheist, things like that couldn't be bespoken with? Perhaps people were too shy or thought it impolite to bother him with such quests? Now he didn't wonder why his efforts on a rational base had been limited, or even failed. He couldn't reach the hearts by that, only the heads and that was not enough.

He, who won the hearts won the heads as well, and only if both were won, victory was in the range.

He would talk things over with Cory as soon as possible, who surely had been present and experienced this ominous emissary. She might know how to proceed now under such new premises. Lucky him, that he was not as all alone as he felt, after having noticed such personal Cardinal Mistake of his, he now could realize. He couldn't think of a way of correcting himself. His brain was swept empty. At best he had hidden, but his time hadn't come yet. Instead he settled at Marsha's kitchen table and opened her his heart.

Marsha also felt cheated a little, like the other teachers. Were they so useless? Hadn't it been better to talk first with them? But then she recalled that meeting about the new curriculum and the planning for the upcoming term when they confronted the new Honourables with their pragmatic approach and couldn't convince them.

Perhaps the two had intended to let them know but couldn't, because there was no opportunity to do so. Now it was too late to correct this mistake. Everything had its time, and they had missed their time in this case. Would there be another chance?

Her consolation for Adrian therefore was poor. The inner unrest couldn't be banned for both of them, just as it was for their other human colleagues.

They all kept on cackling like a flock of upset poultry when the fox was near, and asked for an emergency meeting, which was called in right away. This time they would listen carefully to what their two new colleagues had to tell them, each of them decided for him- or herself, and wouldn't bother them with outdated didactical schemes.

They would highly appreciate, they said, if they also were allowed to experience the Emissary South-Michel of Capricorn. "Is such a meeting at all possible?" Marsha – the official representative of the School of Inbetween – asked. Her request turned into a lengthier dispute Pooty stepped in lively, but didn't lead to a result for a good while. Right among those silent band of

teachers their inaudible whispering was of course heard. In the end the two Honourables agreed at last.

Like doctors are known as the worst patients, so it was with the Professors: They were horrible pupils. They couldn't or didn't want to get really involved. All over again one dropped out of the frame and disturbed the upcoming concentration, and ruined the effort of the instant, as if they just didn't want to or couldn't understand what they were expected to do.

Thus, Billy-Joe tried with a trick and invited the stiff gents and madams to an Australian feast-dance, that differed for those in the know in no way to the well-known rain-dance, Billy-Joe danced at any given opportunity, as if it was made for him. However, this would show only the far future.

The dancing helped because South-Michel swayed in while they were all in the move. The sight of his made the audience shiver.

"Thus, they should treat the Advisor" Arundle wondered almost annoyed, while was glad to have the inconvincible subjects trapped. As a matter of fact, South-Michel could talk. And that was what he did. The Professors listened attentively however South-Michel hardly moved his lips, while his thoughts entered the brain unfiltered, without diversion via other senses. Still his sight was a feast for the eyes. For this time he was clad in a yellow waistcoat and his legs stuck in green long boot-shafts under the tartan kilt, those who met him a second time, noticed what differed.

How fast you felt confidence, Arundle wondered, and how dear the little man was to her already – perhaps, because he was so small and came out of the depth, while the Advisor stemmed from the endless width of outer space.

Atlantis however, was not South-Michel's theme for this time, Arundle meant to understand. Because he was interfering into your thinking, thus, all noticed what was meant only for him or her or for each of them concerning the ethics of the mer-folk, and where it was stuck.

However, the curse of Atlantis was mentioned nevertheless. For the time being it was the curse, and not the Cardinal Mistake only. While South-Michel in fact meant the same, Arundle noticed already without enforcement by the glowing red eye of her Magic Bow that was fixing her with hypnotic glance.

Billy-Joe experienced the same. Pooty was already kneeling on the ground praying – that is, he was kneeling in the ribbons of the Medicine Pouch. His little paws he had folded, his eyes were torn so you could see the white only. Somewhat odd, though.

The Magic Stone was swaying likewise – glittering in all colours of the rainbow above Pooty's folded paws, and it looked as if Pooty's prayer was meant for him, but in fact wasn't, because behind the Magic Stone you could see South-Michel waving – the true object of Pooty's ardour.

What ever happened between Pooty and South-Michel in those moments, nobody will ever learn. Pooty was probably covered by the unspeakable secrets of mystics and perhaps received a revelation – 'Of the necessities and disadvantages of History for Life' – who could know?

Whether even the Professors missed what really was going on, Arundle and Billy-Joe could only guess, because they were busy with themselves, and didn't mind the whole show as such.

The Cardinal Mistake meant to believing in the second with a beautiful woman, what ever this message meant – still they noticed the keyword.

Arundle gazed over to Billy-Joe and he smiled his unbelievable smile, as if the Cardinal Mistake wasn't meant for him.

Arundle also noticed that important things were going on with her. Still she couldn't tell. She would have liked that it had to do with Billy-Joe and with his marvellous smile that was her so dear and near, like small tickling waves of indescribable tenderness dissolving inside her.

What a pity – she felt when she realized a much older trace, that was running ahead of her. She couldn't

do other than follow, the more as so the track was built of golden arrows being shot in the ground for her.

For ages she was attracted by this track, the Magic Bow had laid for her. She had followed up to now, and as it looked, she would go on following, just like that, despite Billy-Joe's beautiful smile. That might follow her, as long as she didn't lose this track.

What ever was set this way was set for good, that much she could say in the aftermath. No matter whether the track got out of sight soon, the track was much further than the eye could see. Because what eyes do see, and what eyes can see, was not quite the same. Sure enough, another proof of the Cardinal Mistake.

The track of the arrows carried her off to a no-man's-land, where even Billy-Joe was prohibited access. Arundle noticed him tapping heavy-footed and ever heavier footed behind her, as if his feet glued tighter to the ground.

Thus, it was. Billy-Joe couldn't follow her. He let her go sadly by heart. She waved with her Magic Bow, whose eye shone inside out on his own, despite the fact that the evening sun reflected before he disappeared behind the horizon, and the night came.

Westward the trail turned by now, and the golden arrows were glowing, ruffling dainty feathers in the soothing evening wind.

"Home, I want to go home" the Magic Bow sighed. In that very moment the golden bulwarks of Atlantis shone up in the distance. Silver dragons with golden horns were blowing, while drifting above the site with a pathetic halleluiah-welcome.

The Magic Bow's eye dissolved in tears and wetted Arundle's little brown fist clenching tight around the tough wood in a decisive air, as if she wanted to grant him absolute loyalty. As if she wanted to tell him - and to her at the same time: "I am yours, and you are mine." A very likely admission, though, as the girl meant to know in that very moment, while following her basic instincts.

Low-purring horseless carriages were waving by, and stopped, while golden Atlantians got off, as soon as

the vehicle halted. Arundle pushed forward her hand with the bow, while the Atlantians bowed their heads, and Arundle followed their example.

“I wish, you were here, mi o my country-boy” she heard herself singing. However, he was still back at the spot where she had lost him, no matter how hard he tried to go ahead.

In her fist she felt a vibrant, and hoped she understood rightly, and indeed she heard Billy-Joe’s heavy breathe next to her. She didn’t dare to turn her eyes off the Atlantians, as if she banned them with her gaze.

“We are searching for the Cardinal Mistake. Here we are supposed to find it” she kept on thinking. She knew not whether out of her or raised by the bow in her fist.

The Atlantians didn’t show, whether they had understood. Instead they invited Arundle and now Billy-Joe likewise to enter the horse-less carriage. As it looked they regarded the horseless-ness of the carriage worth a lengthy explanation, by pointing at the hood where a tiny engine was hidden.

“An automobile, isn’t it?” Arundle replied politely. “We are from the future, carriages like this one are common all over the place.

Arundle made several signs of driving, flying or diving. The Atlantians nodded and smiled, and looked as if they didn’t believe a word of what she was saying.

The bow in her fist made her feel, not to show her impressions and keep her mistrust down, still boiling up, and not to enter this vehicle - under no circumstances.

No spoken word had been uttered so far, she realized. Nobody moved a lip, or if, than to smile or bite on the lip ironically, while presenting two rows of perfect teeth.

Without doubt the Magic Bow was from Atlantis, you could easily notice because there were lots of quivers hidden behind the backs, and many brothers could be seen sticking in such quivers. They all had their red eye shine indicating that they had noticed him.

All too short he enjoyed this brotherly We-feeling. While the knowledge of his world-experience and

philosophy of life made him feel superior. Such youngsters were only there to serve. They were useless otherwise, but being in good shape and alert when it came to shooting arrows.

Now, that he was finally at home, his yearning melted like butter in the sun.

“It’s a long way to Tipperary, it’s a long way to go” he tuned in rather amused. His little home-sick-crisis was over.

Arundle repeatedly said to herself that this was all not true, and that she needn’t worry in reality, while the hostility of the Atlantians was sipping through the mask, they presented.

The beauty scarcely covered the ugly face of cruelty. Once in a while the ugly face appeared, the more as so Billy-Joe’s mighty figure built up, that had been before in the background, little mattered that he had no bow.

The less as since Pooty and the Magic Stone were ignored. “No place for animals” Arundle became aware. Billy-Joe who was first to notice, had his boomerang swirl, smashing hundreds of golden arrows showering down on them, while Arundle let go a similar reverse by means of her advanced bow.

The mean heroes took shelter and Arundle and Billy-Joe rushed away in their dream, then that they dreamed they doubted not, although Arundle found the tip of an arrow sticking in her arm., while Billy-Joe pulled even three out of his legs.

Obviously a very lively way of dreaming had that been. They got plasters out of the invisible quiver and covered the wounds, but didn’t bother the concentration of the Professors, that was still prevailing.

On the search for the Cardinal Mistake they got a good step forward, that much the two of them believed to know. Thus, they all made very lively experiences while sitting there. Arundle wondered, where they could have hurt while sleeping. Perhaps some arrows had slipped out of the quiver, and she had pushed one into her arm and even three into Billy-Joe’s leg, which appeared to be very unlikely.

Such an unreal explanation was much unlikelier than the miraculous tale of the dream. Thus, Arundle preferred to trust again once more in the unreal. While the so-called reality appeared wholly unreal.

“Strange, isn’t it - such reversing of fact and fiction” she wondered, and Billy-Joe wondered back, confirming her change in recognition, by pointing to the fact that his people were blamed for such change by the whites and treated as if they were out of mind.

Seen from the point of view they just took, this was nothing extraordinary, as they just could experience.

“Don’t ask me, how those arrows managed to get into us. The most obvious explanation that they were shot into our bodies by those mean characters over there in Atlantis, you may accept least, am I right?”

Billy-Joe understood her right. Everything rejected such fictitious explanation, while it was most likely the only reasonable one. Instead she preferred a very unlikely construct, she herself couldn’t believe in.

It seemed to him as if Arundle wanted to explain the world in the way of the old. They imagined in one of their legends – the surface of the earth as the back of a turtle. The turtle was standing on the back of another turtle and this turtle on the back of another and so forth, because they couldn’t accept the idea of a globe swaying and drifting in an empty space, but rejected such an idea as wholly absurd.

Arundle gave in. Her Magic Bow was proof enough. After all she knew now where he came from and what a troublesome youth he had in Atlantis with such cruel beings. The bow confirmed her empathy when she rechecked: those Atlantians were just the way they had experienced them.

“They were so racially prejudiced – you can’t be more chauvinistic” he stressed. “Each individual shorter than two hands below standard were put into the mines, and animals only were meant for food, and if regarded as uneatable they were diminished as parasite and mercilessly destructed.

Billy-Joe had them been a double thorn in their side. For once he had the complexion of a slave, and for the other he had an animal in a bag around his neck. Had Billy-Joe not whirled the boomerang before his chest, they would surely have killed Pooty – that is really, not just dream-dead – as real as the arrows had been in their bodies. So it better read – when they returned from another reality to this reality.

How could they get into the far past? Because, when the arrows were real, than everything else might have been real, and so was the time. South-Michel had them somehow transmuted – disguised as a dream – all along the string of time backwards. Was he himself also part of... Arundle had an idea.

She felt strongly reminded of her first visit to Laptopia. The only difference was that the attackers had been artifacts there, while in Atlantis they were humans, and the reason had also been a different one. In Laptopia she had been accused for maltreating her laptop, while in Atlantis they were attacked for yet unknown reasons.

Could it be that the Atlantians accused Billy-Joe for mishandling Pooty? Was Pooty a holy animal for them, that had to be protected?. Perhaps she had misunderstood their motives. However, had her Magic Bow not warned her?

Did he warn her in Laptopia? – Arundle tried to remember. General Armyless had come to rescue her from the inconvenient conditions she had been in. She tried to recall what exactly had happened then, and noticed that she could hardly remember.

The facts had been not so important, but the feelings were, because she now thought to remember similar feelings. No matter whether the situation had been entirely different. Well, perhaps the differences had not been so important but the likeness was. And if it was the way she had suspected, and Pooty was the key to the secret of the Atlantians? But how could they have such a shower of arrows go down on him? They must have known that they endangered Pooty's life. Those Atlantians couldn't know about Billy-Joe's abilities as a defender – or did they know?

Fact was that she was hit by an arrow in the arm and Billy-Joe by three in the leg. To the crucial part, where Pooty was located, no arrow seemed to have approached.

And if they were indeed miraculous arrows, they were especially gifted, as she knew from experience. Finding the target was one of the characteristics. The main task of the shooter was to be aware of his target. If he or she was, the arrow made its way if not hindered by a whirling boomerang, as was done by Billy-Joe's – a weapon also full of magic, Arundle doubted not.

That was why Billy-Joe related on the ability of the boomerang and his virtue of handling; and why Billy-Joe handled his boomerang with great care. He sharpened its inner blade and erased little scars (as were unavoidable in defence) before he had it disappear again, that is, he stuffed it into the belt around his hips, or had it disappear by sending it on a long voyage into the dreamland; well - this was what Billy-Joe told, anyway.

Arundle wasn't really prepared to believe him. Fact was anyway that the boomerang was absent indeed, just like a stray dog, while the inner lead with its master never cut, no matter how far it's astray.

She wouldn't find answers here. She would have to go there once more. And because she didn't know access, she needed the help of South-Michel. At best she spoke with Billy-Joe and had him participate in her musings and feelings now and way back in Laptopia, where Billy-Joe had done such a great job, but that came later.

Lappy, who had caused so much trouble was honoured triumphantly there, and she had never again taken such a device with her to avoid provocations.

This is what she told and how she referred to Pooty. On the other hand, how should they find out what really was the matter when they put away any hint in advance, without knowing why or why not?

However, were they allowed to endanger Pooty? How important was the search for the Cardinal Mistake after all?

She noticed the Professors waking up. Out of deep trance they stumbled back into reality, where everything had its proper weight. They felt like returning back from space without gravity – this was how they behaved.

Grisella even fainted. However, all were happy, and – as one put it – “richer by a sound experience.” There was a lot of talking of the unspeakable and the unimaginable and the unio mystica (communion with God).

Grisella claimed to have experienced such a mystical unification, and that explained her fading when coming back. She couldn't say whom she had been uniting, that was the unspeakable, the whole band was wondering, so nobody except her husband Amadeus was upset when she remained silent.

Amadeus feared greater misdoings over there in heavy trance. Therefore jealousy was overwhelming him. His brother Scholasticus tried to calm him down and explained - somewhat unclear - how this kind of union was going on. He pointed out that there was no other human involved, definitely no other man, and that was Amadeus' major concern. While the dissolved appearance of his wife spoke another language, and couldn't be erased by tricky phraseology either.

Grisella showed more than there was, because in a physical sense she had not been touched, and she would have liked to have Amadeus with her. Perhaps one day this would become real. The more as so Marsha gave the impression of having had just that experience with Adrian.

Thus, they were all talking about the unspeakable. While the unspeakable remained unspeakable. After all, they now knew about the powers of South-Michel, and this was, what they had been after.

20. Atlantis

Arundle and Billy-Joe were sitting alone at the beach. It was one of those summer days, you were yearning for the slightest cooling wave of air. Her friend was wondering about her doubts and his task was to objecting them and stress of contradictions, instead of just being and enjoying the rays of the sun and the sounds of the sea.

Her experiences in Laptopia taught her that things were not always as they seemed to be.

“...I can’t get rid of the feeling of being on the wrong track” Arundle thoughtfully said. “Things are not as they seem. Despite South-Michel and the discernments he gave, reasoning about the destruction of Atlantis, while such fact could hardly be doubted. – I do not doubt the facts, of course not. However it could be that the reason for that had been different, other than the one given by South-Michael.

His explanation must not necessarily be motivated by mean intentions, though. I do believe in what he said about the treatment of the dwarves. However, that does not mean that South-Michel is right in everything he says. Perhaps, he understood things somewhat perfunctory, as we did in Laptopia. Let’s take the first approach – the horseless carriages they were coming up on us and the respectable welcome...”

“Yes, you could be right. They were indeed taking trouble to please us and open up – right at the beginning. However, then something happened, and the situation changed...”

“Exactly, that’s what I mean, and that had to do – well, it must have had to do with Pooty or with you, or both of you, when you stepped forward. Did you do anything with Pooty or did Pooty do anything worth while mentioning?”

“Might have goofed about with the Magic Stone as he is used to, in order to show his importance, I figure, I didn’t pay attention. I was gasping hard, longing for breathe, and was still exhausted by stepping through that

sticky ground. Don't understand why you weren't affected either..."

They couldn't find an answer. Pooty seemed to be sleeping, otherwise he would have made himself known, when Billy-Joe talked about him, the more as so unfavourable, which he didn't like at all, but who did?

"Shall I wake him up?" Billy-Joe asked. "Perhaps he remembers better, what it could have been. Pooty has a fine sense for the supra-natural" he said winking at Arundle, while he noticed Pooty's head stretching out of the pouch, who had understood every word.

"I do not goof about with the stone, in order to make me feel important" the possum moaned. "And what is meant by my – 'sensitive feeling for the supra-natural' -, I must tell you, that it didn't work this time. What was your own sensitive feeling like – Billy-Joe, or what about yours, Arundle?"

Neither Billy-Joe nor Arundle tuned in on Pooty's provocation, while both looked somewhat ashamed to the ground, being trapped for ignorance.

"I think the mood switched as soon as you began explaining to them what you knew about vehicles moving without horses. They didn't believe you. Since then they behaved differently. – Well, it's just an idea. We hadn't been close yet..."

Arundle agreed with everything, as long as it supported her uncertainties. She didn't want to blame those Atlantians before there were not all facts considered, which were supporting South-Michel's negative judgement. Because this way they took the easy trail on the search for the Cardinal Mistake, they were actually looking for, and might go wrong.

"How do you get hold of that South-Michel? I do want to get there again, and give them a chance" Arundle exclaimed very decidedly while pushing the Magic Bow. Pooty rushed for the Magic Stone who was hiding again, for what ever reason.

"Without South-Michel we do not find the way. I myself was most surprised, being suddenly confronted with my beginnings, you can believe that. Meeting all

those little brothers, was kind of queer, believe me”
the bow snarled.

Meanwhile the Magic Stone was found and the two began one of those endless palavers, nobody could follow, no matter how hard he or she tried. So, Arundle and Billy-Joe went for a swim. Pooty decided to remain ashore with the two Honourables, and promised to give notice as soon as South-Michel appeared, which was not all that unlikely.

Arundle and Billy-Joe swam out to their pontoon and stretched on the hot planks. However, as soon as they had settled the well-known song was heard: “It’s a long way to Tipperary...”

Arundle meant to distinguish the voice of the Magic Bow while other voices fell in melodiously.

They hurried back. South-Michel strongly recommended to put on clothing, he didn’t name more closely, thus, they put on shirts and trousers and Arundle shouldered the invisible quiver with the Magic Bow. Billy-Joe put his Medicine Pouch around his neck with the Magic Stone and Pooty in, and over the shoulders he put a tunic-like mattress, while South-Michel guided them along the time-scale, clad as usual: with a red hood, yellow waistcoat, tartan kilt, and green leggings, leading them back to the past.

The four singers were scattering their song in two voices thus it was great fun, and inspired them greatly. The marching was easy that way, much easier than last time when Billy-Joe almost failed.

Pooty was tapping the rhythm with his foot on Billy-Joe’s chest, while singing as loud as he could out of the opening of the pouch, thus Billy-Joe started hesitatingly, first only humming but then with his full voice, and Arundle did likewise.

The song was more than the two front lines the singers were repeating all over again, but they didn’t know more text, which didn’t reduce their enthusiasm.

“It’s a long way to Tipperary,
It’s a long way to go.”

Thus, they marched on towards Atlantis right through the Golden Gate into the centre. The Atlantians formed a lane and clapped their hands, as if this was a kind of triumphant march, while in fact there was nothing to triumph about. Those Atlantians seemed to like gestures of grandeur.

The rally was heading towards a wide square with a sumptuous building, and while many Atlantians were stepping in, following the four, the procession was quite something.

Billy-Joe ensured that they were able of dreaming away as fast as last time, in case this turned out to become advisable. He looked over to Arundle noticing an enthusiastic expression on her face, which made him wonder. She looked as if she was high – probably been carried away by the jubilant masses, which had increased considerably in number, when the tip of the rally halted in front of a magnificent palace amidst the grand square.

The Atlantians tuned now in on the song, stammering meaningless sounds supposed to sound like the original words of the song, and soon instruments resonated: trumpets and drums taking up and transforming then rhyme and melody.

All of a sudden, the noise stopped for no reason. But sure enough had there been a signal all of those Atlantians received. Again the horseless carriages came by and the same procedure as last time repeated.

This time however Arundle rejected any thought of superiority. Instead the guests entered the vehicles and moved almost soundlessly towards the palace.

The carriages stopped in front of the entrance. The guests disembarked and were guided through the magnificent lobby into a huge Hall on both sides of which pillars were lined up, each topped by a statue.

The guests paraded with distinguished steps first along the left hand side of the row of remarkable personalities of the present and the past of Atlantis.

Again Arundle felt reminded of similar set-ups in the future, while the hall was much alike the one in the imperial palace, called the ‘Hall of Fame and Honour’. She had to bring herself down and push such memories

aside, because she knew now that the Atlantians didn't like any comparison questioning their singularity.

Besides, the intergalactic universal law prohibited any interference of the future into past proceedings, as they always were some kind of alteration of the presence. Had their song been already such an alteration?

This didn't seem to be the case, otherwise they would have noticed. Perhaps the problems found their cause right here, rather than with those Atlantians.

She had to make up her mind all over again and recall what they were here for. They were looking for the Cardinal Mistake that came into the history of Mankind, but nobody knew what this mistake looked like, or when in first appeared.

The Cardinal Mistake was now set and fixed, and deeply rooted in everything, culture brought forward. Thus, there might be several ideas of how to tackle the Cardinal Mistake, but all such musings lacked a sound fundament, that is, the knowledge of a historic phase before.

Those statues caught Arundle's attention while stepping on. Their hosts guided them solemnly along the rows. They were gifted with the ability of telepathy, and didn't need many words. Thus, communication turned out to be easier, insofar as Arundle, as well as Billy-Joe had some telepathetic experience and so had Messrs Bow and Stone, who didn't even have mouths to speak or ears to hear, which weren't required.

At each second or third statue the hosts stopped and explained the circumstances briefly. Never they just said, 'this is the famous Y or the godly X. As if persons were less important than the circumstances of their lives. If this was the root of the Cardinal Mistake, then they were lucky, because such notions had been distinguished meanwhile.

Thus the walk around of the small procession approached the most sacred top of the Hall. And now not only Arundle understood the hefty reactions during their first visit, and so did her companions.

On the column there was a peculiar hybrid, showing from the girdle downwards noticeable semblance with a kangaroo, while the upper part was connected to the trunk of an Aborigine. On the head, that was much alike Billy-Joe's, a copy of Pooty was resting.

They were right in front of the incarnation of the most sacred Godly wisdom as the guests learned – “this is the image of the haunted blind semi-being Walt Yio on top of which the farsighted dwarf-being Puh Tzi sees what is coming.”

Pooty couldn't refrain from sticking his nose out of the pouch. This Puh Tzi he wanted to have a look at. When the Atlantians noticed him, they showed all kinds of devotional gestures, which they should have done earlier already, because Billy-Joe also looked much alike this Walt Yio on the pillar in his upper part.

Then Pooty had the idea of climbing on top of Billy-Joe's head grabbing for hold in the latter's thick hair. As soon as he had done, the Atlantians came down. Their world was in order again as soon as things were on their proper site.

This had it been then. The Atlantians couldn't stand the idea of having the Godly beast resting in an old pouch. For them Puh Tzi had to sit on top of Walt-Yio's head, as simple as that. If this had to be so, then it should so be, decided Pooty and remained on top of the world – Billy-Joe carried his lot with patience.

On the way back South-Michel went almost invisible on the telepathetic site. Whether there had been something wrong or whether he had realized his error, or whether doubts gnawed in his soul – each of the co-travellers could look for something suitable, while the right might not be amongst anyway.

Perhaps his staying below surface endured for too long. Perhaps he had lost the touch with the upper world. The picture of the cruel racists, he could not keep up, neither for himself nor for his co-travellers. That became clear. Racism was most likely not the base of the Cardinal Mistake. The Cardinal Mistake must have come earlier into the history of Mankind, or at a different site.

Was the fall of Atlantis the wrong track, then?

Did Atlantis fall because it denied such Cardinal Mistake? This idea came to Arundle's mind flash-like, and the more this idea settled, the less absurd it seemed. The more so after the second visit.

Was it not absolutely absurd to charge the Pompeian for the destruction of Pompey? And would it not be likewise absurd to charge the Atlantians for the destruction of Atlantis? Doing so, would mean to interchange cause and effect, as was quite obvious in case of the Dinosaurs.

You can't in fact view geo-physical events as punishment or vice versa perhaps as reward. All you could do is say that victims were at the wrong site at the wrong time. The question why things like that did happen quite often in history, might be worth while investigating. Signs of warning must have been ignored – or the ability to notice them got lost.

On search for the Cardinal Mistake Arundle and her companions might have gone wrong in Atlantis. Nobody forced them to accept the false tale of punishment for misbehaviour and hypocrisy, the more so as there was no evidence.

The interrelation between human hypocrisy and tectonic occurrences in the earth's crust, nobody who was sensible and reasonable could claim. Who ever tried to draw a connecting line here had surely to prove it with convincing evidence.

Perhaps the opposite idea that Atlantis fell because it didn't follow the Cardinal Mistake, might be worth while considering. Arundle didn't have but a vague feeling, though. On the search for the Cardinal Mistake the late salvation of Atlantis would mean a small diversion, if at all.

21. Puh Tzi and Walt Yio

How did the half Walter, the half Billy-Joe and the whole Pooty get to Atlantis? What great deeds had they done together down there? Why were they hailed as heroes? Quite obvious Puh Tzi - as he was called over here – took a leading role. The blind giant Walt Yio was carrying the wide-sighted dwarf-being Puh Tzi on his head. Together they formed the sum of all wisdom, such the rumour went.

Pooty only shook his head about so much rubbish, and Billy-Joe couldn't see any sense either. He didn't like the idea of being blind and just some kind of undercarriage for Pooty, whose messianic glamour Puh Tzi kept emitting, while fully aware of everything.

Repeatedly, Arundle had to assure him that Walt Yio was an image of a long passed and forgotten culture, while his curiosity had arisen just for that reason. So, the little sting at his ego was therefore just like nothing.

He feared that he was converting in the future, in order to become transformed back to the past that way. A hair-rising idea, that made him sick.

Fact was, that neither he nor Pooty recalled a similar likely situation. And were absolutely sure of that.

So Arundle reminded them of what it had been like on Conversiors' Island often enough.

"Could those caricatures have been built after snapshots, while in the critical phase of transformation?" she asked and made them think twice.

"But who should have witnessed us? And not only that – the monument was surely built afterwards. Before we must have been in Atlantis and done great deeds. Why else should the Atlantians build such a monument – that is to say - did so at their time)?"

"Yes, and that we do definitely not recall" Pooty confirmed. "Photo shooting on Conversiors' Island – yes, but miraculous deeds in Atlantis definitely – no. I do see it likewise" Billy-Joe agreed. A phase like that in one's life would of course be unforgettable.

"Well, could it be that such events still lie in our future? Perhaps such trip as saviours lies still ahead of

you” Arundle wondered, while noticing how tricky such jiggling along the time-string back and forth was.

“The two of you return tomorrow back to the day before yesterday and we all return today back to yesterday – if we all do so, then things work out fine with the monument and the devotion. While you have to imagine the todays and tomorrows and so forth, kind of stretched, though” Arundle put in and enjoyed the surprise in the faces of her witnesses.

“Main thing is, you understand yourself” the bow snarled, who wasn’t fond of logic.

“Humans always want to know. And if they forget anything they feel shame. While in fact they always forget things, and for you this turns out to be a catastrophe” the Magic Stone went in his speechless impertinent way of communicating.

“Could we then wait until tomorrow, and then travel to the day before yesterday?” the sly Pooty picked up the thread, and did, what Arundle intended to do.

“Yes, but must we wait until tomorrow? Billy-Joe went in now. “Can’t we go today back to the day before yesterday, then we know what Puh Tzi and Walt Yio have been doing, and perhaps we do understand those Atlantians better, and perhaps find out if they made the Cardinal Mistake or not.”

“If this is technically possible” Arundle looked around questioningly at the Magic Bow, who had his eye shine and stimulated the Magic Stone to lift and glow in the brightest colours. It looked as if the two felt quite capable of doing so.

“We’ll stretch that time-string a little further, what do you think, old bloke?”

“Yes, sounds alright with me – let’s get going.”

For this time they choose another song “only for this time” it said. But that you never knew – not even they did.

“Fine marching is the miller’s lust –
 Fine marching is the miller’s lust –
 Fine ma-ha-chin

He couldn't be a miller's bloke
Who never ever marched ad hoc
Fine ma-ha-chin..."

Without South-Michel the time-string led them on dusty overland lanes and devastated fields. No golden city came in sight, instead they were approached by a small band of vagabonds, who followed Walt Yio with Puh Tzi on his head. They looked like a monument that had become alive.

The people in their company were well-built Atlantians of differing age and gender, somewhat about twenty in number.

In order not to cause trouble, when Pooty and Billy-Joe met their 'alter ego' the Magic Bow and Magic Stone had an idea. They covered the visitors by an invisibility-charm, thus they couldn't be seen by the Atlantians.

For that the Magic Bow enlarged a covering cloth, thus they all could hide, while it had been Pooty's, but had been forgotten and rested unnoticed on the bottom of the invisible quiver, Arundle had always with her together with the Magic Bow, mostly on the back, as she did right now.

Still out of sight the cloth was taken out on command of the Magic Bow and was unfolded. Arundle, Flory, Cory and Billy-Joe took a corner each and stretched it neatly on all four corners until the cloth became not only very thin but also large enough to house them all.

Being so thin had the advantage that you could look through without much obtrusion. Pooty did like his 'alter ego' and held tight on Billy-Joe's head with his little paws. Thus, he became seated on top of the invisible pyramid, and had the best total overall view.

As soon as the Atlantians passed by - the hidden visitors followed and eavesdropped them in the telepathetic mode, finding out about their inner communication.

There was quite a confusion. The twenty were caught by the spirit and flew over by the greatest emotions and ideas. However, Puh Tzi seemed to be

asleep, because he wasn't online Pooty found out, who was of course most interested in him.

'Let's hope, he'll soon wake up' he wished. However that he had better not done, while Puh Tzi suddenly woke up and yelled, stretching his forefinger towards the invisible pyramid, that was obviously not invisible to him.

This might be caused by a special supra-natural clairvoyance and might be the reason for the devotion he encountered.

A wild turmoil broke loose. All twenty disciples male or female shrieked and shot some twenty arrows at any direction. The disciples didn't share the clairvoyance of their master obviously. Besides, those arrows kept gliding down the invisible cloak of camouflage that was as it seemed more or less in vain. The arrows broke under the feet of the fleeing flock of invaders.

Thus, the merry march came to a sudden end, while the marchers hurried to get away and out of sight as soon as possible. Followed by the yelling of Puh Tzi who directed the arrows. But the protective cloak was still in use and the arrows kept on gliding down the shimmering cloth like silvery dewdrops on sea-rose-leaves in a pond on a wind-still summer-morning.

Hindered by the cloth the escapees weren't faster than their prosecutors and Puh Tzi soon changed the tactic. He had the pyramid surrounded and encircled, but he didn't consider the wittiness of his original. Pooty kept turning the Magic Stone until the latter took off straight up like an arrow tip, taking the load under the cloth with him – (of course they had to get hold of it.)

The cloth was strained and stretched almost over the limit but thanks to the power of the Magic Bow, who didn't want to show weakness, the cloth endured. It was, after all, a very special device from his very personal secret magic box.

Now they were away, but further they weren't either. They stood where they started, when they lowered red-faced and sweating, from where they had emerged some minutes ago, with a merry song on their lips.

“If I didn’t know you, I’d say Puh Tzi is a psychopath” Billy-Joe grumbled upset and rubbed his aching head-skin. Pooty had grabbed a little too tight while troubled.

“I wholly agree – I think, I’m mad” he giggled and couldn’t stop laughing. He infested the others, and all started laughing for a whole minute or more, and weren’t really sure, why exactly.

I think, I’m mad” Pooty repeated as soon as the laughing faded, thus it started all over again.

I think I’m mad...”

However, was Puh Tzi really mad? Or had he good reasons for his behaviour? When he could look through the magic cloak he had seen Pooty sitting on Billy-Joe’s head, no doubt, as if he looked into a mirror. Only the time-travellers had had an idea of what they were going to face, while Puh Tzi had been surprised by the situation. Thus, his reaction might be understandable.

Should they therefore try another approach – this time without the magic cloak? Perhaps they should grant the pair some time to digest what had just happened. Such a shock claimed for incorporation, that much was clear.

Besides, it was high time to have the public here on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth informed. First of all Grisella or Scholasticus who had a right to be involved, because they were in it just as Marsha and Adrian, as well as their student friends.

It might be best anyway to ask for a school conference where they could present their adventure at length.

So it was done. The escapade in Atlantis was stunning enough, and met great interest. And the conclusions were welcomed as well. Nobody discovered a mistake.

They were praised by Scholasticus for sticking to the universal transgalactic law, while the appearance of Puh Tzi seemed somewhat problematic. Thus, a clarifying expedition was arbitrary.

“Of course with the necessary precautions...” Scholasticus said,

“That means, he wants to come with us”
Arundle whispered into Billy-Joe’s ear.

For this time, there was no lengthier ado. As nobody wanted to employ the help of the magic cloak, there was no objection concerning the number of participants. Both, Magic Stone and Magic Bow didn’t publish what they had learnt yet.

For sure Scholasticus wanted to be on board as well as the specialist for prehistoric history Professor Grisella, Lady of Griselgreif to Greifenklau-Slyboots.

When Arundle and Flory described the mode of getting there, she overcame her panic of flying. Penelope M’gamba also claimed to be expert for mystery-cults and paganism and therefore her participation was a clear necessity.

Flory and her sister were on board because of their farther and own interest in archaeology, while Tibor was of need because of his transcendental air.

Thus the group kept growing and if they hadn’t departed right away, they might have grown even more.

South-Michel’s help was no longer needed, that the Magic Bow and the Magic Stone had proven. The once trampled path alongside the time-line was obviously broad enough even for those newcomers the magicians were still certain, despite the fact that the Magic Bow was Atlantian himself.

Perhaps for this fact his ability was founded of indeed finding the proper way.

Thus, the two Honourables stepped on singing one of those boy-scout songs, and marched to the sounds of the Internationale. While Arundle let them know that this was not just a boy-scouts’ song at all, but the song of the working class all over the world. However, it was too late for a change, and an alteration was most likely not intended anyway.

They all tuned in and thus the air resounded by those martial reverberations all over the idyll of a peaceful evening on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth.

Arise, the workers of all nations!
Arise, oppressed of the earth!
For justice thunders condemnation:
A better world is now in birth!

Once more the marchers all stuck closely to the time-line bewigged by their own singing and the harmony of their steps. The dusty roads of Atlantis already shone up towards the close horizon, when they sighted the band of disciples of Puh Tzi and Walt Yio, who were marching no less decisive towards them and soon stepped in on the same rhythm as well as the martial singing, while breaking down the text to unreadable sounds. Even trombones resounded like the trumps of doom accompanied by heavy drum beats.

Both bands of marchers met and combined. And further they went through the land, passing by hamlets wherefrom poverty-stricken Atlantians streamed by and followed the procession.

And thus the 'March of the Millions', it became famous then, was started. Nobody tried to find out the exact number, neither now nor later. It was a problem of noughts more than believe, such the rumour went amongst those in the know.

Until the golden city was reached, they surely were a couple of thousands that was singing the liiihaanahaahaalee to the drumbeat and trumps following the almost even pair of Puh Tzi and Pooty both sitting on top of the world, so to speak, while Billy-Joe had trouble jiggling the upset possum steadily over stick and stone on his head.

The time-travellers were enthusiastic likewise, and mixed with the folk before the palace on the centre square, soon packed tightly by the masses that streamed by from all sides, thus no carriages could pass, which were made serviceable for the high guests of honour. Because in the Grand Hall of the palace the official annual feast acts of the first inauguration of Puh Tzi and Walt Yio was to be celebrated. For the Atlantians thus the double became a true miracle and Godly revelation.

As you can imagine the arrival of the time-travellers enriched the position of the Saints (as they were regarded) considerably. That was why their appearance was pushed up to the 'March of the Millions' and became recorded in the annals of Atlantian history, no matter how short the distance to the final fall was already.

Whether intended or not, the appearance of the strangers turned out to be a milestone towards the Atlantian doomsday, Scholasticus concluded later, somewhat pathetic. Nobody wanted to accept his point of view however, before he produced a pile of evidence that couldn't be pushed aside. But this was some time later, when the time-travellers had returned to the Isle of Wisdom-tooth.

Unfortunately, Pooty had no chance of contacting Puh Tzi, while he was so eager to find out how Puh Tzi had become his 'alter ego' and mark Atlantis with his stamp.

Whether he had any idea of cloning Puh Tzi asked just like that while they stood side by side before their monument,

"You me clone" stammered for the first time also Walt Yio addressing to Billy-Joe next to him, and twinkled silly out of blind eyes, so that Billy-Joe felt bewildered.

"Let's hope, it's the other way round" Billy-Joe wondered, however than he felt ashamed, how could he treat himself like that?

For now both didn't know how important this little scene was, and how far reaching, not only for Atlantis but for the future of all Mankind.

There were no further contacts any more. The official ceremony tided up the saints while Billy-Joe arranged for a gathering of the time-travellers, because the Magic Stone indicated that the time had come for an orderly retreat.

Little later Billy-Joe understood what the Magic Stone had let him know. Everywhere people consumed drugs now, and the Atlantians became somewhat irrational, thus the xenophobic tendencies came up again, and hidden cruelties inflamed, as they recalled from their first visit.

In a hurry the strangers were collected. The Magic Bow had the magic cloak unfolded and Arundle pushed it over the little band, that was miraculously all covered thus the whole mishpoke was beamed off the endangered zone.

And before Grisella (who was so threatened by the fear of flying) – realized, she was back home sitting in her professorial chair, and felt as if she had just had some kind of a colourful dream.

There was a lot to be analysed. Nobody had remained idle while over there, but collected loads of material. Thousands of photos had the youth taken with their cellular phone cameras. Even probes of saliva some of Penelope's aides had taken – stones, cloth – even shit they assembled, while idling about in the mass.

The stammering ('you me clone') of Walt Yio had been recorded, as well as the singing of the International by the multitude. Of course the wavering thought couldn't be recorded. Instead there were some videos taken, showing the official act below the monument.

22. The Clone Thief

The evaluation of all that material went on for weeks. Step by step a more precise picture of the Atlantians crystallized. They differed in specific areas of culture only little from other antique peoples.

The Athenians were in many ways very close as far as the appearance was concerned, as well as certain patterns of behaviour, Grisella deduced, and not always the positive ones.

Outbursts of xenophobia, scarcely suppressed cruelties were found likewise. Whereas the search for the Cardinal Mistake didn't get any further. For that aspect the field-research had failed.

Interesting were those results in any case. A livelier and more natural discernment into a strange culture that had passed - never existed. Of the many photos the best were taken for an exhibition and were supplemented by the videos. Thus, you got a lively idea of how the Atlantians used to live and feasted.

Unfortunately it was impossible to get hold of the telepathetic dimension of this society. Neither the video takes nor the collection of photos or the many items supplementing both, gave but a vague idea of the remarkable abilities. Only much later such circumstance would receive the necessary attention.

Rather stunning was the DNA comparison, thanks to the probes secretly taken by Penelope M'gamba and her aides.

DNA wise the Atlantians differed a lot to contemporary humans or other antique peoples, as was checked by the bones, which were found and analysed. Such findings contradicted strongly the thesis of the splitting off. Most likely the Atlantians were no early Greek colony as experts suggested.

While the comparison with living beings also proved considerable differences. Thus, the researchers on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth concluded that the Atlantians were a singular and strange race. They might even be of alien origin, that is, some kind of fallen angels.

Thus, the search for the Cardinal Mistake would lead astray anyway. What ever was found that way, it wasn't necessarily part of the human evolution, the scientists concluded. Be it, however, that inter-mingling occurred, an idea explaining to a certain extend the fits of xenophobia. But that was mere speculation.

Thus, telepathy was put on the angels' side – which might turn out to be a grave and meaningful error. Far too soon was that theory of the extra-terrestrial offspring at hand.

The most important group of scientists dealt with the cloning and the idea that Pooty and Billy-Joe were either clones or had been cloned. Both were of course most interested in proving them originality. With them were Arundle and Scholasticus, as well as Grisella who was hoisting her flag on many staffs.

First they compared the secretly taken hair probes of Puh Tzi and Walt Yio with Pooty's and Bill-Joe's. The result didn't surprise any one. The probes were identical. Nobody had expected anything else.

This proved that Puh Tzi and Walt Yio were clones of Pooty and Billy-Joe.

Theoretically there was the chance of turning things around. However, this seemed so unlikely that the scientists didn't follow this track, the more so as the two 'guinea-pigs' (as they addressed themselves ironically) were part of the team.

The idea of being clones of those mad psychopaths from Atlantis was absolutely strange and most unlikely for several reasons.

While the fact that the earlier apparition was the more original one, still had something in it. And this fact couldn't be doubted in case of Puh Tzi and Walt Yio. This was when Grisella stepped in as a linguist.

"The name Puh Tzi is a perverted form of the German adjective 'putzig' –" the Professor somewhat high-brow deduced – "it means something like nice, or fine, or neatly cleaned. The German language however commenced even in its grey beginnings much later, after Atlantis had long doomed. This name and the applicable figure therefore was an import from the future. Another explanation is very unlikely and doesn't make sense.

The name Pooty on the other hand – seems to be the Australian Anglicism of the same German adjective" she completed her assumptions.

"In the second case things are even clearer and more obvious. The mixed being Walt Yio is in the upper

part alike Billy-Joe and in the lower it is like a giant kangaroo. In Walt we have the short form of Walter and in Yio we recognize Joe. Thus, the riddle is solved. Walt Yio cannot for his name's sake be the origin, Billy-Joe must be the original source of the blind semi-human being.

Still, the semi-human figure may lead us on the right track. The extraction of genetic manipulative material can only take place during the phase of conversion. In this kind of androgyny state enough blastulae (reproductive germ-cells) become set free, as are needed for cloning. Cloning means but the artificial parting of a blastula. Much like when twin embryos emerge... well, I think that's enough for a start, and that much need to be said for Walt Yio's coming into being..."

"There is still another question" Scholasticus interrupted. "Namely the question, who overheard Billy-Joe's conversion and pinched him of a blastula, while being in the critical androgyny phase, which Walter also claimed, as we do know now. Because Walter was one of the few male giant kangaroos with a belly-bag, which is the big exemption from a biological point of view. We needn't argue about his other qualities, though", Scholasticus objected.

"Can we be sure that the same way of cloning was taken in this case? Exempting cells of a living being need much time after parting, in order to breed two identical embryos and not just an identical copy of the original owner of the blastula" Arundle put in.

"I don't agree, dear Arundle" Scholasticus contradicted. - "The most important question, however, is not how the clone emerged, but how it was transported to Atlantis. The fact, that it emerged is out of question, we should presume, and be it only for a preliminary hypothesis to work with."

"Yes, and where this embryo was raised" Arundle insisted. "Perhaps only the embryonic cells were pinched and taken to Atlantis where they somehow grew up. Perhaps those blastulae were implanted into a mammal's womb or even a woman's – you do have the choice. This

would require the least effort. I'd say" Grisella put in.

"Still a lot of effort" Pooty remarked.

"...And a lot of planning on top" Billy-Joe added.

Yes, and there must be sense in it either. What the hell is all that good for? Why so much effort? I can't help it, but that looks like a prank of our old opponent, I strongly guess" Arundle said and looked around, ready to tackle the challenge.

"You mean **him** to be behind all that cloning and things?" Billy-Joe asked back just to be sure he got her right.

"Help, no, not **him** again" Pooty yelled.

"Time is not his concern, that's for sure – thus – logical it would be, no doubt, and his aims, that is chaos, hatred, destruction and doom he has achieved, no doubt about that", Arundle answered.

"Then Puh Tzi and Walt Yio would be responsible for the fate of Atlantis", Grisella put in.

"Perhaps not in the technical sense, because the island collapsed most likely by a tectonic catastrophe. That doesn't mean however that the civilisation hadn't reached an end beforehand. Things were in bad shape as soon as you left the shining centre. The land was a desert. Didn't you realize?" Scholasticus asked.

"They might even have been able to blow themselves up – the knowledge of such disastrous explosives they had most likely had."

"Also one of his presents, - well, the handwriting of Malicious Marduk's everywhere, as soon as you start tracing him down." Arundle thoughtfully said.

"You could find a lot of past grandeur, that is, you've got to stress that it's past and gone now" she went on.

"And Puh Tzi supplied the fitting religion of decline. I have here a very interesting brochure taken with me, that was handed out. I wonder why I was the only one who noticed – well, anyway its heavy stuff" Grisella said and continued right away:

"The end of the world is described in eye-catching pictures, however not threatening but heftily welcome, as

far as I understood. You cannot just read that writing. But the little I was able to interpret, guided clearly that way. We are confronted here with the so-called Manichean bacillus I would assume. This bacillus is chasing mankind like an insane goblin through history. Mostly disguised by varying forms of salvation. While you see in the background the cruel will of destruction, powered by a sick world-weariness.

Disguised as a light and soul cult such rejection of all that lives and loves, and presses forward in ecstatic plenitude - becomes vital. Spirit and soul need salvation from the bonds of earth, is then said. Matter is the cause of all evil. Like blinking gold in the mud, the captured souls long for freedom. The world can only be saved by the destruction of all matter which is regarded as the stronghold of the evil forces. The final big bang may grant freedom for the captured souls. The final goal is the destruction of the world - by people like Maniⁱⁱ, the founder of this religion.

His cult was wide-spread in the Mediterranean World, competing Christianity in its beginnings.

Such negation of the world can be found also in the teachings of Puh Tzi, as far as we understood, yet. If there had been any doubts, we can now clearly notice who the teacher is, and the force in the background. We all do know who he is. It is nobody else but Malicious Marduk, this is as clear as daylight to me..."

"Sure enough, dear Grisella" Scholasticus wholeheartedly agreed with what his sister-in-law said.

"Had there been any doubt, the brochure I just mentioned will bring clarity, as soon as we have it translated" Grisella confirmed.

"Malicious Marduk's slyness and his unlimited resources have stamped an iron heel on poor Atlantis. What ever he needs, whatever he longs for, he acquires just like that by rushing back and forth on the time-string. Puh Tzi is but a wilful terminator. His teachings and his enthusiasm are genuine and therefore convincing..."

"It's high time to notify the Advisor" Arundle added.

“We still only assume – more or less” Billy-Joe objected, but received a punishing gaze in return by Arundle, who ignored such doubts because she was by now sure about that matter. Like once before she was able to enter with empathy the sinister ways of thinking of her opponent. A dangerous undertaking – she knew all too well. No matter of all the errors she underwent, in the end it was she who -like no-one else - judged her opponent rightly.

“I know it”, she said “Malicious Marduk is absolutely mad about the fact that someone stole his favourite toys. Since the creation was taken once and for all out of his hands, he only muses for revenge, and tries to destruct everything that has been built by the creator with so much passion and effort. He does what ever he can and often enough it looks as if he succeeds. Those Atlantians had obviously been led astray.”

“Perhaps it’s him a cruel satisfaction and a devilish fun to have Walter all over again humiliated further than in the world of the living, by misusing him as the blind undercarriage of a mad being. Most likely was he far from any human civilisation been brought up as a clone and was poisoned and blinded while this was done” Billy-Joe added to what his friend said, confirming her assumptions, as it seemed.

“And Puh Tzi manages with his new religion of destruction to destabilize the Atlantians and have the longing for dissolvation established as their final aim in life”, Grisella put up the thread and went on:

“Thus, things worked, and thus he managed to get the Atlantians out of equilibrium, while things went wrong anyway – be it socially or ecologically, when the soil lost fertility and the upper class failed their obligations of ruling...”

She had that from the booklet, she still couldn’t read yet. She stressed on - yet. Soon she would be able to do so and was on a good way.

Scholasticus agreed “...one’s longing for the death then, the more so as it is painted in the sweetest colours, I would guess.”

“...when the soul finally returns to its empire of happiness” Pooty supported the Professor, then began to sing a pretty outlandish song, wherever he got that from:

“Who cares when we are marching
And everything falls apart?
Today we owe Atlantis –
Tomorrow the rest of the world.”

“I understand” Scholasticus thoughtfully said, while he recalled the dubious context he had heard those words before, and so did Arundle.

“That was why the Atlantians enjoyed marching so much. Here is the connection, and everything looks quite obvious, no matter how awful it is” she nodded and felt shame of having marched so enthusiastically together with all her friends.

The cloning of Walt Yio they meant to have understood so far. There had been many opportunities in the previous month on Conversiors’ Island, when all the attacks occurred and even casualties had to be lamented.

Malicious Marduk had had more or less unhindered access. They only noticed in the aftermath. It had been the time when Billy-Joe’s totem animal changed, and he entered the secrets of his early childhood. While such metamorphosis suited him well – (you couldn’t in fact talk of Walter’s death – seen that way – was he but still alive, although hidden under a human coating, that was set aside for four days every month.)

Walter managed to get along with the world, and Pooty won back his stepfather, although for just about a week each months only. Thus, they all were served well and Billy-Joe got the chance to enjoy Walter’s wisdom, which he did excessively just as Pooty did.

It must have been in one of such conversions when Walter took over from Billy-Joe, that is, when Walter turned inside out - giving Billy-Joe his shape, when Malicious Marduk slipped in, extracting the vital germs for cloning.

And neither Pooty, who was always with his friend, nor Billy-Joe realized what happened. – Conversions of that kind, didn't pass without bruises and bleeding, thus it was easy to capture the required material for cloning.

On the other hand it was fact, that Pooty didn't alter his appearance but remained who he was, and was wondering now whether there had been a situation differing, where he had been injured when getting to the island.

Of course, when the converted sea-sprites attacked Conversors' Island he had been with Billy-Joe and had been paying blood toll in form of a cut in the back.

There must have been someone able to get what was required for cloning. Perhaps Malicious Marduk himself led such attack, when Conversors' Island had had the highest priority.

Could well be that this devil had been looking ahead and was planning what later became reality, while his intentions had failed then. He might have learnt to hate Walter right there, who confused his plans and intentions repeatedly.

23. The Cardinal Mistake

The days passed. The evaluation of the field research material was in full swing. Grisella didn't rest before she had unscrambled the writing of the Atlantians and filled it with sense. While becoming familiar with this complex language was impossible. There were too many intrusions of the mental kind, noticeable only by blank signs which were of course only understandable by individuals who were wholly familiar with the cultural context.

Therefore, Grisella was eager to try another trip. Now, while she knew how it worked, she wasn't afraid anymore. However, her co-travellers dissuaded her from doing so. They might become involved into the

doomsday, her sister argued, who had been instructed by her husband, what was going on over there.

“Let them keep their last secrets and take with them into their eternal grave” Dorothea somewhat paternalistic argued. “We cannot do anything for them.”

“However, they might be able to do something for us” Grisella answered defiantly. “Perhaps we can find out more about the Cardinal Mistake.”

Grisella meant to be on the right track. While it was far too early to talk about. However, Dorothea didn’t let her go with this in her practical way of seeing things and pushed such unreal notions aside.

“Let’s assume you find out about their Cardinal Mistake. Who is helped with that? Do you really believe that you can alter the course of Mankind’s history? What has happened, has happened. The switches are shifted for long...”

“Exactly, that’s why we need to know the Cardinal Mistake” Grisella went in excitedly. “We’ve got to know it in order to make it extinct once and for all, thus it can never be made again as long as there are human beings on this planet.”

Hang on dreaming, dear sister. Mankind will not only stick to that Cardinal Mistake but to all other mistakes they were involved. That’s the way people are. And perhaps this is their Cardinal Mistake already. The biggest mistake of Mankind is that people are making the same mistakes all over again – mostly, because they are inexperienced, or thoughtless, or stupid, but there are also low notions and egoistic motivations involved. Yes, such favour more than once all those cruelties to the best advantage of individuals.”

Grisella was impressed, how clear and sound Dorothea looked at things. Still the argument didn’t convince her. The Cardinal Mistake was far more general and therefore far too close already. Grisella meant to grab it with her hands. She could see it swaying like the sword of Damocles above their heads.

It could well be that this Cardinal Mistake was like a chameleon – changing colours and appearance for the

living. - She had to trace thing down, no matter the costs.

Thus, she pleaded her brother-in-law to raise his influence in order to motivate Billy-Joe and Pooty for another excursion to Atlantis. Arundle, she would surely get over to her side in an intimate talk between women on eye-level, she knew by experience.

She was able to convey the importance of her attempt: "This time we know what it is really about" she stressed and reported of her success with the decoding business of the script. "We need some more sound material, little conversations, single words... Material I can feed the computer with and incorporate into the system. I just have too little material. If I only had a few facts about the grammar. However, I hardly recognise the nouns."

"Do you mind if I object?" Arundle replied somewhat cool. "We do have a brochure – a rather voluminous manifesto with clear references. Compared with the few plates of the Sumerians or the Assyrians our scientists have at hand, this is a lot more."

"Yes, but they didn't work with telepathetic blanks, which can only be filled by a reader, who is intimately familiar with the cultural context."

Grisella didn't give in, and Arundle wasn't against a new trip along the time-string, as a matter of fact. In case of emergency they could beam back, as they once did. If Grisella was prepared to overcome her fear of flying, why not? It would be right with her. She wasn't really convinced about the reasons for such new visit, because the unscrambling of the brochure couldn't be everything. However - if Grisella insisted – the Magic Bow was prepared. He was searching for new songs already, and hoped to find something stimulating, because they knew now how the Atlantians mentally functioned in this respect.

Besides, they wanted to get them to talk as much as possible, as Grisella had made clear.

Should they show up again with Pooty and Billy-Joe, while their clones inflamed riots in Atlantis? – Better not!

“I would prefer to get in touch with ordinary people somewhere in the countryside” Grisella explained.

Thus, Arundle had a word with the Magic Bow, who consulted the Magic Stone in return, if it was possible or likely to do the trip without his caretakers, in order not to stir up further upheavals and riots, that might be inflamed by the common care-taking pair.

“I could hang that Medicine Pouch around my neck” Arundle suggested. “There we put you in and everything is like always, what do you think?” Arundle asked the Magic Stone. Who began to gloom and wink for help over to the Magic Bow.

“May I find me my own carrier?” the Magic Stone asked after a short while of hefty unspoken communication with the Magic Bow.

“No question - of course – choose who you like...”

“Well then, I want Professor Slyboots to carry the Medicine Pouch, and for replacing Pooty I want a little toy-koala in the Pouch. Can that be arranged?”

“Certainly, that’s no question – too much honour for me. I do thank you very much indeed...” Scholasticus agreed.

“And I provide the toy-koala” Grisella exclaimed.

That decision took at once two loads of Grisella’s mind. For once she hadn’t believed in their trip when it became clear that Pooty and Billy-Joe wouldn’t be with them – no matter how obvious the reasons were. And secondly she highly appreciated that her dear brother-in-law was with them. He was some kind of steady rock in the swell, she could rely on one hundred percent.

Arrangements were made for the trip. Arundle, Flory and Cory lined up with Scholasticus, Grisella, and Dorothea, who insisted in taking part this time, and have an eye on her husband, as well as supporting her sister with collecting such voice recordings. Thus they all lined up along the virtual time-string.

Up front came Arundle with her Magic Bow, followed by Scholasticus who was the keeper of the Magic Stone for this time, then the others followed.

The Magic Stone tuned in on a voiceless marchers' song, and the other set in right away, as soon as they realized what song it was:

“Who has the nicest sheep, all here?
That is the golden moon!
Who lives behind the treetops, dear,
And will be rising soon.”

All over again the song sounded through the falling evening, while over the scarce land of Atlantis the silvery moon arose. From far lights kept blinking of a small hamlet the wanderers headed for.

Their singings arouse curiosity. When they finally got there, they were welcomed by some ten Atlantians, children, elders and one couple – a family as it turned out soon.

They all tuned in on the song as well as they could – and Dorothea took over the recording.

With the kids talking was nicest. They enjoyed communication and didn't mind whether they were understood, because children normally don't understand everything anyway. This is the way children learn language, wherever children are.

Thus it went on for almost an hour, until it was time to go to bed. And like everywhere the children asked for a good-night tale. So the mother got an old book from the shelf, while the little ones snuggled up into their rags and stuck the dirty thumbs into their little mouths.

On the table you could still see the rests of a frugal meal consisting of a thin oatmeal soup and stale beer, for which the guests were invited without any hesitation, no matter how they strove.

The old people soon dismissed and rummaged behind the curtain. This the guests took as a sign for departure. And while the children slept, and nobody talked, they withdrew, nodding friendly at the parents,

before wandering back on their virtual time-string. –

For this time without singing at first - which made it a hard fight against the forces of persistence, until they softly tuned in again in their song, as soon as they were out of sight. –

They kept on singing until they saw the silhouette of the Isle of Wisdom-tooth coming up in the dark. They were at home again.

In fact, their excursion had been little more but an evening walk after supper. To be honest, quite a walk, though. In any case you couldn't compare with what Grisella feared – those trips into space and time, because such were so bottomless. That was why she always refused and claimed her phobia. Not even regular flights she accepted. –“There are busses and trains, and even ships” she argued.. Those were her preferred means of transport.

Everything was alright, as long as you stayed on solid grounds. While water – not all that unfamiliar with air – was exempted for reasons only known to her.

Had it been the song? Or the peaceful evening? They had met very polite and convenient people, no matter how poor they had been. Still there was a hearty joy of life, as far as such a short visit could show. There was definitely not such cannibalistic wrath prevailing which had to be assumed for a society in decline, dissolution, and destruction – heading towards doomsday.

The audio language patterns achieved were combined in the computer with signs and sounds available from the booklet. A first systematic overall view soon showed up. By means of the written words in the brochure and the spoken words mainly deriving from the good-night tale a useful overall language pattern was achieved.

The computer then tried to find sense as well, and experimented with all possible conjunctions of both sources, until a suitable order showed up that might claim validity at last.

The brochure turned out to be what Grisella had guessed. It was a pamphlet of hatred against the unworthy world over here, and at the same time a praise for the upcoming world and the joys of the next life.

Each Atlantian was explicitly demanded to participate actively in the destruction of this world. Therefore there were detailed instructions and procedures laid down. People were called to the arms to the final war against state and society. Dying in this war was the highest aim.

Such a rigorous form of world denial had never before existed in the history of Man. That much Grisella was able to say. After all she was on common grounds, and was an expert in this field.

Thus, she meant to have made it. The Cardinal Mistake of Mankind was found, she was certain. – And it was found right in the state of birth.

This was a scientific sensation of the singular kind. Grisella reddened all over her face because of so much excitement, and didn't know where to put her enthusiasm. Had she been a child, she would have jumped about yelling, as if the golden goal had been achieved in the world cup of the home team.

She was no child any more, therefore she had to stay on the ground. She kissed her husband passionately instead, before she got hold of Intellectus who was kissed likewise. He hardly recognized his mother who generally was more the decent type.

Grisella called in a General Meeting to introduce 'the scientific sensation of incomparable ranking' to a more or less interested audience. However, such ignorance didn't hinder her engagement.

Scientific revolutions like that needed their time, and step by step the sensation would find access to the minds of the appropriate society.

The Cardinal Mistake – once spotted - had now to be found and eliminated in all possible spheres of life and

institutions. This would cause considerable changes, and it was Grisella's job to make herself and first of all the present audience clear what this meant.

When she pointed out how severe such alterations were, she noticed that such an undertaking was practically impossible. The Cardinal Mistake – spotted or not – could not be eliminated, or if tried, the whole society would be blown up.

“Dear Grisella” her sister therefore raised her voice for an answer, after Grisella had touched the surface of the consequences a little, and noticed how tricky the matter was.

“Dear Grisella, I would like to remind you on my words before that all important visit. I told you ‘hang on dreaming, sweetie, just hang on. Human beings will not only continue to make the so called Cardinal Mistake, but they will continue to make any possible mistake. That’s the way people are.’ And therefore I tell you once again: The true Cardinal Mistake of Mankind is far more basic. People will make the same mistakes all over again, be it for negligence, or inexperience, or stupidity, or thoughtlessness, as well as for low aspirations, and egoistic motives. And thereof you won’t change anything, even if you succeed in banning the Manichean goblin and free the world from such ban of unworthiness.”

Grisella blushed in anger, while she had to listen to her sister. Getting set back in public like that in her own field, and by her own sister, was too much.

Instead of being thankful to what she had done for her, now this – that was more than the poor Professor could stand. And this on such a day. Instead of the expected glorious triumph - now this...

“Come, Amadeus, we are leaving” she hissed and marched off the hall stiff necked. Amadeus followed her on the heel.

Marsha, the Commissary Headmistress in charge, dissolved the assembly hurriedly, and tried to make it look as if Grisella's departure had been part of the general final.

24. Sisterly Quarrel

Long healed wounds broke suddenly open. Deep inside her soul Grisella felt the pain again, she had pushed aside and forgotten. Never had she overcome the first set-back, she felt now quite clearly. In the shade of brilliant Dorothea she had starved. What ever she then tried – nothing and nobody could help it.

How much had she secretly admired her sister, how much had she loved her, and yet – hidden in the love and admiration - hatred never vanished - and envy, and jealousy.

How often had she trained in front of the mirror to be like Dorothea. She never came closer but to a ridiculous caricature.

Then she had turned to something own to get out of this devil's roundabout, she was trapped in. She felt it, she had known it all the time, deep inside, when she listened carefully enough - that there was something else, that was more and this More was waiting to be freed.

For a long time she had not been able to define this 'More', not even vaguely. Perhaps it hadn't been real yet at that time. Perhaps it had been only a dream of something, that wanted to become a 'More' – nothing else.

She realized that she owed something, Dorothea didn't owe, no matter whether she was able to clearly name it. It was as vague as the 'More', and she knew the hidden secret had to do with this 'More'.

While she had been unscrambling that brochure from Atlantis, this forlorn dream had come to her mind again. While in that pamphlet the talk was of something valuable hidden in the mud of matter. And this was exactly how she had felt being in her sister's shade. And also to her - the world around, which was so brilliant and beautiful and colourful to others, had been a dull sad misery, she tried to escape with all her effort.

Dorothea was bothered by similar scruples, only the other way round.

Sweet little Doro, sugar-puppet, all liked to neck and smooch, like a doll, was stamped a dummy, while Grisella was the intelligent, the reasonable, the one you could really talk to.

“Take example by Grisella” people said when she tried hard with her homework and failed. Her lack of cleverness she could feel in comparison as long as her sister was near.

She didn’t have a chance but being the sun-shine, otherwise she would have pegged out in her sister’s shade.

And thus she blossomed as a beauty, while nature had been helping a great deal. While Grisella on the other hand, became a typical blue-stocking, - the full explosive impact of both then showed up in puberty.

Dorothea could have any boy she wanted, while nobody wanted Grisella. That was as cruel as the world could be.

From Dorothea’s point of view the sisters didn’t stand back. Both had suffered under each other and had been bereft by the other considerably.

This was how Dorothea saw it, and Grisella should have been as just as she was, while she had meanwhile been blessed with the wittiest son you could think of, and with a very handsome husband, who was dearly in love with her.

Parentage had been denied to Dorothea up to now and probably forever. This was one reason why she had broken into the domain of her bright sister in order to conquest a piece of the empire of the spirit.

A stupid little brochure from the far past, written on strange material, no papyrus or goatskin, irresistible and thin as paper! A brochure that could be rolled up or folded but never torn to pieces, now tore apart sisterly passion by mistrust and ignorance.

While Dorothea had only tried to remain on solid grounds and keep her sister from running astray into irrational fantasies and dangers.

The two of them supposed to know it better. Things that happened to them from infancy on couldn't be avoided or corrected just like that. Of course there had been many mistakes done with them. But how could they have been avoided?

This was how Dorothea looked at things, and she couldn't find a mistake on her side. This however had a good reason. As to Grisella she lacked of a dimension. A dimension, which Grisella claimed to have achieved. And this was the reason why she was so self assured and convinced of what she had found out about the Cardinal Mistake and the Atlantians.

All those in the know had an idea of the wrong state of human affairs, and only those who hid their heads in the sand like an ostrich did in danger - could ignore what was obvious.

In the history of Mankind an early mistake had been mingled in, which nobody noticed in the beginning. While people tried to correct this mistake, nobody became fully aware of the dimension, and thus all trials got stuck already in the beginning.

In Grisella's intellectual process of manufacture the definition of the Cardinal Mistake held a central position. For a long time she believed – together with others - to have recognised the Cardinal Mistake by the term 'Alienation'. Then, however, unexpected irritations occurred, and in the end the abrogation of the alienation turned out to be nothing else but the return of the soul to heaven, back from the imprisonment in the material chaos of the world.

And this was exactly what Puh Tzi had planned for Atlantis in a large scale, and transformed into reality as was known by the historical facts.

- 'Could well be that the Atlantian souls were laughing by now and were glad to have made it. However, we don't know. Was it due to the Cardinal Mistake, or had it been non existent then, as Dorothea claimed? Was the Cardinal Mistake the sum of all the

little mistakes made by the people, because they were human beings?’

“There must be a way out of alienation – right now and here – in the real world about us.” Grisella wanted it that way, and everyone who hindered her searching for that way, was opposed.

First you had to push aside the psychological apparatus. There was a lot of confusion inside her, that had nothing to do with the historical dimension.

The sisters had in fact made their peace long ago and the early past was buried and cleansed, the wounds had healed and weren’t just scars, ready to open any minute, but gone for good.

Grisella felt well in her skin and loved herself with all senses - definitely when mirrored in the loving eyes of her handsome husband. While Dorothea meanwhile knew about her intellectual abilities, and didn’t sail in the shade of her sister any more, which had still been the cause of the sudden outbreak of turmoil right now.

Perhaps, the translation of the brochure from Atlantis had confused her already, and when Dorothea topped her state of being by her fundamental criticism, she lost her nerve.

Because her position meant in last consequence that Mankind had no chance to get out of the self-induced misery other then following Puh Tzi’s proposition.

A position, Grisella was not willing to accept. Because she had learnt by now what life held available on the sensual side, she felt all the more pushed towards her search for ways out of the alienation.

Who once realized the value of the interrelation of body, mind and soul rejected those who ignored such basics, and by doing so - the hope and outlook on the salvation of Mankind. Without such outlook you were hopelessly lost and confused, sliding towards doomsday. This way led astray, and was in fact the peak of alienation, while claiming the opposite.

Arundle and Billy-Joe meant to have discovered an entirely different problem. Decent people who attacked each other that way without obvious reason, usually suffered from infestation by Miseriors, and should be vaccinated immediately. On the other hand was there the fact that Dorothea had gone through the light, and her sister Grisella was by nature enlightened visually, after all she was the only full scale Divinator over here. Therefore, they both were supposed to be immune against infestation.

Still, there might have been a slight chance, when marching towards Atlantis along the string of time by the tunes of self-induced songs. An incalculable damage might have occurred in the light-coating, for reasons beyond their range and knowledge.

“In case it doesn’t help, it doesn’t harm”, Billy-Joe said with a grin and referred to the French philosopher Blaise Pascal. Billy-Joe wanted to say, that such a vaccination was useful if it helped, and didn’t necessarily cause damage, if it didn’t help.

Grisella was prim in the first place, and wanted to be precisely informed about the side effects, whether she risked any threat to her health, while she herself had participated in the produce of such serum. Being reminded of this fact, she finally gave in.

Had it been the Placebo effect or were they indeed freed from evil spirits, - the sisters were heart and soul ‘for each other as soon as they were vaccinated. They both felt unable to understand what had happened to them, attacking each other the way they had done. Both asked themselves where such hefty aggression had come from.

However, no-one saw grey shadows hushing off, but that might have been referred to the bright sunlight that day, flooding the surgery where the vaccination was practised.

Later, they learnt that the effect of the serum differed from patient to patient and in some cases it took three days before the exorcism was completed. Besides, the likeliness of getting rid of the tormentor at night was

some fifty percent. Thus, nobody would notice a grey defiling shadow anyhow in the dark.

Perhaps the Advisor would be prepared to send Grisella through the light after all, if it was correct that she had overcome her fear of flying while marching along the scale of time back and forth – while once being rescued when attacked by furious Atlantians.

Arundle considered to question her in this respect. She had to ask urgent questions anyway that were not immediately connected with the quarrel about the Cardinal Mistake parting the sisters in the first place.

25. South-Michel of Capricorn on Report

Nobody enjoyed being commanded on report. South-Michel of Capricorn was no exception. All the less he enjoyed such incitement by the Advisor, because he had a very general disciplinary objection with the ranking. Nominally the Advisor claimed the higher ranking. Fact was however that they had both their spheres of influence. It might thus be mainly a matter of perspective (as South-Michel put it.)

Each of them meant to have the proper general view, - the Advisor because he had ‘the Ultimate Overall View’ (UOV) from above, and South-Michel because he had ‘the Ultimate Perspective Discernment’ (UPI) from below. (Discernment sounded more adequate to him.)

In fact, each of them saw what could be seen from his perspective. The Advisor saw the surface and South-Michel the interior.

South-Michel mainly looked on the world through the prism of his sub-water globe under the ocean, where the dwarves kept on dwelling in the underground, while the mer-folk did likewise one storey above. Whereas the Advisor looked from the top – down, comfortably located in the virtual centre of all universes, galaxies, stars and planets, and so forth.

Because he saw so much, the Advisor believed in his omnipotence, but this did South-Michel no less: he

looked into the depth and the interior, and that was no less challenging than the Advisor's grandest grandeur, - however, somewhat different.

Only once South-Michel had been able to invite the Advisor into the inner universe (that is the Nanoverse), and the Advisor had been very impressed. Since then - thus had been South-Michel's hope - the understanding had grown on the Advisor's side. This was what South-Michel expected and assumed - until that letter came - commanding him to justify his way of dealing with the affairs of his disciples.

For a good while South-Michel wondered whether he should forget about the date, pretending of not having received the letter. Because he had been underway a lot when things went out of control in a way. But then he decided to go nevertheless.

He asked for a proper agenda in return, in order to prepare and get legal advice, he hoped to find with those humans on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, who had impressed him quite a bit in their majority.

Thus, he contacted Arundle by interfering into her dreams, and laid open his quest. The little agenda with the crucial points to be discussed, he had received meanwhile, and he transferred it this way to her likewise.

Unfortunately this form of communication wasn't fit for the transmission of genuine documents - at least not in a way of remembering them in the state of mental awareness.

Anyway, Arundle was notified, and confirmed date and time. She didn't remember any limitations, when it came to travelling. Therefore she invited Billy-Joe with Pooty and the Magic Stone to be with her, thus enforcing the magic which turned out positively on the travelling arrangements.

The Advisor had ordered South-Michel indeed towards the virtual centre, that is, the imperial virtual island in the no-where right between everything and nothing.

South-Michel of Capricorn was waiting already, when his legal support arrived a little late (due to the time

loss in the outer space, the Magic Stone pronounced, who had been responsible for the navigation this time.)

A little deranged and out of breath had they been, however well cared and safe, when they finally arrived.

Just in time to witness the empirical entourage marching in – the bombastic somewhat ridiculous spectacle that accompanied the emergence of Their Majesties.

South-Michel of Capricorn was standing next to Arundle and whispered into her ear, somewhat intimidated – he'd only reckoned with the Advisor alone.

Arundle whispered back that this was not common right here on the virtual centre of all real and unreal fictitious and non-fictional worlds and entities.

The ceremony went ahead. The high personas were uplifted on their shaky thrones and heaved towards the virtual sky. The spectacle could commence.

South-Michel was seated on a stool in the red challenger's corner, while the Advisor was sent in the blue corner opposite.

"No bad proposition" Arundle whispered. She mimed the coach and ring-aide in the red corner, and served her challenger eagerly and obediently with the necessary utensils like drinking bottles and waving towels, while South-Michel got gloved and seated on his red stool.

Billy-Joe was coaching the blue corner likewise. He had not being asked properly, but swayed in on the pleading gaze of a very lonesome champion, no-one paid attention.

As referee Pooty jumped about in the centre of the ring.

"The duel of the strong words may begin" the hardly audible loudspeaker squeaked from above.

South-Michel felt encouraged by the fair set up of the performance, and did a first attack.

Upset as he was by the impertinent way he had been addressed in the invitational letter, he double-hit the Advisor's ears – thus, they began to ring in a most annoying way – later diagnosed as Tinnitus.

However, the immediate counter attack of the Advisor was no less far-reaching. South-Michel's nose was punched severely by an extremely heavy blow. Blood was sprouting and couldn't be brought to a standstill, thus, the bleeding caused the fight to be cut off, before it had just about started.

South-Michel's nose was still swelling. Thick plugs in the nostrils were supposed to stop the bleeding. The referee disqualified the blue corner, and South-Michel of Capricorn was declared winner by technical knock out in the first round.

Frenetic jubilant ecstasy from the terraces indicated how much the fight had pleased, despite of the short distance. Nobody seemed to have expected anything else.

The imperial throne-chairs couldn't stop shaking of enthusiasm:

“Ever more,
storm in roar,
forth and back,
bamboo cane - never crack” – a thin voice kept chanting.

Arundle was completely stunned and meant to vomit with empathy, however she then noticed that the chairs were luckily empty. Their Majesties must have jumped off unnoticed. They might not favour such public sport-events.

Arundle had to have a word with the Advisor before he disappeared again. She asked herself how it had been possible, that the two fighters caused so much damage at each other – while the Advisor was known as absolutely peace-loving and ethereal.

South-Michel's double punch to the Advisor's ears must have been of disastrous effect. From the referee she learnt that the man was practically deaf. Therefore, it might be wiser to send him a telegram or even better – an e-mail for her immediate request.

While she was still wondering what to do, the importance of her request didn't seem given any more. She wanted to ask permission for Grisella to go through the light, but couldn't see the urgency right now.

At least she remembered Grisella's necessity, behind which the quest for the Cardinal Mistake lured, she now recalled. There were two altering positions opposing in the outer empty space, so to speak, in order to keep with the given situation they were in.

When speaking of the empty outer space, she noticed South-Michel's resistance. 'Where – for heaven's sake – was the empty open outer space?' she felt him inquiring.

"That's my trouble and misery with that Advisor and his megalomania. Grandeur he only sees in the size. He can't do differently, that's his nature" South-Michel lamented and complaint his grief out into the empty space, that wasn't empty at all, and couldn't be empty either. (empty was no option, because emptiness was in a way non-existent; - everything was a matter of dimension, aggregate state, size, and perspective and a lot more other conditional considerations.)

As coaches and aides Arundle and Billy-Joe did a rehearsal of the fight. They wanted to chat a little, while the fight was over so soon, but would have lasted on, normally.

Billy-Joe was packing his utensils back into the coach's pouch, having the blood-stilling tissue further at hand. Then he covered Arundle's protégée with his coat, saying 'South-Michel of Capricorn' on the back, and guided him - who was still shaky - over to the bar, where thick clouds of smoke kept rising.

The boxing public was in this respect very conventional, and didn't mind fishy regulations. – South-Michel was coughing all the time. Since he had stopped smoking, he couldn't stand the smoke at all.

"A quick drink, won't harm" Billy-Joe said just like that, and tried to hide his worries. While Arundle was also not so certain any more that her decision had been the right one, or even a brilliant idea, to have their drink and chatting about the fight right here. They could have gone elsewhere.

Thus, not much came out. "If you approach the matter that way, you needn't wonder if you fail",

whispered the Tinnitus-damaged Advisor who strolled by, nudging South-Michel's bloody plugs sticking out of his nostrils just like that. South-Michel yelled of pain and sighed, but it was the sigh of a victor, as they all realized.

"If you consider the arm length" he said self-content and stuck his short arms out. While standing on the stool he hardly topped the Advisor by a head.

'True grandeur lies in smallness' -

Everybody along the lengthy bar noticed by now who was standing there, and friendly agreement mingled with nasty boos, depending on the side taken, or the character, or the state of drunkenness.

"The winner gets them all" Arundle wondered somewhat misfitting, she herself realized. What was fact about the negligence of his tasks? While it had been she, who explained the facts to the Advisor in detail. She had told him about Malicious Marduk and all that. It wasn't South-Michel's fault. If there was someone to blame then she was to blame.

The whole idea had been just a farce. Order someone to report, who had been left alone for centuries or even more than a thousand years!

At that time when the subsoil enclosure occurred (thus the dwarves called the epoch of the destruction of Atlantis.) - At that time, their ancestors had sworn never to commit the Cardinal Mistake of the Atlantians, but do their own thing. Remaining always opposite - on the other side, of where the Cardinal Mistake had been committed. Because all those who once perpetrated, would never get rid of it again.

South-Michel's point of view was somewhat logical, seen from his side. He had given his best, as to his understanding. Therefore he couldn't agree with the Advisor's dissatisfaction.

"Someone spending his days in the underground gets rid of the general overall view" the Advisor opened the continuation of the match by other means.

“Anything is better than doing without the proper perspective discernment – good man” South-Michel responded.

His nose had started bleeding again, while being touched purposely at that vital point.

“Don’t ask a mole for an eagle’s gaze” the Advisor went on generously conceding somewhat pathetic, and probably unfitting. However he meant what he said, and thus his ears started jingling again badly. That was an unmistakable sign.

“No-one ever should pretend to carry the baton in his knapsack” South-Michel trumped, while he enjoyed seeing the Advisor perplexed, and kept him pending for a while. Then he laid open by means of a bunch of rhetorical questions, he put together rather voluntarily, the true relations – as he put it – as they prevailed on earth, after all.”

Just lately he read a disguising book of a famous South-American authorⁱⁱⁱ - South-Michel went on. ‘It’s the story of an urban brought up Jew, who gets lost in his own ethnological studies, and continues as the Storyteller of a dying Indio tribe, while there his true life commenced, shortly before ultimo. This man also tried to get back in time before the Cardinal Mistake was committed. His life can be seen as a mighty disaster or a grandiose fulfilment – seen under the perspective of the Cardinal Mistake.’

Arundle and Billy-Joe cocked up and felt like colonialists to the mer-folk – the more so as Billy-Joe still was feeling the sufferings of his own folk much more evident – almost like a hammering sound in his vessels, as there was his own blood singing such tribal anthem.

The Advisor’s ears stopped ringing, as he noticed first stunned and then freed. He smiled his merry disarming smile, as could only top Billy-Joe’s smile, Arundle realized, and was amazed anew like every time, how a living being could smile that way.

“Help is a boomerang” Billy-Joe confirmed South-Michel’s advice, which hadn’t been more than a reprimand after all: “It misses its aim and returns” -

Sounded somewhat wise, though. In the long run Arundle could imagine him as an old Shaman. Whether he might once suffer a similar fate than that Jewish Storyteller in the Peruvian rainforest?

‘What do we know about the happiness of Mankind?’

‘What do we know about the fulfilment of life?’ - Arundle wondered, and she felt the Advisor and South-Michel being with her, gently exchanging neat little kisses of peace and understanding - lest ear- or nose-bound punches.

Still she felt an envious sting because of that Shamanism in general, and Billy-Joe’s Shamanism in particular, which hadn’t yet arisen, of which she was nevertheless afraid, almost as much as most women were afraid of breast cancer.

Before he’d become Shaman, she would have liked to have a joint life, she imagined bleary eyed, while she snuggled up at him, and didn’t know where to let her hands. Putting them around his neck here in public she would have regarded as unfitting, and not appropriate to the situation. This was the way she was, after all. Seen from this point of view, growing up was a very slow and tough matter, which seemed to take no end.

The Advisor promised to send Grisella through the light, when she overcame her fear of coming up to him. “This is the basic supposition” he stressed and lifted meaningfully the V for victory with the fore- and the middle finger of his right hand while fading gently.

South-Michel looked for a filled ashtray and put his blood stained nose-plugs on top. This might prevent the devil-may-care from smoking, he hoped.

Because of his deeds none was done without purpose. No matter whether he explicitly declared or just did without explanation. Be it that there were no witnesses about, whom he could oppose with his teachings, or were they the wrong ones like in this case.

Still he always intended to set a sign, that could of course be misunderstood, and would have been misinterpreted by most of those drunkards at the bar.

They felt repulsion, nothing else. They didn't understand or didn't want to understand what he was after, but took him as an inconsiderate goblin, who wanted to ruin their mood with such mess.

They didn't look for deeper sense for a second, while he – feeling the heavy blow from up front – hurried to lay open his intentions.

Questions of that kind were not favoured at the bar. Here, people cared for fun and good mood and the tender touch of king alcohol. He kept swinging his sceptre, which occasionally turned into a knout for those who became addicted, and that was what happened to all of them in the long run.

“Will you come with us?” Pooty gently asked South-Michel of Capricorn. The Magic Stone was in a hurry. For some reason he feared obstructions.

Arundle's Magic Bow slipped out of the quiver behind her back and got ready. The bar with the drunkards vanished in fume and mist, as well as the adjacent box-ring. Busy waitresses hurried about with buckets and swabs, collecting bottles and glasses with one hand, while the other had them glide into a foamy indefinite liquid.

Some resistant drunkards claimed the very last drinks. Others were still puffing hefty and extenuative, the cigarette in the corner of their mouths, eyes pressed tight, while helping each other into heavy coats more incapable than able, as soon as women were in part.

Their hysteric yelling overrode the bellowing coughs of the men, who were secretly handing coins or even bills to the cloakroom attendants, with a dirty grin on their red swollen faces.

“Might be worth while talking over with the big boss” Arundle agreed, while she caught the questioning look of the victorious goblin, who joined them on their trip home, at last.

26. The Day of the Upside-down Emissary

The Magic Stone arranged with those blooming coordinates once more controversially. While the Magic Bow unpacked the space cloaks, made for ‘interstellar travelling’ – thus was the official labelling – and off they went. Billy-Joe heading with Pooty and the Magic Stone.

South-Michel took the chance to have a look on the other side. He would have managed perfectly well on his own. Besides, he enjoyed company, all the more after his triumph, when he made his point so crystal clear.

The load dragged right into one of these staff meetings, which had been arranged because of Grisella’s complaint. Thus she was highly pleased to learn of the good news from Arundle, that her application of going through the light had been accepted.

It seemed advisable to take the chance right away, Arundle pointed out. So, South-Michel was unloaded and Grisella checked in instead, and off they went back to the virtual centre, they had just left.

And while they were back, Arundle and Billy-Joe took the chance to quickly slip through that sluice of brightness as well. They felt great while doing, and so did Grisella. She felt her inner balance return and the wholehearted openness flooding back, she had missed so much. It was a good feeling.

Should there have remained hidden rests of any Miserior’s aspirations, they became spilled away. Her search for the Cardinal Mistake was thus enriched by a new dimension, and improved her understanding.

Meanwhile, South-Michel of Capricorn was guided on an impressive sightseeing tour of the Isle of Wisdom-tooth. While the meeting was postponed until the return of the space travellers. When they tuned in, he was just on his way down twenty storeys in the transparent lift showing the proper craftsmanship along the shaft, he was

of course interested most. He wondered how the builders had managed to mirror the light so deep down, that plants could still grow.

Scholasticus was all too happy to explain and mimed the expert with lengthy explanations, more or less appropriate.

At the bottom, some fifty yards under the surface he had the curtains withdrawn from the panorama panes opening the view of the fathomless depth of the ocean.

“This is where dear Adrian, our Vice-Headmaster, is commenting those famous Pump the Pummel encounters celebrated annually on the Day of Democracy. Even the old King Melisander shows up then”, he explained.

“However, this you are going to hear of a vocational voice” he said and pointed at Adrian Humperdijk, who had managed to assemble some friends of his outside by telepathetic call – or had they been attracted by the strong beamers that lit the scene? Fact was, he was there likewise.

The remainders of prejudices vanished. Colonialism or imperialism was not their cup of tea, thus South-Michel meant to have understood by now.

When the nixes recognized their beloved Emissary behind the pane, they didn’t believe their eyes at first. But then they bowed and hailed their Salvador.

South-Michel acted most adequately, as surely was expected from him by bowing and scraping elegantly, waving his red hood at the gathering audience on the other side of the pane.

Ever more streamed by outside to witness the miracle.

Adrian learnt at his next visit the day was named “Day of the Upside-down Emissary”

This referred to the fact that the Emissary, as they called South-Michel, showed up from the other side. Because he normally did so from below, if he showed up at all – seldom enough, and never as clear as he did on that remarkable day.

The matter had an unwanted side-effect. The visitors from the Isle of Wisdom-tooth also were raised in

status and became saints – while the Emissary had been in their company, on an eye to eye level. And what had been recommendations before, now became advice.

Finally the vaccination could be conducted, covering all the people, no matter whether this measure touched the identity of the mer-folk fundamentally, which it did.

With the foe the dare-devil was likewise extricated. That was fine in a way, however, reality was altered considerably by chemical means that way, and this was of course not intended.

When South-Michel learnt of such facts, it was too late already. The baby had been emptied out with the bath. The few resistant who had opposed the vaccination anyway, became the new outlaws for whom there was no space inside the society.

Thus happened what no-one intended: Under the influence from outside, life changed radically, no less as they themselves changed.

Cannibalistic carnivores became over night peace-loving vegetarians, who might accidentally grab for a witty tiny passer-by as a kind of reflex, but let otherwise their fish-headed neighbours in peace.

As outlaws the few beasts of prey were banned from the civilized world, and damned to match with veterans and killer sharks of the former royal troops, who had gone that way already as a consequence of the democratic revolution.

Once masterful men had become outlaws, and elite soldiers became brand marked pirates in both hemispheres. The Melisandrian army got rid of those likewise. They didn't fit over here any better, while peace and reforms were in progress as well, after the old elite had resigned together with their king.

Those desperados attacked and raided hamlets and smaller towns. They didn't even shy away from slaughtering domestic infant whales or sea-cow babies in their boundless greed for fresh and tender meat.

Wherever they showed up, they spread fear and horror, and left behind only death and misery. A track of

devastation ran through the territory, be it down under or in the motherland, the more so as they then even were robbing sea-maids and have them reconverted.

Those poor prisoners were stuffed into lonesome camps, where the outlaws not only satisfied their animalistic lust but also forced the desperate maids to switch back and eat meat again, until they also swayed back into that semi-civilized state as had been common in the so-called good old days.

Thus, all their efforts had been in vain they had undertaken in order to get out of that primitive state of being, that was undoubtedly connected with that kind of nutrition.

Their tormentors meant to be the last of a dying race. In their cruel rituals they sacrificed to their idol men and beasts.

The Emissary's gestures of dismay they took as signs of insufficiency, which caused their efforts to double. Thus, the sites of sacrifice were polluted with clouds of blood. Only the deepest red, deep purple or violet - such the myth said - might lead to the Emissary's satisfaction.

While the blood settled to the ground from where South-Michel of Capricorn was to be seen, if at all. -

They addressed the Emissary - the Emissary from the depth, while the other Emissary, as was now appearing from above, was denounced as the false Emissary, that is, the Emissary from above.

Because he was the Emissary of the peace-loving vegetarians, who had allied with those drylanders from the adjacent islands. This false Emissary, regardless of the fact that he very much looked alike the true Emissary - was invented by those to destroy the proper way of life.

The fact, that the Emissary from above had been seen in the company with some islanders then of course led to contradicting conclusions. While the vegetarians hailed the newly appointed saints in the Emissary's company, the outlaws regarded them as frauds and terminators showing up on the eve of destruction.

Adrian's and Corinia's monthly reports from Australis laid open the dilemma that was going on in

Australis. And while the humans from above clearly realized whose handwriting was noticeable once again, they couldn't deny that there was something else on the verge. They couldn't ignore the desperate quest for an identity which differed extremely, from what is meant to be a way of human life.

But who were they to decide that this way of life had to become extinct?

No matter how precarious the situation had been in old Melisandria, they had been authentic, what you couldn't say of the latest development over here in Australis.

Strange influences of a wholly different kind were at work. Adrian and Cory didn't argue about that, the more so as they mostly met open-minded and enlightened individuals, who enjoyed learning and picking up everything which was offered.

The box-match East of time and space in the virtual centre of all galaxies and poly-verses didn't come to a decision. Arundle now wondered - which side was right, that is, which side had an own point of view. However, that remained written into the stars, so to speak - where it might belong to, and fitted well, but didn't help with tackling the difficult question of the Cardinal Mistake.

What did it mean to wipe out this mistake? And didn't it belong inseparably to the freedom of Man - making decisions on each critical turning-point of life?

Decision-making that had been done million times before and would be million times after? Still, no way led by such points in life of each individual - Arundle wondered:

All human beings - all of us - have either to avoid - making this Cardinal Mistake or hand themselves over to it. The crucial question was whether we could notice the Cardinal Mistake as a mistake as such, or whether we were hindered to do so, by a world-outlook grown and settled over the centuries, that made us unable to spot the mistake at all, because we couldn't imagine, and were

like those people who were certain to live on a disk, while the disk was in fact a globe. Sure enough - when mankind meant to live on a flat disk they couldn't imagine that this disk actually was a globe.

Thus, Arundle mused, and decided to have such substantial questions discussed with the Advisor, the more so as she had once more lacked of asking him for her father's well and being, who was supposed to be somewhere out there.

Was he on the moon, where he longed for in his dreams, or was he stuck in some disciplinary altering measures, where he became disaccustomed with his past - a lot might have to be worked over?

She rejected to go on speculating and worrying unnecessarily. The time was now favourable as ever or unfavourable, because she couldn't leave just like that. Always there had to be something considered, or had to be done. There was always a pot on the stove, that had to be tended, so to speak.

Since the anti-petrification-serum that was now doing so great a service with that vaccination programme, they were in due process with, - little else had been successfully elaborated. Their understanding of the substance of time stagnated more or less, and was as far out of reach as ever while challenging as ever.

If the new system of values would be coming, replacing money by time, and if that development couldn't be stopped any more, then she wanted to know at least, how they could steer things a better course, avoiding exploitation and deprivation of the masses.

There was enough wealth in the world to grant all humans a humane life already, and thus, the new system had to guarantee them a long life, worth living, instead of granting everlasting life for some privileged on the one hand, and drastic reduction of life-time of the plenty, as was already showing up.

Would it be too much a demand, if she asked the Advisor for a meeting with her father? Or was that too much? She could feel the barrier. She could feel that the time wasn't yet ripe. There had to happen a lot more and being cleared as well - things, she understood too little

of. Therefore, she was almost sure that she wouldn't get a chance. However, a negative advice was the least she could expect.

South-Michel's ridiculous box-match with the Advisor had been the greatest hullabaloo of all times, as Pooty put it. What was the sense of it? Everybody had expected some clarity, or at least a proper demonstration of the opposing view-points.

What was the point in South-Michel's stressing on the 'Ultimate Perspective Discernment' as he put it, and why did he oppose the Advisor's 'Ultimate Overall View'?

What was the advantage of South-Michel's point of view? Why did he regard the Advisor's overall view as limited, while he claimed to see through the matter and down to the substance of things.

While Arundle was thinking all that, she felt carried away towards the dreamland, where the Advisor met her with a smile on his face, offering a cup of tea to her, then asked her to get seated on a neat little chair covered with red velvet. While she slurped her tea with pleasure, she tried to wind her legs around the slender golden legs of the chair in vain, while the Advisor answered at length all these questions, which had gathered on her mind.

Although he began with an excuse, of not being able to answer all of her questions, and trace them down to the ground. However not, because he didn't want to, but because there had no answers been yet found. In fact, he was hoping to get the answers from her.

There it was again – the high expectation, she was resisting in vain - tossing from all sides towards her. That was so unfair and she couldn't do anything about it.

While deep inside she was a little proud on her, when she was quite honest. How did she say go?: 'Among the blinds the one-eyed is king' –

Not necessarily, surly not, if he was carrying a Puh Tzi on his shoulders, or even on his head, like Walt Yio did – ruining the scene over there in Atlantis on the eve of destruction.

While this in fact was the true and only Cardinal Mistake, as to her personal opinion. Right there in Atlantis this Cardinal Mistake had proven its irresistible power of destruction.

Those who first denied and damned creation and felt bound for a higher and truer life above, leaving the world behind, denouncing it as unworthy, awful and mean, and denying a worthy life in the world – were committed and deeply devoted to the Cardinal Mistake, and laid the foundation-stone by hiding it for all future in the undercarriage of human civilisation and culture.

While Arundle presented her view to the Advisor, she earned mild but careful agreement, mingled with occasional little confused coughs, which rather annoyed her. Because she didn't know how to handle. Was he regarding her arguments as limited and shallow, not proving real intelligence, but simple naivety?

A grave and basic quest like this couldn't be approached in such a naïve manner, was probably the quintessence of his tickling gibes.

'Won't work with daddy either' she learnt straight and harsh. "He isn't that far yet, has to be worked over. One of our many construction sites, where we get stuck once in a while, but we remain alert. Delays are the rule more than the exception" – and thus it went, no matter what subject she raised.

'Mentioning South-Michel caused a Tinitus-attack, and that was it, and with him – the "not at all easy view-point-business" - as he put it, was pushed aside "once and for all." He indeed meant to wipe aside with this South-Michel's fundamental criticism.'

"UPV or UOV – that is the question, whether 'tis Nobler in mind to suffer the Slings and Arrows of outrageous fortune..."^{iv}

27. Music in the Air

“Meetings of that kind, you can forget”

Arundle reported back and awoke amongst her friends in the round. There were Flory and Cory, Tibor and Tika sitting and having their meal already, while Billy-Joe just turned in with his tray balancing above his head, and the unavoidable Medicine Pouch dangling before his chest – just behind Arundle, who dropped her plate with a loud bang on the table in order to give way to the nuisance she still felt because of that Advisor.

“Whenever it got tricky, he was attacked by Tinitus. That’s the way any-one can do... It was so unfair...” She had of course not believed him. “...And then this coughing – whenever I said something he didn’t quite accept, he started coughing. I just don’t want to think of it any more. – What are we going to do this afternoon, anyway?” she gave the conversation a turning towards a more grounded theme. While she had done all the talking, so far.

It was like always: the six of them met under the South-Pacific Palm-tree roof of the dining hall, where almost no meat was served, but loads of excellent vegetarian food instead.

They were a sub-committee of the general time-study group, that had been formed as an answer to the new queries, which had turned up with South-Michel and the quest for the Cardinal Mistake.

There wasn’t much research work done yet. They didn’t find the right clue where to start, and didn’t see clearly which way things went.

That measuring of the time on the sea-ground had been stopped a while ago, when the results turned out to be stable. Whether this had to do with the democratisation or the general vaccination against Miserior-attacks – such the official term – neither those responsible on the side of the mer-folk, nor the young researchers from the Isle of Wisdom-tooth would have felt able to confirm or deny.

Arundle was reminded of the Advisor’s unacceptable and annoying attitude of dealing with questions of grave concern, as she just had experienced.

Most interesting of their projects was the actual state of the worldwide nano-transplantation medicine. In this field you experienced almost hourly advances, and had there been no modern servers they'd have given up, sorting things out.

Here, the problem was sheer quantity, no individual institution could overlook. Therefore, it was impossible to evaluate the actual state of the theory and to keep up with the actual practice. Nowadays, everything seemed possible or likely.

A fresh breeze was blowing. Should they try to conquer a boat? However, they were too late. Only some surfboards were still available. Anything else with sails had gone and was cruising out on the lagoon.

Untrained as they were, they had a lot of fun on the shaky planks. However, after two hours they were fed up with that permanent in and out. They brought back the surf-boards and swam out to their pontoon, that was for unexplainable reasons not yet conquered by others.

“This time please without shaking” Tika pleaded, and Tibor promised.

In the fresh wind it was pleasantly cool, while the sun was still shining brightly, and thus they kept on longer than it was good for them. Arundle, suffered from a sunburn. She was the whitest of all. This was no pure advantage, she noticed once more.

The Magic Bow could help. As soon as they were back ashore he had Billy-Joe to embalm her back with a special lotion from the invisible quiver. That helped immediately.

The evening approached with long shades, thrown by the rocks behind the boathouse. The wind turned, and sucked off the lasting heat above the rocks.

One of those voluptuous tropical nights began and invited for a beach party that arranged itself by its own. Open fires flamed up. All kinds of equipment were brought. Bottles, cooling boxes – some even got their

guitars and drums, and began to play softly first then with more effect, encouraged by clapping hands.

Strange fume out of exotic pipes emitted. While the absolute prohibition of alcoholic beverages was obeyed. Thus, the mood raised and kinetic forces came over the exulted, who wilfully obeyed.

The night - soft as velvet - bowed deeper and deeper its blue head, and stars showed up in the darkening sky. The broad band of the Milky Way parted the moonless dome, enlightening itself and spending scarce light for the secret beasts of prey or plant. There was a whispering and crushing, a gurgling and chuckling – sometimes from afar outside, then frightening close.

Schemes were dancing - embroidered by glow-worms – you wouldn't know whether beast or Man, or child, or goblin – very low above the water, or over there on steep rocks, where brushes seemed to be wandering over brisk edges, indicating danger already by day.

Unending wide the dome of heaven extended, while the Zephyr closely touched the limbs - gently and covering, almost like a silken, velveteen loose suit or cloak perhaps, sloppily thrown over humid steaming-warm skin.

Tuzla intoned a wistful song of her home. The strange rhythm was picked up by Billy-Joe on the guitar. Light-footed the others moved over the soft sand – bending and bowing to all kinds of fantastic figures.

The pipe in his mouth emitted a strange smell. Arundle took it, when he began to sing, while first he'd only hummed. He liked to see her snuggling likewise.

She melted inside and was carried away by her mood, pushing aside all grave thoughts. She managed something she never succeeded: she stopped thinking, and became one with the singing and the tune of the guitar, and the movements that overcame her without realizing. Life itself happened to her, she meant to hold so tight in her hands. Now she grabbed it, while letting it go.

All that musing and searching, all those questions about sense and reason, or use, or ruin – wavered away

with the clouds of fume and drew her with them into the seventh heaven of pure delight.

When the singing ended, she stepped behind Billy-Joe and bent over him. She felt his skin on hers, and noticed the incomparable acquaintance and sweet yearning closeness. From South-Michel – she knew not how – she remembered an old Scottish reel, she now started humming and clubbing on the boy's shoulders, who transformed the rhythm to the strings of his guitar. There was no text what so ever, and all began humming and drumming, thus it became a real reel, somehow.

Still a bit hesitant at first but then an ever enlarging circle was formed stomping rhythmically through the loose sand.

Those inside the circle grabbed each others hands, or hooked up or put their arms over each others shoulders – one at the time, while the rhythm held and carried them and steered them away. No one fell or only tumbled. In fact, they set their feet and steps neatly and accurately, without being much aware of it.

Had they realized what they were doing, they might have experienced the centipede's trouble, which stumbled as soon as asked how it managed to get away with its many feet, without stumbling.

Tibor forced the beat ahead by rhythmic strokes, until he couldn't stand the tension any more, as he was in his element. He not only effected his Sublimation-friends, to do like him, but they were supposed to do likewise with their common neighbours. By that the circle started whirling and even lifting here and there in waves. It even occurred that they all lost contact with the ground for the part of a second, which caused them to stumble like the humiliated centipede or even fall if the neighbours hadn't hold them.

The circling was accompanied by yelling and screaming of joy and sheer delight, that it was just pure fun to witness.

South-Michel was amongst the dancers wherever he had so suddenly come from. He jumped lightly like a feather, and put his steps gently. He bowed and bent continuously without losing the rhythm. Esoteric as he

was, he crossed through the rows and divided the circle to form a snake he then led in sophisticated turnings around the lowering fire-places, while all hunger was stilled and nobody lacked of warmth – quite the opposite!

From the water-side a splashing was heard and in the dim light of the stars a foamy circle showed up.

South-Michel gave way on the top and got lost most likely that way, while the headless snake felt forced to bite into its tail.

Once more the staccato of the guitar beats increased. Billy-Joe couldn't feel his fingers anymore. However, the rhythm didn't let him go, got hold of his arms and shoulders and of his whole body. He had become one with his instrument. The more as so South-Michel with a harmonica before the chest – suddenly appeared in the middle of the circle again, giving the reel now a more melodious and presumably a more Scottish touch as well.

Outside the sea was foaming. Thousands of naiads and nixes whirled and reeled in the meantime in circles of hundreds. As far as the ear could reach they were heard.

Under water the sound waves went for miles, once having reached the sub-water level. To make this possible, South-Michel had installed the big water-proof hi-fi set from the boat house and plugged his harmonica with it, thus the 'heavenly sounds' of the harmonica played by 'The Emissary himself' - were heard everywhere in the closer or further vicinity - as his were of course the most important tunes for the mer-folk anyway.

A memorable night inclined while the morning was dawning in the east, and the sun was rising red and glowing out of the sea behind the horizon – thus it looked. Those who saw something else, knew it, but you couldn't see anything else.

"Thus it works with our sensual abilities" Arundle wondered and felt well. However, feeling was not enough, there had to be more. Still – a memorable night, no doubt. Billy-Joe had come closer, even though she

didn't know whether this was possible at all. And how nice he played. Had he been playing before and didn't do over here?

From somewhere this unspoken order had come to get started by means of music.

"The voice isn't only good for speaking alone" the saying went. While the music room had been available all the time. However, scarcely anyone went inside.

Suddenly that peculiar urge had been there. Arundle had felt it and her friends Flory and Cory likewise. Might have to do with that singing and marching business along the time-string. All her friends started remembering forgotten talents and had a violin forwarded from home, or a trombone, a trumpet, or flute, and the like.

Was their affection promoted by their joint experience? Perhaps there was no need for explanations.

A lot they had done together, a lot, but no music. This had come to their minds in that special night. So, they let time be time, and made music. And at once they noticed that they played at least an instruments each, or had done so, before they came to the School of Inbetween.

"I left my violin at home, I just wasn't good enough..."

"And I shied away from taking my flute with me..."

"My harmonica was too big and too heavy carrying..."

"When I became older, I didn't like my piano teacher any more. Therefore I gave up playing..."

Thus it went on, each and everyone had a similar foul excuse, why she or he didn't do anything music-wise – although conditions were indeed favourable.

Sound-proof exercise rooms, a thankful public, able teachers (not just available right now, but could easily made available the Headmistress declared.) In case there was no-one available for a certain instrument, this could be managed – money was no problem since that book of Anonymous.

Thanks to Dorothea the administration worked fine and money flooded in like rain in spring.

Since that beach party the students felt relieved and relaxed, no inner pushing and the same burning questions about the more or less real dangers and troubles for them or their acquaintance. With a little more ease things didn't work out worse, but much better as far as they could be regulated at all.

Not everything could be settled – not with other cultures and when it came to the fortune and the future of individuals.

“I'm no percussionist by origin” Billy-Joe declared a little highbrow.

The musicians and band members-to-be sat in a circle. Each and everyone were introducing the whereabouts and experience with his or her instrument. When Arundle pointed at the guitar and looked challenging at Billy-Joe.

“The guitar I play just like that – Nope, I never took lessons. Drumming we have in our blood, so to speak, and this string-tinkling you just copy, and have shown it to you here and then. What really matters you have to find out yourself anyway...”

Arundle decided not to comment that, the more as so Tibor was eager to proudly present his horse-headed violin, he had had sent from home just recently. He was able to produce wonderful, strange sounds, and surely was a great talent, no matter which way the train was due of their joint venture.

Li Mei and Li Chang, the Korean twins, were trained opera singers and played the violin. They had been using the music parlour regularly right from the beginning.

Sandor Khan was a trained Mongolian low voice larynx singer, besides, he understood beating the huge drums.

Cory and Flory had wonderful voices and were trained traditional Indian dancers and singers. They had

been training secretly with all kinds of jingling bells on fingers and ankles. Their way of performing was as worthy as any other. Even Arundle scarcely knew of their hidden talent, who was so familiar with them for so many years.

Arundle was also hiding how far she had come with playing the piano, and meanwhile she surely had forgotten a lot. But she had definitely left the stage of the flea waltz and Schumann's Elise behind. And still owned musical fantasy. Melodies kept flying at her just like that, as soon as she took the time to record them, lyrics were no problem either. Thus, she hoped to get some of her songs on stage with the new formation, they were just going to found.

However, things went in a wholly different direction. A school band would be founded, but all of them, who were gathered then, shouldn't be part.

28. More Perspective Discernment

Arundle's ideas didn't suit the Advisor at all. "Far too many efforts" he argued, besides, there was a school band already. The mixed band called 'Loblolly-girls `n boys' had been playing already on their first feast on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth. They only had forgotten.

"Its something for the first graders" the Advisor said and they all somehow agreed. The idea had just come with that remarkable night, and might fade again. In their first term they had just missed their chance, and now it was definitely too late. Besides, their talents lay on other grounds, and that was the most important aspect, when it came to concentration – the Advisor let them know and turned to Billy-Joe, who, like Arundle, had been following his urgent invitation.

The Advisor was clear and precise, perhaps, because not Arundle raised her questions, but he held the sceptre in his hands, and clearly designed the general course, he saw in danger since that late "Summer

Nights' Dream" as he put it. Things like that weren't part on the agenda he had made up for them.

"Didn't know, he had plans with us" Billy-Joe murmured unwillingly, the old mistrust awoke anew. Had they hoped to get further with their catalogue of questions, they became disappointed again. All the Advisor intended was to get them away from the sweet leisure life on the beach, they found out.

"If he hasn't to offer anything in return, I just don't listen any more" Arundle scolded. Billy-Joe was on her side anyway. He neither wanted nor could put aside his mistrust against that faint appearance.

Perhaps there was jealousy involved. The Advisor had a very possessive attitude, and offended Arundle's sense of liberty. No-one was allowed to deal like that with her. What he forbade to others, couldn't be allowed, Billy-Joe decided.

Somewhat strange it had been, though – where had that dope come from in the first place, they had been smoking, and the pipes and all that...?

He had never been smoking, still he did that night and he had forced Arundle to do likewise.

Had someone poisoned their tea, or had something been in the cookies for dessert?

The guitar he had fetched by himself, that he could clearly remember. Some weeks ago he had it taken to the island, following a vague inspiration. – None of the famous brands, but handmade of wild cherry and cedar wood. Soon had she conquered his heart, though.

The Advisor noticed such resistance. Therefore he offered them an excursion to the central switchboard in the virtual head office of all might and power, where they, so he hoped, not only experience a surprise, but would hopefully see the proper track again.

The centre gave a wholly unreal impression. Nothing reminded of the switchboard type of centre. No desks were there, or telephone. No radar screens or squeaking loudspeakers. Not even an entrance control.

It was like in heaven – just as people imagine heaven. Winged angels all in white passed by and turned

their eyes upwards – hands hidden in wide sleeves and from their mouths it constantly chanted Hosanna and Hallelujah.

Sitting on a pink cloud only some feet above their heads a Bavarian in trendy leather shorts and plaid shirt with a green velvet hat on his head - kept fiercely working on a little harp, while singing with cracking voice his heartbreaking Hosanna, that tears came into Arundle's eyes. And Billy-Joe deeply sighed thus they pitied the poor man.

"Well, well eternity can stretch, no doubt about that" the Advisor sighed, when he realized where his guests were looking. "Don't worry, he will come down again, as it says in the Script."

"What script does he mean after all?" Arundle wondered, and knew the answer at once. She always forgot, how closely she was related to the Advisor in her mind.

She wanted to start a brief explanation, to inform Billy-Joe, whose part was it not to be familiar with the Bavarian habits and hospitalities, when she saw her father sitting on just the same kind of pink cloud, as the Bavarian.

Would this cloud be grey instead of pink, she would have sworn that they were in Laptopia, and not in the true heaven.

Her father also held a harp in his hands, and was frolicking as well as he could, while boredom was written into his face.

How long was he doing this, Arundle wanted to know. She didn't get a clear answer. Most likely all the time he's here, she figured and reckoned back – must have been some five months or so.

"More than five months" Waldschmitt confirmed, he was allowed to be himself here again, despite of his false face, that hadn't been altered back yet, and wouldn't be, as far as he knew.

He was growing wings already, he remarked proudly and pointed at his back where you could see indeed two little vaults under the white gown. Other than

the Bavarian he had put on the heavenly gear already. “Not to raise bewilderment” he declared.

“The Bavarian is going back on his own request – that’s why his garment.”

A shining golden ring around his upper head was meant to indicate a gloriolo-to-be, but was only brass, Arundle recognized.

“That’s the way you live” she concluded, and you could see that she disliked the idea. “It’s not heavenly to me, after all”, she said without addressing anybody, and made the Advisor turn to her, who had been busy with Billy-Joe.

“Looks worse than it is” Waldschmitt tried to calm her down. “I do learn a lot” he added and after another pause he exclaimed suddenly: “I know now the whereabouts of the curse.”

“You mean how blessing turns into curse?”

Arundle meant to be very sly, by thus overdoing.

“Something like that” he monosyllabic replied and had him sink back on his pink cloud while the conversation had discouraged and exhausted him.

“I shall give you best regards from Mom. She was here. We had a nice time together. She has an own office and is on her own now.”

“Ah, yes, I’m glad to here that. What did you tell her of me?”

“Nothing special though – that you are still hiding because of that gangster organisation. – We did read your book together, and Billy-Joe explained it to us. – In the aftermath she adores you and is very proud on you. On the book-fair you signed her a copy of your book, without noticing her...”

In partitions the sentences erupted, as if she had greatest difficulties with such exchanging of information she neither could nor wanted to be involved.

“Oh, I’m sorry about that. Give her my regards in return and tell her that I’m all in all fine... - If you are allowed to blab this out. As soon as I can and may, I will look after her.”

The Advisor made his placid poker-face, which meant that this was very unlikely - definitely not in the near future, Arundle concluded.

“We could send you Zinfandor Leblanc or Watchdog Will Wiesle, then you have someone normal to talk to – up here between all those angels.”

The two had accompanied Roland Waldschmitt on the deserted moon, where he finished his book, while he had to be protected against his prosecutors.

The Advisor’s face was shutting up now completely. That was obviously a not so welcome idea of hers.

“How is the book doing?” Waldschmitt then asked, in order to bridge the confused pause that came up when the Advisor rejected each of Arundle’s proposals.

“Very well, Grisella said. Dorothea is buying school certificates with your income. However, money seems to be the least of your worries, as it looks...”

Roland Waldschmitt nodded in silence, then said: “For you money could be helpful, then you are safe. You never know...”

Arundle just shrugged, she didn’t care about money either. If you agree, we spare some of it for Billy-Joe’s family-clan, they need support.”

Billy-Joe shook his head. Such money he didn’t like. Arundle just ignored him.

The Advisor showed impatience, Arundle realized and said farewell. She hugged her daddy heartily, noticing how weak he had become. She felt tears on her cheeks, and inside opposing notions. On the one hand she welcomed what happened to her daddy, on the other she could hardly stand the unavoidable alteration he underwent.

The Advisor, who was reading her thoughts again, nodded earnestly. “Such changes are unavoidable, and they do not concern your dear father only, dear child” he said and gently touched her still wet cheek. “His triumph he had had. His life on earth has been fulfilled at best. What else can a Man wish?”

Billy-Joe shook Waldschmitt's hand, or tried to do so but couldn't feel any response. You could hardly feel that hand anymore.

Thus, the corporal revelation had still not been solved satisfactorily.

"Rather virtual – your old man" he said, meaning to cheer her up. "Is that so?" she asked back, with a gentle smile. She knew how right he was. She just couldn't stand the idea of his death. For a real corporal life someone like him was not suitable, she slowly began to realize step by step.

Of course, we always lose something of each other, she told herself. In each farewell and in each separation we lose something, and we can never get it back, we will never be the same again. While now she experienced another level of alienation – this was now a new quality. Because in between there was a farewell for good. She had never looked at it that way.

Thus, his disappearing was not just a trick to get away, and was not just set in scene to get rid of his persecutors. Roland Waldschmitt had left this world corporal and irreversible. With own eyes he could be only seen by those in love with him, who had his beloved image in their heart, while it one day would also begin to fade.

"And what about me?" Arundle asked miserably and reared the answer, she meant to know already. But the Advisor shook his head with a smile.

"With you it's different – with you and your sceptical companion, by the way. Your fate won't fulfil in South-Michel's reel, that much frankness must be..." he said and turned back to this slightly arrogant and mocking air of his, Arundle couldn't stand at all. And just to top her impression he topped while fading:

"Do your best, wherever it is
And keep up your good name."

What was that? Did he want to upset her?

"It's from Black Beauty, everybody knows" she uttered somewhat highbrow, but Billy-Joe only shook his head.

“I don’t” he said intimidated. Thus, Arundle felt ashamed, when she woke up.

“What a dream” she wondered. She had certainly to talk about it with Billy-Joe. First of all with Billy-Joe, but with the others as well. They had a right to learn why she was altering her intentions so often, as if she wasn’t master in her own house, and that – in fact – she wasn’t.

Perhaps it wasn’t all that bad to be torn back. Not everything that came to her mind had to become a mighty project, or even a worldwide hype.

The Advisor wasn’t wrong when warning. Thus she opened up only another construction site, so to speak, while there were many urgently needed actions, like the time for instance – little was done lately.

Billy-Joe – how could it be otherwise – had shared her dream, he had been with her.

“We did start awake, do you remember? We were destined for that virtual centre of unlimited power and as far as I can see, your Magic Bow took you there while I was proceeded by the Magic Stone. The Advisor then came and took things out of our hands. Somewhat then we slipped into a dream. That’s the way it had been, while I didn’t notice, but that doesn’t mean much.”

“Did you find the Advisor more trustworthy, then? I think it’s very important to me, if I’m honest. I do care a lot what he says. No matter if it’s much – well, perhaps I do, because he tells us so little.”

“South-Michel’s reel he dismissed, I’d say. - You can say that...” Billy-Joe agreed.

“While we were dancing so nicely. The sea was all excited” Arundle said – remembering scenes and approaches, and gestures. Were they asked to give this all up in future? That could not be.

“I think it was because of those drugs. I should never have lit this pipe and hand it to you.”

“We all were high already then, wherever it came from” Arundle opposed. “You played the guitar like a young God.”

Billy-Joe grinned and turned away. Arundle was certainly overdoing. Besides, much more important aspects had shown up meanwhile.

“The relation between South-Michel and the Advisor is very tricky, I’d say”, Billy-Joe changed the subject to a higher level, both realized after that box match. There was much tension: “The contradiction between the Advisor’s megalomania and South-Michel’s minilomenia” Billy-Joe added – “each is nuts his way” –

“Still – the Advisor seems well capable of tuning in on South-Michel’s dimension” the girl answered – “I know for sure that he’s able to enter the nanoverse. That much flexibility seems granted on his side. What we not yet found out is, how South-Michel get along in the larger scales...”

“Fact is, that South-Michel showed up before our eyes, while only lately, and is the Advisor alike.”

“The one’s getting down from his greatness, the other up from his smallness...”

29. The Return Bout

The disappointment was incredible when Arundle and Billy-Joe announced that they wouldn’t participate, because the Advisor asked them not to do. They didn’t really know why. However didn’t want to ignore his objections. There would be no time for such a project. A school-band you founded during the first or second term and not shortly before the final exams, he argued.

This is what they hadn’t considered. While they didn’t think much at all, but followed the intuition instantaneously.

For most of the study group members schooling ended at the beginning of the term after next, that was in about three quarters of a year. And there were no reasons, why this date couldn’t be met. They would surely keep it. Next to Billy-Joe and Arundle, Florinna and Corinia, as

well as Tibor and his brother Sandor Khan would terminate, the others had a little more time left.

In any case, the back-bone of the undertaking would be gone then. Besides, nobody had yet thought of the existing band, that had a hard time anyway. Confronting them with a competitor wouldn't have done them any good. It might have been wise to have contacted the band-members, instead of coming forward with a new formation, only because South-Michel had put ideas in their heads with his Highlander's reel in the tropical night, which had been the main cause of the subsequent idea.

What made Billy-Joe buy such an expensive guitar – right now? He couldn't say. Was it only because he had finally enough money? His scholarship had been increased considerably when he became eighteen, and an extra payment was credited to his account.

While dreaming he had seen himself playing the guitar, right at the beach as became later real. While he couldn't remember South-Michel, who had not been in his dream at all, or he had overlooked him – which was very unlikely – how can you overlook a dwarf clad in Scottish gear and a red hood?

For his part in their joint invention of a vaccination-serum he also would be gratified, as soon as the application was settled, and the shares had been evaluated by the Swiss Patent Office in Basle. His share would be some twenty percent, and negotiations with a Pharmacy-Multi were pending.

“...Will end up with huge amount and a monthly lifelong pension” Dorothea figured. In any case a save cushion for an unemployed young graduate with a native background, which was no real door-opener even in liberal Australia.

The invention served an entirely different purpose, that was originally acquired for de-petrification, caused by a determining shock – what ever this meant.

That was why clever Dorothea put emphasis on the second effect. The serum was supposed to be – “a most

effective means against depression, which could likewise be applied against severe psychoses, with great positive results...”

Thus, the drug promised to be sold worldwide, with great success, and soon was.

What made him change, Billy-Joe asked himself, when he found him sitting for hours playing the guitar, and humming or singing all kinds of melodies that came to his mind just like that. Why hadn't he done so before?

Had there been no time? Had he been sailing and swimming so much?

He was sitting at his former favourite site where he also used to sleep – somewhere near the teachers' dormitories, where he conquered a site in the open, and didn't give way ever since.

There he was sitting now, experimenting as well as reminding almost forgotten chants and songs of his people and ancestors (or who he meant to be such) - coming to him in his dreams.

The melodies were in his reach, closely purring about in tender soft flows of air or what it was, and enjoyed being caught in his hidden corner.

Arundle asked herself the same question and didn't get any further. The music had come with South-Michel's performance, - all others confirmed as well. They had had the same experience. They felt, as if the contact with South-Michel had initiated something slumbering in the hide.

There, South-Michel was again – what did he possess, what did he initiate, and why did he do it the contradicting way?

For the mer-folk he was the Emissary – a Godly emanation, a Salvador and Messiah of a new time. The democrats amongst them saw in him the initiator of their change. While the meat-eaters claimed him as guarantor of the old now threatened tradition. Each side maintained and adjusted him as to their needs.

And what did they (that is, the ‘true humans’ on two legs) - see in him - as he appeared under a red hood with that checked waistcoat, tartan kilt, and yellow gaiters? Did he make them smile pitifully or just benevolently? Did they think him wholly naïve? As he promised the overcoming of the Cardinal Mistake – or what he meant to be the Cardinal Mistake. As you can see, his was no definite interpretation, but was asking for contradiction, and was of course contradicted fiercely by the Advisor, and his rough argument with a punching fist.

Only some weeks ago he introduced himself as South-Michel of Capricorn (might be even two months or three by now.)

South-Michel had turned them backwards. Not in the future, but in the past you could find the dawning of the Promised Land. And that fitted very well with the intentions of the School of Inbetween, - to pick up things that were lost in the course of progress. All what threatened to disappear in the scars of the streaming history for ever and all times, and for all future – remaining undiscovered and unused – if not recovered and saved in rehearsal.

This was why South-Michel was very interested in the witnesses of the long forgotten or sunken past.

South-Michel drove their attention to what lay under their feet, or right in front of their noses, or came about them secretly in the mist of the night with sweet pictures as well as not so sweet ones.

He pointed at the obvious – all the world took for granted and wouldn’t doubt. He put emphasis on fairies and fables, and the naïve belief of the children, that was mercilessly sacrificed on the altar of up-growing.

Most likely, here was the greatest secret, nobody yet traced. - Because the perspective discernment, and the child-related stunning, and the child-related ability to see and experience wonders - were not utilized - for reasons that were obvious.

Thus, South-Michel spotted the missing Ultimate Perspective Discernment (UPI) as the Cardinal Mistake of Mankind.

This was why the Advisor vehemently contradicted. His whole virtual appearance manifested in holy wrath and formed the blood-rising punch whose intergalactic consequences couldn't be overlooked yet. A punch of a fist – thus South-Michel put it – that changed the world for ever, because it would never be as it had been before (he might overdo a bit.)

And thus, such an Advisor could talk a lot, such a negative creational aspect (such a punch in fact was) would never ever be eliminated, and was an absolute novelty, as new and singular as true creations only can be.

He'd be glad to learn that the idea of creation as such was accepted at last – (the Advisor avoided the direct verbal confrontation) – you better ignored such an Isnogood, he felt need to see in South-Michel since that mean punch towards his ears – the effect still troubled him considerably. No matter that you saw nothing – quite opposite to his own punch in reverse.

You couldn't see the effect but you could hear it all the better. – Well, in fact, just one person could, and that was the Advisor himself. That was why South-Michel's publicly demonstrated suffering annoyed him all the more, as this was what the dwarf in fact did, you wouldn't believe it.

“Creation, by all means – nice a creation that is” South-Michel grumbled, and carefully touched his swollen nose – pointing out that this was the truest and latest creational innovation, that couldn't be ever erased again.

Never ever had a thought turned into being like that, not only initiating the deed - but performing it likewise. This was indeed a new quality of the ‘Phenomenology of the Spirit’ as a great philosopher put it^v.

“It's rather a kind of newly discovered quality” the Advisor nasalized. He seemed to be making fun of South-Michel, which incredibly upset the latter in return. Things

ran towards a newly inflamed uproar in the arena of the virtual centre of all universes and galaxies.

“Not with me” South-Michel groaned and the Advisor acknowledged “That may God beware.” However, it was too late.

Adrian Humperdijk was already introducing the opponents. His trained voice of much reportage of sportive events stretched and modelled the syllables the fashionable way, in order to grant his subjects more volume and importance. Which was easy in case of the dwarf, whose name he could intonate well tempered and resounding, stressing the syllables one by one and ending with a long – oooorn – for Capricorn – very successfully.

While the Advisor couldn’t be handled likewise, who regarded such as a bad omen.

However, his conviction forbade superstition, and therefore he swallowed the bitter pill. Expecting the defeat to come.

Someone who is going into the battlefield in such a mood, needn’t wonder the outcome after all.

Pooty as referee jumped about like a fluffy wool-pad in the middle of the ring. Arundle took care of the Advisor this time, but she didn’t really like it. Not, because she shied away from tending the looser, but because the Advisor promised to become a bad looser.

South-Michel was movingly tended by caring Cory, assisted by her sister.

Both of them had never done this before in reality, and were looking forward to such a new experience. They were dressed – somewhat unfitting – in their beautiful Indian saris, and had put on the jewels of their mother Vasantha – for them also seemingly fitting for the occasion. - As this was not an ordinary box match but a principal encounter of the metaphysical kind, - nobody really cared.

Neither did any-one mind the considerable difference in height of the opponents, which was all too obvious while here in the box ring – out side no-one realized normally. When were they ever seen side by side?

“A great name for a small figure” – murmured the Advisor to encouraged himself – he tried in vain.

- Before he had the fists up - South-Michel nailed him down with a hail of blows – jumpy and alert like a punching ball until the senses of the so attacked faded.

Adrian Humperdijk got no chance, while he would have liked to comment only once something else but that more or less - always alike - Pump the Pummel match. Those sea sprites were also fast, but at least they took their time, while here and now the match was over before it had begun.

Thus, he could only sum up what had happened.

Arundle shrieked in her corner, - after all, she was the coach. Did she make a mistake?

Now, there he lay on the planks that meant the world, and didn't move any more. – Pooty counted and counted. Then the doctor came and checked the pulse, and when he didn't notice any, he gravely shook his head.

Another Blitz-victory and the confirmation of the title seemed to be certain for South-Michel. But at what price!

Arundle awoke - so scared was she. Once more, she had been fallen asleep. This time, when they vindicated to each other on that school band project, the Advisor had emphatically dissuaded them from doing.

In her dream the Advisor now lay on the floor and didn't move. She almost meant he deserved it, she mused, and felt ashamed of her ill feelings. - 't was of course nonsense worrying - as immortal as he was.

Still, the victory of South-Michel made her think twice, if you looked at things principally, and considered what South-Michel stood for.

30. Searching for Mentors

What did South-Michel stand for? “Might be a suitable theme, though - for your final exam” Professor Grisella, Lady of Griselgreif to Greifenklau-Slyboots said, and gave Arundle a kind, reassuring look.

“Push everything aside, leave the big wide world on its own for the upcoming months” she went on.

That was the way all of the teachers were speaking in all ten subjects. But she wasn't really afraid of – and if at all - then before the test papers written under supervision.

From now on each test counted, and there were four more to come. This meant grinding and swotting and grinding again.

“And do think about your future, it's high time. All of a sudden you hold your diplomas in hand and then what? It's always the same” the Headmistress, Marsha Wiggles-Humperdijk, recommended.

You couldn't fail in her subject. It was too practical for that, no matter if you lacked in theory. There was always the practical side of ‘the other way of seeing’ and that they all had learnt by then. Beside the fact that they all knew themselves pretty well by now. Therefore, the most gifted trained with the newcomers, even those who didn't owe the appropriate colour yet, which might be raised in the exam for the first time.

With Professor Slyboots Arundle arranged a verbal test, as was possible for exemptions and Arundle was an exemption! By that she skipped the classic themes of physics, which weren't her favourite, the more as so you had to calculate, because she then would surely fail.

Billy-Joe promised to help her, when she taught him grammar in reverse. His rather limited English didn't show, the more so as he wasn't alone with that – still the fact annoyed him.

And so it came that Arundle had a considerable small study group sitting around her, who all wanted to improve their English, and learn how to express or forward what you wanted to say, and write it down properly as well.

Where had the time gone – with all the collected erudition of Somniors and Animations – promising incomparable advantages?

It had been an all too transitory knowledge over the years - light like a dream, and tender like a soul, so to speak. Nothing enduring, if it wasn't picked up and hardened. The dealing with such knowledge was careless, as it could be repeated at any time, this was the way things were looked at, even by the teachers.

In fact, everybody stuck to the theory of 'learning to learn', and for that the characteristics of Somniors and Animations fitted well.

Unfortunately was the theory of learning to learn no subject. Still that didn't matter really as nobody intended to cause problems for those who wanted to get access to one of the major universities, either over here or somewhere else in Europe, America or Asia.

The School of Inbetween had an excellent reputation and with a diploma from here you could get almost everywhere. It was one of the elite institutes on world scale.

In the term before last it was high time for the candidates to look for a mentor, who was supposed to guide her or him through the heights and depths of the exam in close personal contact.

A very personal and trustworthy relation was of course necessary, that ideally had been built up over the years. This wasn't all that easy for the numerous age-groups, and thus a system had been developed giving all candidates a fair chance of getting the mentor of his or her first choice.

That way also those teachers got a chance of becoming chosen who were not so well liked. Each teacher was allotted five students maximum, that was more than enough, experience had shown.

Not all people are made for exams, most aren't, and some are not at all, and those were the candidates who needed most help.

The discussion of sense and nonsense of exams never ended therefore, and here in the School of

Inbetween it arose at any occasion anew, - and this year in particular, because so many students had to be examined. It was not only the number of students that made this year-group so strong, but the personalities and talents of the examinees:

Strong personalities like Arundle and Billy-Joe, and of course Tibor, or Flory and Corinia, just to name a few.

The trustworthy relation between mentor and candidate did not only refer to the personal likes but also to vocational provenience – at best – thus it was laid down in the accompanying recommendations, wherein you could easily spot the voice of dear Marsha Wiggles-Humperdijk, the Headmistress. That was of course no failure, quite the opposite. And for this term they didn't lack of such exceptional and extraordinary candidates, who had found their Mentor by heart.

No-one remembered similar intensive and job-related relations. Too many situations had there been where you met on eye-level or even saw the white in the enemy's eye together, so to speak.

Thus, students and teachers were more alike blood brothers than anything else, united in sisterly passion – thankful for the lifesavings more than once. And while such facts didn't show in everyday school life, it never wholly faded in the memories.

Arundle couldn't make up her mind between Grisella and Scholasticus, but finally decided for Grisella, while Billy-Joe choose Scholasticus. Thus, things were settled for once.

The choice was appropriate in both cases, and emotionally their verdict was also best. With their decision the exam stress spread further, and infested the chosen teachers. While noticing their amiability for once – feeling the strain of responsibility likewise, as they of course strove for the best of their disciples.

“Forget about the colours this time” the Commissary Headmistress, Marsha Wiggles-Humperdijk recommended. – Dorothea, who had been taken over, couldn't stand the double workload. Besides, Marsha and

Adrian were a well-trained team – in life and at work. Dorothea had enough to do with all the administration work and public relations she decided, and strove for consequences.

Marsha's suggestions were often not really helpful. And more than once you had to do just the opposite of what she recommended. This might be the case again this time.

All of them knew how important the colours were, and that sympathy was surely a question of the right colour. Matching colours seldom failed, and so it was the other way round. While of course pigeon-grey and watery-blue didn't form a substantial contrast – thus, you couldn't speak of opposing spheres.

While things were different with a strong green and an also strong red of even blue. Only few combined inside such large-scale differences in colour, or harmonized with representatives of complementary or neighbouring counterparts, if you tried after all transforming such schemes into the abstract of the plain scale, which wasn't advisable anyway.

Moschus Mogoleya wasn't really amiable, for what reasons ever. His teachings he managed just like that as far as his major subject was concerned. Apart from that he had nothing in the backhand – not even a second subject. His teachings were all the like, no matter the labelling. Everything referred to green whirls. Thus, meteorology seemed suitable, all the more so, nobody else was found for this subject. His geo-physical knowledge could well be compared with a gifted beginner.

However, he had a strong feeling for atmospheric conditions and of course for whirls of all kind. This way he could pronounce routes and strength with great reliability.

And as cold his character appeared, his subjects were laden with passion. Rational arguments weren't his cup of tea. Many a statement of his couldn't be proved, no matter whether they were true. He neither wanted, nor

could prove what he claimed, and he was deadly insulted if you doubted in what he professed.

Should he do with such a strenuous mentor? Tibor asked himself, and couldn't make up his mind. No matter whom he asked, they all uttered doubts and misgivings. Job-wise Moschus Mogoleya was not reliable, some said who meant to know him, or really did. While his humane aspects were even more suspicious, Arundle argued who had once been his enemy number one. The other way round it wasn't any better. The two were trapped in an almost paranoid aversion.

"It'll help him, and won't harm you", Peter Adams encouraged Tibor, who still was fond of Moschus, that caused some strange ambiguities on his side and the queerest accusations.

Strange changes in the social climate there had been some, that couldn't be put right away on the Miseriors' account. – They themselves might have been kind of sloppy and threadbare or even righteous – seen in the aftermath – searching for a scapegoat and – oh wonder, spotting one, Peter argued, and Tibor was willing to see his point.

How should he decide? Did he decide against Moschus Mogoleya, then he would decide against his own nature – or what he meant to be his own nature – which fitted to him like a second skin, no matter what others thought of that.

Another question was, whether he agreed with what he was. And therefore he needed Moschus Mogoleya as well - to find out, and measure or even mirror behavioural patterns, he might not even notice otherwise.

Besides, Sandor was going ahead. He didn't bother with scruples. He did like Tuzla and Patagonia, who felt best taken care in their Dean's company. They didn't enjoy sweet harmony all the time, but they understood each other, and felt at home. Therefore, they dared an open word and risk a quarrel without fear. Because they knew they belonged together.

The three of them had made up their minds and had selected Moschus Mogoleya, the Dean of the Sublimations, as their mentor. Still Tibor couldn't make up his mind, because there was someone else. Things weren't as clear as he wished in his case.

Ever since he felt that tie of yearning between him and Penelope M'gamba, whose secret and widespread wisdom and knowledge attracted him. He would have liked to follow her on the way to Shamanism, had he only enough spirit and toughness.

At least he could talk to her. Perhaps she saw a wiser way for him, that didn't show. – He couldn't openly talk with Moschus, without choosing him, because of his difficult character. It might be the same even with Penelope.

Whether it was too late now to get started with Shamanism by entering this vast field of secrecies and wonders, he didn't dare to decide. Tempting lure stood against deep consent. Was he allowed to follow his feelings in such a crucial question of everlasting concern?

Possessive was that woman likewise – by all means. However, if that didn't bother in case of Moschus Mogoleya, why should it matter here?

In deep thoughts the boy trotted along. You didn't see those nineteen years he had passed. This might be because of his slim appearance, which made him so suitable for that dancing with the wind.

Among those Sublimations down here on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth he was – no doubt – an exception. His sinewy body abounded in energy and his splendid mind was over-boarding of fantastic ideas, and made him careless once in a while. He then tried things, he better hadn't tried. However, that would calm down with the years. Besides, routine increased safety.

Would he give away such a splendid gift, if he decided for Shamanism? – His own brother, his fellow-students and his Dean would see it that way, because they had their limited horizon, that was only seemingly wide. Their horizon didn't go further than their eyes could see in the steppe with all its worries and fears – while still offering freedom.

Was it the tickle of news? Well, Shamanism wasn't really new to him. It had been him who brought that Shaman over here in order to free the befallen beast and Man. That was when the pigs died. He had felt the tickle for the first time, then – saying 'I can do better'.

His feeling he had pushed aside, he didn't want to be impolite with that wise man, but at latest now he felt this itch again: 'I can do better... if I was trained, and knew how to do things right.'

He was not the only one who had an eye on Penelope. She was a well liked mentor, Tibor noticed when he found himself sitting in the waiting-lounge on his stool expecting a lengthier waiting-period.

A lot of Shaman stuff was to be found about herbs and potions, and the like. Not always – but mostly from Africa. That was only natural, because Penelope was African.

At last he found an article about Shamanism at his home country, and the importance of the horse headed violin - he was electrified.

Like Billy-Joe who never could make up his mind why he had bought that not just cheap guitar, thus happened with Tibor. He couldn't tell why he had had his old horse headed violin shipped over here to the island, against the declared will of his arbitrary father. Never before such an idea had come to his mind.

While now he couldn't do otherwise. The ancient heritage was supposed to remain with the family, insofar his father had been right. Still he had taken it. The drive had been stronger than the prohibition, he fought in vain.

Now he got stuck with that article, and forgot everything about him, until the kind Professor bade him in her parlour. His vague desire, he had felt somewhere inside, turned into firm certainty under the impression of that article and the impact of the horse-headed violin he felt, without knowing the whereabouts. He only knew, he wanted to go the way of Shamanism, and he wished his

eyes and senses to be opened as well as his heart and spirit.

His eyes were opened when exorcising the Miseriors, and his heart by South-Michel's reel the other day at the beach party. His spirit however, that he knew, would be opened right here and now by nobody else but Penelope M'gamba.

The Professor was chatting merrily and at ease about this and that. They also spoke about Zinfandor, who was well, Tibor learnt. But then the Professor had a look at the clock on the wall and turned the conversation towards the cause of the meeting, which he told her right away.

His strong wish he founded in the attraction he felt towards Shamanism. He also mentioned his little experience, he had gathered, and still made him curious. He also referred to the horse-headed violin, and the magic of that summer night's dream and South-Michel's reel.

With little gestures and few words the Professor made him open up before her ears, giving her access to his inner life. She agreed wholeheartedly with his thoughts and ideas of how to open heart and ears, thus she was prepared to open his spirit as well.

"Fine, then" the Professor summed up. "There is time enough, I can see a vast ocean ahead of us. What I know, I'm going to share with you. Be patient with me – and with yourself. Keep in mind that Rome wasn't built in a day either..." she added laughing.

Tibor wanted to add something, she knew already, whether she would guide him as his mentor through the upcoming exam, because his last term in the School of Inbetween had just started.

"It's in your file, - see..." and she lifted a file in front of her. "This is yours" she said opening, and showed him the day of his entry - as well as the expected date of termination.

"Very right, in about nine months, more or less... In that period a human being is growing up in its mother's womb. Why not a young Shaman as well, don't you think so?"

Penelope M'gamba smiled friendly, while closing the file and rising.

"If you don't mind, we'll meet every week from now on" she said, and off he was back in the waiting lounge where to his big surprise Tika was waiting.

Florinna and Corinia Hare were one year apart, however, since they were in the School of Inbetween they had become adjusted. Corinia didn't want to be excluded, because Florinna and Arundle went to the same form since primary school. Thus it happened that Corinia worked hard and developed enormous eagerness, while Florinna did it more the easy way, as far as traditional schooling was concerned.

Both were well liked by their fellow students and the teachers – all of them, without exception. And all would have liked to take care of the sympathetic teenagers, now when their last term began. All meant to know what the best would be for them.

For both sisters an academic continuation of their education seemed arbitrary. While both had their own ideas, when it came to the subject. Since she became acquainted with the mer-folk Corinia had made up her mind. She wanted to become a Deep-sea-Archaeologist.

Florinna couldn't yet make up her mind. She knew only what she didn't want to do. Therefore the teachers weren't of great help. The sisters had another question to solve. A question that had to do with their attitude towards life, and what they inherited from their parents and ancestors. Under no circumstances they wanted to be parted, neither of them, while Corinia even went as far as changing her subject if it came to the worst.

"We stay together, in any case" they decided – "as long as possible" and added "no matter the costs..."

They wanted to go ahead dually in any case and become archaeologists like their father – if necessary with different points of emphasis. "And for balancing between body and spirit we will take part in a traditional classic dancing education."

As mentors they chose the Headmistress and the former Vice-Headmaster, who both agreed with delight. Adrian would become Cory's mentor, while Marsha would take care of Florinna. Both fitted well with the colour-scheme, and that was of great importance.

31. Tibor and Tika

Tika had never overcome the attack on her life. No matter that it was proven now a thousand times that Arundle had had not the faintest part in the assault. Deep inside Tika could never get rid of the idea that Arundle was her enemy and competitor.

Her brother - Tika had found late. Not before the age of six - sister and brother had met. And it was by accident that they later found out about their relationship. Thus it happened that Tika fell in love with Billy-Joe (as much as you can fall in love at this early age.) When they then became brother and sister, she had under great sacrifice managed to alter her devotion, and gave it another direction. At least she thought she did.

But this didn't hinder her from being jealous on Arundle. And the more she became pushed aside here in the School of Inbetween - the more this jealousy inflamed. How much had she tried to control such ill feelings - she never really succeeded.

Then Tibor came into her life, and everything changed at once. In one magic moment - nobody can ever find really out about - great feelings overwhelmed her. It was love on the first sight for both of them. The green whirlwind conquered her heart just like that, somewhere up in the air on the verge between land and sea.

Tika burst into blossom for the first time in her life, and felt well in her human appearance, although this was virgin ground for her.

A lot that had tied her to Billy-Joe she now transferred on to Tibor. She pocketed him in her mind,

just as she had collected Billy-Joe before, because her shy nature wasn't altered by this love altogether.

Still she was able now to keep contact with her kind. But it was too late now for deep friendship with other girls. Such were built in the years she had been devoted to her brother.

Sitting right there in the waiting-room she realized with absolute certainty that she had lost her brother for good and irreversibly, when she saw Tibor coming out of the Professor's parlour. She listened inside and searched for the well-known itch in her soul. It was gone, and she knew that the time had come.

Now she realized her inability of forming friendships and enduring them over a lengthier period of time, and nourishing contacts, although the reference had altered or was disturbed for good.

And thus, the fare-well hurt doubly, while she knew that she had lost Billy-Joe to Arundle and not only to Pooty and Walter, but now as well and finally to Professor Scholasticus Slyboots.

The last step of this long and hurting fare-well ached most, because the separation was now for ever. The end of a long way was reached, that was parting and guided each in his or her direction. Something inside her meant to know that their ways would never cross in future.

She couldn't think of a more distant relationship. The idea, of thinking in love at each other from afar, didn't come to her mind. This was all the more bewildering because they weren't separated in reality. The fact that they still were so close hindered in reverse the process of reflection on her side, so it seemed.

In reality Billy-Joe had become unimportant for her for quite some time already. Still the connection had been there, and only now, when she realized the facts, she became aware of what was now destroyed for ever.

Thus, she used her time waiting other than Tibor had, although she had come here for the same reason.

Since Tibor had decided to become a Shaman, she felt as well the call.

Penelope M'gamba was a sensitive person who heard the grass grow, in matters of that kind, and inquired Tika's affairs intensely and carefully. What she found was alarming. Tika was a genuine shaman talent.

Tika never troubled Tibor with her worries. When they were together, they had better things to do, than to talk about brothers and family-ties. The more so as Tibor wasn't free in this respect either and had his own lot to carry.

No matter whom she asked, almost all had their own lot to carry family-wise. Most suffered from sticky ties which couldn't be cut. Other felt the other way round and were longing for maternal warmth in vain, they had lost far too early, causing an everlasting cold in the soul. Too much affection – the lack of love – too mild or too severe parents – there was no ideal each and every one suffered from the one or other extremity.

“We are all disturbed, the question only is - how” was Arundle's conclusion. Bothering Tika with such finesses didn't help her at all. Quite opposite, she reacted allergic against such arguments from above, and Tibor felt just alike, which forced their mutual acquaintance a great deal.

Now their joint mentor confirmed, they had another even more touching connection, woven in a secret place, that joint only selected souls and reached only enlightened spirits in the unreal world between heaven and earth. Here, in the pantheon of the world-soul, their Totem Animal kept waiting, and asked them to unite the Converter's way.

Tibor surprised himself as a horse-headed violin, while Tika handed herself over to her second nature, and didn't surprise Penelope or Tibor, who were accompanying her. Be it, that Tika played so much more delighted in the light of the full moon, wasting no time in howling at her as she used to do, whenever the moon arose beautiful and round and full on the soft velvet-blue nightly sky.

“A horse-headed violin might be a niche Totem animal” Tibor mused and didn’t know quite, what he should think about it. Strange enough, he felt his hands remaining, enabling him to play himself.

For melodies he wasn’t short. As small as his horse-head appeared, there was space enough, if it was true that melodies were formed in one’s head and not right away in the chest or the throat, where they belonged.

The whole trouble between South-Michel and the Advisor about the Cardinal Mistake was just ridiculous, and caused Tibor’s violin to a mighty Homeric laughter, that was right away transformed into an expressive melody – (much to the pleasure of the awakening nature), and got under the skin of the earth, so to speak, causing the earth to shiver, quite so as if some snowflakes settled in your unprotected neck unexpectedly (or an eagle’s feather, or a glowing cigarette end – the latter leading to a wild quake, eventually.)

If things get together one by one that way and one to the other and the other again – and so forth – then it’ll show what’s coming next and what’s gonna be. Until somewhat likely the wink of a humming-bird may finally end up in the furore of a hurricane.

Tibor knew not quite where he was. A second ago the converted Tika howled much less than usual, but still – while he lacked of comparison, and Penelope didn’t stay on the island more than a couple of minutes.

Tibor worried a little, that there was no space for him. The weather alone was a problem. Such a violin was a precious instrument and needed special care. His thin legs carried him with pain and in no way over long distance.

He couldn’t enter the cabins of the guards. They’d feel disturbed and overlooked. A dry cave, not too deep

and uninhabited would do. But that wasn't found in the vicinity – at least didn't show up on the meter.

Tibor's fusion with his horse-headed violin led to hefty arguments among the Conversiors. However, while nobody could remember a similar case, the uproar went astray. Until next month a dry soundproof cave - soundproof it had to be, some of the Conversiors demanded, while the majority was of the opposite opinion. Many had been listening to the miraculous tunes in sheer ecstasy. This part overruled the minority, who claimed protection in reverse.

“They want indeed to have a sound-absorbing wall built right through the island” it was said.

“Those, who still were in doubts had opened their eyes at the latest now” South-Michel said, when he learnt of the quarrel.

“What broken blokes those are, while being part of the misfitting kind. Who ever wants to doubt the existence of the Cardinal Mistake, find proof of its survival right here...”

While Tibor was fiddling around with the horse-headed violin, Tika used her time for herbal studies. Conversiors' Island was inhabited by all kinds of strange herbs and brushes. The wind had brought about the seed in hundreds of thousands of years, coming from everywhere and mingling to the most stunning new breeds.

With insects it was hardly different, while insects had more trouble getting here from far continents. Some however managed and founded fertile colonies.

It was a pity that Tika wasn't allowed in her Totem animal costume to collect herbs and insects. While she had enjoyed chasing about with her botanising equipment to show her mentor all the treasures there were.

However, Penelope seemed to be rather content that such was prohibited by the regulations valid for

Conversiors' Island, thus she didn't enforce any change, as was demanded by her two eager disciples.

That way, Tibor didn't fall back too much. While they chased about as humans jointly on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, where the wind hadn't brought less seed. Tika proudly showed her friend what she had learnt already, and for some plants they jointly sought a proper name, while following the procedure of Carl de Linné, and made Tibor burst into blossom, who was now able to realize that this blooming Latin wasn't all that useless in reality.

"Proper names aren't everything. More important are character and healing or poisoning effects, and all that..." Mentor Penelope M'gamba eased Tibor's effete. "Knowing lest naming is what matters", her credo was.

32. Time to say Good-bye

Thus, they all went apart. Each in the direction he or she had chosen to be best, or was part of his or her identity. "Not for the school we learn, but for life" Marsha Wiggles-Humperdijk the Commissary Headmistress let the students know, whenever she saw the chance to do so.

Arundle plunged into a sphere of the most the filigree buildings of thought ever, that is, the philosophy of the German Idealists, which turned out to be most difficult. Billy-Joe tried the same with Einstein, Feynman, Hahn, et al – hardly less awesome.

Still, or just because of that, his mentor Professor Scholasticus Slyboots was content with him, and so was Professor Grisella of Griselgreif to Greifenklau-Slyboots with her disciple Arundle.

Time went by, just like that. And all of a sudden it was there – the big day of triumph, wherein the bitter drop of fare-well mingled.

In a final public viewing the marks of all examinees were published, and the Loblolly Girls 'n Boys school

band played to honour them, who made it quite well, the almost would like to be band members noticed somewhat nostalgically. Because it meant the final fare-well from their youth.

Was it said four years ago in that basic course ‘Get to know yourself’, ‘All starting is difficult’ it now said ‘All parting is difficult’.

And while the start up had been sometimes frustrating, the fare-well hurt that much more. Inbetween there was for many a dream, that had become real, and of which awakening did hurt incredibly.

In vain, they tried to comfort each other, by promising to write and chat and mail and meet each other virtually any time. As for once they all knew it – it would never be the same again. At most comforted the first big come-together next year, as it was planned.

Even the Somniors were little better off. Although they could meet whenever they liked in their dreams. While here was a danger, not only the Aborigines suffered, who lived the dreamtime more than their real life and wholly turned away from reality by that.

For all that meant that they had to take care and balance the forces and gifts they had, and had to rely on them alone with that.

Had only the island not been so small. In the beginning there had been University-classes going on, even promotions had been possible in cooperation with the alma mater of Sydney University. But then thing widened and such had to be cut off finally.

Plans of reconstructing Conversiors Island failed because of the righteous veto of the Conversiors. They saw in such measure an unacceptable limitation of their development and unfolding.

The other way of limiting the number of newcomers had been considered. However, that would have meant to stop the scouting tours around the world, in order to trace the hidden talents and contact them. Because thereof the School of Inbetween lived and drew their self-recognition and saw here the basic task.

Now, while the good name of the School of Inbetween was spread widely, more and more children asked for entry, and were not always gifted enough, but were pushed by their parents.

As a scout you needed a good sharp eye to separate the chaff from the wheat. Still, such facts didn't lower the flooding, so to speak.

In short – a universal extension was no realistic option, while the opposite seemed more likely. When lowering the age of entry you might increase the chance of advancing talents earlier, and train them before they were buried under the avalanche of disappointment, that came about unavoidably in the early life of most human beings in their habitual surrounding.

Fact was on the other hand, that the school-leavers now were left alone in the early age of 17 or 18 into the cruel world outside, and had to do there without aid and protection.

Still, you couldn't see what the consequences would be, as there had been only one weak age-group before, that suffered under the effects of an early disruption. While now this numerous age-group would be sent on that same track.

Thus, not only the school-leavers looked ahead scared, but the teachers as well. They felt their responsibility further reaching than the school boundaries. That was why they granted the school-leavers the way back – “just in case, you may not need it, but if you do, you are welcome.”

The mentors worried most about those students who came from far away. For them a fund was installed, because they lacked of money in general, which led to an absurd situation in case of Tibor and Tika.

Thanks to the help of Penelope M'gamba, and also by their own initiative, they had managed to find a Shaman near-by, who was willing to accept them as disciples.

Where she lived, there were no administrative authorities, and no campus with lunch, and mail address, where Dorothea could have sent them money.

While some girdles of kauri-shells were welcome as an entry-gift. They were harder to purchase than a check was filled in. In addition, Penelope promised to look after them in person. They arranged for a magic connection each full moon, when the griffin darkened the full moon, when they would meet at a fixed sacred site, where things would be straightened out, she let them know mysteriously.

This was, no doubt, a somewhat circumstantial, however very original mode of connection. Penelope M'gamba liked it mysteriously. This was an ideal equilibrium. Fact was, she ran out of targets, because she had to stay away from the common routes of air-traffic. That was why she was brooding over maps with Zinfandor, to figure out where to go.

Billy-Joe and Arundle had their own income by their shares, just as Tibor, who was one of the creators of the de-petrification-potion, that was now used so successfully. While money would be of no use, were he wanted to go.

Flory and Cory managed to persuade Arundle and Billy-Joe to jointly look for a suitable university. Their father had done his best – he was a lecturer himself, and pointed out two likely sites, that would meet the needs of all four of them.

He considered the climatic and ethical conditions as well as the scientific ones, while the Professors there had to meet the high standards of the School of Inbetween, and Professor Hare had of course to agree as well.

So, the four of them met again - after extensive holidays apart in the furthest ends of the world - at the beginning of march - very near to the Isle of Wisdom-tooth – in Sydney - for their first university semester.

Flory and Cory registered for Archaeology – following their father's foot steps, so to speak. Arundle decided for Philosophy and so did Billy-Joe (just for the time being – as he put it.) In addition, he took Physics, and Arundle Sociology.

Where they already driven by home-sickness, making them to decide for Sydney? Well, of course there

was the recommendation of Professor Hare, who was neutral and considered advantages and disadvantages likewise.

One advantage would certainly be that Tibor and Tika were near as well. However, this advantage and the closer conditions of their way of being would come in sight only later.

The final decision for Sydney had been something else, and for that all four of them accepted also minor disadvantages, one of which was that Billy-Joe wasn't boss in his own house so to speak. He had to decide for Walter and Pooty likewise. And Pooty was not welcome in Pretoria – the second choice. Because animals were not allowed on the campus there.

“What a nuisance...”

“How retrogressive...”

“You feel like pushed back into the 20th century.”

“Those are the late reminiscences of Apartheid...”

The four all agreed – while they were in fact five and at best they had liked to have Pooty registered as a student as well. He had received his diploma from the School of Inbetween. There was even a photo taken of him in a tiny cute robe with a square little hood on his head, him posing right in the middle of the age-group.

Looking backwards, they realized from afar very clearly the plentitude and richness of the School of Inbetween, as a kind of pioneer deed.

Why should they accept their demission? Why should they make them fit into a system they mistrusted?

As an indulged pet Pooty would become depressed. He would suffer similar to the Magic Bow when enduring in the strong-room, because he was part of the prohibition of arms.

The idea of a university of their own was dawning behind the horizon, and emerge like Aphrodite on her rosy shell, as was painted by renaissance genius Boticelli. Long enough they had waited. How could it have happened that they accepted their demission in the first

place? They didn't understand themselves any more.

The argument, that there were objective facts to be obeyed, had obviously intimidated them, and lulled in their spirit and imagination. As if such an institution was a matter of space.

Sure enough, they couldn't dive down into the virtual world for ever, as this might cause depression and loss of reality. But they surely had the means to find and build a suitable site.

"What about a space station? We might even be able to take one over."

"Why not the whole moon?"

"Yes, the moon, why not the moon?"

"My father likes the moon..."

"Our moon has no infrastructure yet, and the moon of Laptopia might be a suitable hide for time escapees. With a whole university however, we would run into trouble. That would surely offend the first universal principle of reality..."

"Law you mean..."

"I don't mind..."

"Still, a brilliant idea, could be mine" Pooty boasted, who revived, while things got started for his sake.

All laughed, Pooty was somehow right. Thoughtfully they kept on musing. When Arundle raised her voice:

"I don't know – don't you see it likewise? I can imagine our Island-University only in close vicinity of the Isle of Wisdom-tooth."

The others nodded. They agreed with her, and were homesick already. They would have best returned right away better today than tomorrow.

"And if we rebuild Conversiors' Island? It's hardly smaller than the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, and quite alike. We would easily get away with some twenty floors..."

"We would have to leave enough space for the Conversiors – as much as now..."

And everybody had to move each month for four days, in order the grant the Conversiors their common grounds."

“...while underneath life should go on as ever?

I cannot imagine that. Such an institution cannot be cut off hermetically, that no sound escapes. While there would be living over on hundred people. We would need a landing strip and some room would also be required...”

“...and a landing stage for boats, and a lagoon with a pontoon...”

“and besides, everything must be just the way we are used to...”

“Everything is up to the Conversiors...”

They stopped for a thoughtful pause. –

“Couldn’t we top up the Isle of Wisdom-tooth?”

“... right, in the middle, by some twenty floors...”

Then there would be still space outside and around for parks and gardens and the helicopter port...”

While you could fix **that** on the roof...”

“Or the Conversiors move for good – there must be an uninhabited island nearby. Needn’t be big, though.”

“Right, they’re hardly more than twenty...”

“If at all...”

“It’s a kind of dying species, somehow...”

“Is that how you see it?” Billy-Joe said, somewhat gruffly. That was another problem he hadn’t tackled yet. How would he get back to Conversiors Island in the first full moon night from the city each month? He could suppress such urge a couple of times but not forever.

Tika and Tibor were happier as they could say. Their Shaman was a good-natured woman – ancient not only in years but even further in wisdom. She preferred the Tasmanian way of life, which you had to get used to.

However, she didn’t force her new disciples to adapt her style or follow her example, but let them do their thing. First they built an own home and got settled. Tibor had bought a boat he could pay just like that – he wasn’t yet used to the fact that he had plenty of money.

With the boat they could sail to the main island whenever they felt like doing and wind and weather allowed.

The island had no name, because it was so small and unnoticed, and had never been settled because there was no potable water, except what you collected. Thus, Tibor purchased a huge basin he dug into the ground, where they collected the water from the roof and adjacent space around their home.

Of course they wanted to find out why the Shaman was so famous and well known all over the place and the whole area, who was living far from any settlement or human dwelling - all over the New Zealand islands and even further down South until Tasmania, where she originally had come from – most likely.

“She’ll be able to fly” they wondered and Tibor thought of his Shaman from home, who never touched the ground, but drifted about like a balloon.

When the full moon was there, the two disciples discovered something else, which enriched their relation again. Tibor was just beginning to strike with tender little paws over the belly of the horse-headed violin of his, and Tika stretched her furry limbs in the light of the full moon, preparing for a good wild beat. They hadn’t yet let their tunes rise towards the sky, when a magnificent phoenix rose from the hearth under the roof of the Shaman and tuned in on the first tunes of Tibor’s violin play with the most beautiful twitter.

And soon the three of them were rejoicing and shouting for joy under the moon, who started sobbing, and those who carefully looked saw a huge teardrop running down over his pale cheek. And while she did so, even the stones down here on earth, in the round being piled for protection of the new pond, began to sob as well, while the basin was still almost empty, thus they could go on for ages...

Meanwhile over there, in Sydney, three young women were dreaming of the Isle of Wisdom-tooth -

bringing forward their worries to their former teachers, as far as those were accessible. In convincing words they explained their ideas and conveyed their musings, asking for an urgent General Meeting.

They referred to detailed alternative projects of an architect who would be available as soon as they had the details in inch and foot. Of course unanimous and top secret. They would be able than to present at any time from now on appropriate plans for any alternative.

For the Professors the dream turned into a nightmare sooner or later. They only saw the avalanche of costs rolling by, not to speak of the dust and dirt, and nuisance, and noise of a construction site of such dimensions. You could forget about the peace and secrecy of the islands.

Besides, would the Conversiors agree? Would they accept the limitations, if at all?

33. The House Deep Down Under

Tibor figured it some 50 miles from here to the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, when he was back to himself again. The horse-headed violin was lying in its case as innocently as a sleeping baby. Tika was dressed up again in a neat dress – while the Shaman couldn't do without her habit, no matter of the two disciples – that meant she didn't wear anything but naked skin.

Penelope had come to check, after being informed of the assault of the girls. However, they all at once were aware, as it is with Shamans. You needn't words for that.

The dream had raised them all, Penelope confessed, while repeating what she had learnt from those plotters in Sydney (as they used to call their homesick former mates.)

Her mission now was clear enough. They needed a location for the Conversiors, either for good or for the

time of the construction work, if the new project would become realized at all, of course.

That was her secret mission Penelope repeated. “That’s why I’m here, dear colleague and Honourable all-wise Susamee” Penelope addressed the Shaman of the island, somewhat sophisticated, as to Tibor.

The so addressed however, gently smiled and nodded, the more she listened, giggled and nodded, and giggled again. Thus Tibor only could check the proper route, “which would be overcome as follows”, he said “With the helicopter to the mainland island, where I’m waiting with the boat and from there I’m taking them right here in no time – well, some 50 minutes or so... it’s just a rough idea yet, might even cut down ... all in all, less than two hours. Of course it’s different and other than usual, however that it is by now for people like Adrian or Corinia no less. I wonder how Cory had managed the full moon over there in Sydney anyway.”

“Far away and unpopulated, tended by a Phoenix, a Dingo and an autonomously performing horse-headed violin, what else do you want?” Penelope M’gamba summed up what she had learnt and achieved of Susamee’s Island.

Thus, the island was found and with that, the major obstacle was overcome. The new University could be built, while the School of Inbetween was hardly bothered by the construction work.

Four months time it would take at least, or even six, at immense costs, while support was uncertain – that was a challenge made for Dorothea. She burst into blossom and, as if it had to be so, she became pregnant one month after the beginning of the construction work.

The first trial with that new site had been done by the expatriates. Watchdog Will Wiesle reported for the Convertors, who were out of mind during full moon, as is well known.

“They all felt well. Susamee’s Island was dark and mysterious, and there was a lot to be explored. Big enough it also was. While the tour forth and back took some time, mostly because of the change of means of transport.”

Tibor promised a better solution. A copter port would certainly do, but needed permission of the Shamaness. Such could be found somewhere abroad at the other end, were nobody would be disturbed. And surely was granted by the generous woman. You didn’t need more than a plain flat field for that anyway.

Susamee’s Island was scarcely populated by animals either, because the island was young. That was why the invaders could hardly disturb the few. There were only about twenty invaders coming anyway, and they all were trimmed to peacefulness. While for the meat eaters there was always a filled jug with fresh blood available, which the candidates donated the month before.

It wasn’t supplied by a slaughterhouse nearby anymore. Because this blood had never been really fresh for once, while it was infested by the horror of a terrible death and contaminated accordingly, and didn’t taste, - only the greediest would gulp.

Shamaness Susamee agreed on the whole. She even made friend with Watchdog Will Wiesle, who burst into blossom because of the new and improved task.

He courted Susamee despite of her age with diverse presents, she willingly accepted. She decorated herself with all kinds of necklaces, earrings and the like, and covered her body with a sari, and had Tika do her hair.

Monosyllabic she still remained. And who wasn’t able to read thoughts was lost in her presence, because he didn’t know what was going on.

Watchdog Will Wiesle liked to be sent to Susamee’s Island and spent more time over here than on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth. He even thought of building his own home – which was in full consent with the Shamaness.

While she didn't let things bother her, but she hushed off at night as she was used, collecting medicine at secret sites or meeting patients wherever they were, and took access the shaman way.

For Watchdog Will Wiesle however, she dressed and made herself up. For him she became a desirable woman again, who was hiding behind a distracting sight, nobody overcame, be it that love opened his eyes.

Dorothea managed to find a clever building supervisor, who succeeded in keeping the limit. While most of the construction work was done in the interior of the island (things did change later) it looked all different. For outsiders it looked as if a terrible chaos was broken out on Conversiors' Island.

The natural conditions in the socle of the island favoured the plans of utilization of the former volcano slot, that had been inactive for at least ten thousand years. And South-Michel ordered a gang of his dwarves for assistance, who fulfilled sheer wonders in the depth.

In principle, Conversiors' Island didn't differ much from the Isle of Wisdom-tooth. Under water the two islands looked as if two flowers were growing up from a joint root in the mainland shelf of Australis, where-under the city of the mer-folk was hiding.

South-Michel took it personal - as his very personal challenge. He visualized some kind of Pater-noster connection between the two islands. Thus you could get from one side to the other.

"That's a great idea, but who guarantees us that things won't blow up one day?" Marsha wondered - "... would save us a lot of space, though" Dorothea said.

"We're drilling a channel cross to the slots - that's what they still are, - so we have an emergency outlet, just in case..." South-Michel eased Marsha down.

"Final guarantees won't be granted, I'm afraid, but things had been quiet for a very long period of time ...

and you'd be affected anyway – so that's no difference over here.”

He had the 25 storey interior building in mind that housed the students' dormitories and all other facilities – which had been built on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth.

Fact was of course, that they moved on thin ice, so to speak, all over here in this area, where the skin of Mother Earth was thin and vulnerable.

“Volcanoes take the outlet with the least resistance” South-Michel put in, and referred to the appropriate measures considered by the dwarves.

“Those little ones are real experts” he proudly added, thus managing to ease sensible minds to a certain extent.

The Australian craftsmen never met any dwarf. The Australians worked from the surface downwards while the dwarves were busy the other way round. They developed a system of corridors and slots by means of which the two shafts were connected in the depth.

The Australian gang overcame a distance of about 50 yards, while the dwarves covered a distance of more than one thousand yards. And had there not the shelf been, they'd gone even further, as such depths weren't unlikely over here, as long as you stayed clear off the glow.

So, South-Michel felt safe and was certain to be able to keep his promise, that no volcano outbreak would bother them, as long as the safety outlets were in order and in proper operation.

“You might get the flood wave still afterwards, just in case - that'd be kind of a nuisance, though...” he mused. Remarks like this didn't comfort the frightful minds, in no way.

Secretly, South-Michel could only shake his head, when confronted with such ignorance. And that with people who had to know eventually. While it could be, that those who were acquainted with the matter, didn't share their knowledge with those who had no idea of what was really going on, while being experts in their own field.

‘Strange people – those contemporary humans’ he wondered, and the Cardinal Mistake, he once more saw quite clearly, showed up in the brightest red before his inner eye, like a dangerous inflammation.

In Sydney, where homesickness had initiated remarkable activities, the banned were sitting and moaning (now, no longer!) when they thought of their island. They were looking forward instead on all reports giving notice of the advancements of the construction work. Every night they collected the latest news by means of the Somnions and were thus well informed.

Dorothea’s spirit was in no way limited by the growing child in her womb, quite the opposite. – “Pregnancy is no disease” she let her husband know, who always tried to calm her down.

For Cory and Flory she had thought of something special. Therefore she was corresponding with Professor Hare, whether he would be interested in a scholarship at the new ‘Island-University’ as it was called provisionally – “only until we get a better idea...” she answered questioning and doubtful gazes.

Most of the present teachers intended to go on bi-trail – as had been done in the past already, by those who had be here then.

People like Peter Adams now saw there chance, and hoped for an own chair. And the not so clear cases checked their papers, if they were qualified enough, or did their best to qualify right away. Either by handing in their records and merits of former days or sit down and write on a topic of interest to have such accepted accordingly.

Once again Dorothea travelled around the world – this time accompanied by her husband, which wasn’t quite what she wanted.

However, as a mother-to-be she claimed a different attention from the men’s world, as she was used to.

Therefore she didn't really mind having him at her side. He might even be of help, eventually.

The stock market was attended and a new edition of shares was installed to stimulate interest. And thus Dorothea's desk was flooded with applications of all kinds, while still absent. She urgently needed assistance she realized as soon as she was back.

The applicants for the School she handed back right away to Marsha Wiggles-Humperdijk, and the applications for the university-to-be were handled by Adrian Humperdijk, with the directive to postpone or refuse right away or refer to the School of Inbetween for a start.

She herself and her sister handled the few applicants for academic teaching, while both understood the art of reading between the lines meanwhile, and separated thus the chaff from the wheat quickly.

There were still far too many applicants, the Board had to decide upon at a later date. While agreement was soon reached about Professor Hare, the more so as he passed the colour-test with bravura. (not as a Somnior, however, but as a kind of Animator – with a remarkable – somewhat perforated aura in faint blue.)

Furthermore was Archaeology highly welcomed on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, now with all these experiences in Atlantis. Quite a few of the scholars favoured such studies, and intended to register for the subject later.

Esoteric studies weren't wholly disgraced on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth or rejected as a whole. Thus, those candidates who were able to teach such matters, had to be carefully chosen. Separating the charlatans and frauds from the truly enlightened was a complex matter, the more so when the applicant was young and good-looking.

Professor Penelope M'gamba was still looking after her academic reputation. Her curriculum wasn't all that straight and clear. Therefore, she suggested to have someone like Shamaness Susamee being appointed as teacher, and even offer her a chair in the new institution. While she was meant to be the last living Phoenix. She'd liked to have added – 'Like I'm the last griffin.' But

didn't do so. She didn't want to wake up sleeping dogs, that is raise an argument about the pros and cons of Conversion in general or converting into certain specific animals, the more so as she had just recently regained her airborne abilities.

The term ended. Nothing kept the homesick aspirants in Sydney. And for this time, there was no reason for Flory and Cory to travel abroad, because the big move was just about.

The construction work on the scholars' housing area was almost completed and the apartments or houses were waiting. Similar to the set-up on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth the houses of the Professors' families were neatly grouped on surface level in some kind of round village with a little market place in the middle and neat front yards.

Last minute installations, like pre-bred green became rolled out, while moving gangs unloaded containers at the near-by landing stage, where formerly the boats of the Convertors landed. While ships anchored way out and stayed safe from the shore, which carried the cargo by.

Family Hare was first to move in. The girls had to share Billy-Joe's camp site. Their beds had been given away for good to newcomers. It was kind of provisional outside. However this didn't really bother them, as long as they were at home, and that's what they were.

But now this time was also over, thank God. "You are staying with us, Arundle" Vasantha Hare decided, and didn't accept contradiction. Like a cluck she assembled her former chickens and forgot, that the young ones had grown up meanwhile, and where on the way to become hens themselves.

The Teachers' Board kept sticking to the colour-scheme and aura-blessed candidates, there was no

alternative. Who didn't owe a colour was not allowed access. There were no doubts left in fact. And nobody, who didn't have an idea, understood what was really going on.

And thus, the secret grew and became even more attractive. A lot was speculated and tried. Faked applicants were sluiced in and were promptly rejected – polite but consequently. It didn't take more than five minutes.

On the other hand, limited, neglected and ragged slum kids were pampered, and treated like raw eggs. “That shall understand, who can...” the refused candidates said and retreated enviously. While the whole wide world was open for them, but not this little island.

Thus the ‘Island University’ - which kept the provisional name – limited in number. Hardly more than fifty students had registered and now didn't fill the lecture halls and almost got lost in the wide corridors. Because the set-up was made for some three hundred students.

Twenty five academic teachers were planned, who would live with their families in the small village around the neat market place in two storied detached or semi-detached houses.

Dorothea – recognizably in good hope – started counting the weeks and days to the D-day, as she put it, but this fact didn't limit her spirit. She held the planning tight in hands and didn't allow any exceptions. She would take care of avoiding all those little weaknesses and failures that she was realizing in the old premise, no matter whether they formed part of its charm and attraction.

Only those applicants were accepted, who had passed the exam in the School of Inbetween before. This was what the Board of Teachers agreed upon finally after lengthy negotiations.

Those, who insisted nevertheless, had to prove capability in at least one term and passing the basic

course “The Other Way of Seeing” successfully, and owed at least a gentle touch of an own aura.

34. Maternity

Shamaness Susamee didn't object teaching. Thus, Penelope M'gamba agreed with her to split the subject into a more practical and a theoretical part.

She suggested this, because Shamaness Susamee resisted entry into a lecture hall, all the more one so deep under the surface. The idea alone made her sick, and caused fits of claustrophobia. What ever fled the open arms of Mother Nature couldn't be worth much. With 'open arms' she meant everything that was accessible on the surface. In addition, rectangles were unbearable to her.

Penelope felt ill humour getting hold of her. She nevertheless became aware of the degree of alienation she had accepted, ignoring the itches that came about with compromises and was sorry, that she surely had passed a red line a long time ago without a chance of a way back.

Be it, that she became lazy, be it, that she had been weak ever since for such a consequent life-style. Thus, she felt also admiration. Here opened a treasure, many should get the chance to nourish, one way or another.

“As a matter of fact, things down there are more round than square” Tibor objected, and Watchdog Will Wiesle nodded. “The dwarves don't like rectangles either.”

“You should get to know South-Michel, indeed” Tika added. “South-Michel is a miner with roots way back to Atlantis, you know...”

Shamaness Susamee cocked up, but didn't say anything, but was thinking her part and hoped that people

didn't clearly understand her, because she found her musings no good either, almost silly, in fact.

Watchdog Will Wiesle, blind-folded by love, whenever he met her, made her heart soft and her soul melt and made her give way to all stubbornness.

Should she have it a trial – only once, just to be sure, she was right? She covered her body with a sari and draped all kinds of jewellery round her neck and arms and ankles, and entered the helicopter for the first time in her life. While it had been easy for her to travel the Shaman way. Well, in fact, she didn't quite know whereto.

The pilots knew it all the better and it didn't take an hour, when they landed on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, where she was welcomed by an illustrious committee. Its members had been pre-warned and thus omitted all contacts with buildings, but walked through the park and around the beautiful rim topping the crown of the island. When Adrian, who joined them under way, pointed out how well the construction work was advancing all over the places.

Lucky though, South-Michel zoomed in, and Susamee was highly pleased to meet in him an old acquaintance. – It would have been strange, if they hadn't met, living in the same area for so many years.

While South-Michel was swaying, Susamee was swaying likewise. And thus, they swayed away towards the Pater noster, which had an entrance over here. The trip through both tubes took about half an hour, normally, but could as well speed up, but that was uncomfortable.

Therefore they did it the slow way, despite the fact that they were leaving the surface. The idea was to make her familiar with the device and show her at the same time the beauties of the world below. Thus, make the Shamaness change her mind.

Their way led them through all twenty storeys of the School of Inbetween. The glass cabin walls opened the sight to the outside, and you could see, were the journey went.

As soon as the sea level was reached, the sight didn't change much at first. You could see the

shimmering water at first but then the sight darkened and the speed increased, until the middle of the tour was reached, where the speed slowed down again and windows opened to the other side, where you could see the water again and a little while later the new facilities of the university. Here, the craftsmen were still busy. Only a few floors were completed and inhabited.

The Pater noster ended in the middle of the little village of the Professors and their families. The cabin door opened and Shamaness Susamee stepped out, taking a deep breath and welcomed the day back, by lowering to the ground kissing it devotedly.

Then she raised and looked quite amazed back over the open sea some 500 yards to the neighbouring island where they had started from some minutes ago, and couldn't believe her senses.

Penelope insisted in showing her guest around and to have a look at the Shaman Teaching Centre, especially designed for the purpose. Most facilities stemmed from her, and she was very proud of.

“No rectangles, as you'll see – everything organic, everything genuine...” Shamaness Susamee couldn't decide whether to ridicule the whole matter, or to admire what had been achieved. Penelope was happy with it.

But then, something else caught the Shaman's attention. She listened into emptiness, turned the eyes inside, thus you could only see the white, then turned around her axis a couple of times and disappeared, just like that.

What had happened? Dorothea needed help - to be precise - help on delivery, and Shamaness Susamee was in her element. At once she was at the site and realized what the matter was. She pushed here and pulled there, supported one way or the other, and in no time the baby was on the world.

A girl, beautiful as her mother, if you could see that already – and Scholasticus could, and for the mother she was even more beautiful.

Shamaness Susamee rubbed it dry with a bunch of leaves, and put it in her mother's arms, and showed her

how to comfort it with mouth and breath, and had her feel the motherly caress.

At first, Dorothea didn't dare, but then she closed her eyes, and felt her own flesh and blood, accepting it wholeheartedly, in overwhelming jubilant love - just as unrestrained as was once generated in the closest communion of passion.

Fear of flying was not her problem. Shamaness Susamee had the helicopter, which brought her over here to the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, take her back to her own island. As soon as she arrived, she let her disciples know what had happened and what was going on. She knew they were eager to learn everything.

As she detested obedient souls, she did everything to avoid an air of one-sided dependence. Therefore she asked her disciples to go over there by chance and see with their own eyes, what was going on.

Their return was as sure as the coming up full moon, she certainly knew. Insofar her freedom wasn't all that free. She well might have the wrong ideas in mind, though. Such musings were further from Tibor than the moon. Quite the opposite, he was eager to accompany his teacher when collecting herbs or healing clients – a privilege Tika had.

Shamaness Susamee saw in Tika a natural talent, or did she see herself in her, when she had been young?

In any case, she favoured Tika's company – the more as so in serious cases like death or troublesome birth, that happened more than often. Shamans were obliged to death only little less than to life.

Sulamith's birth pushed aside everything that claimed importance – for the young parents, anyway, who realized how well-known they were all over the world. All the way from Germany the congratulators came, and the area over here stood all in flames, so to

speak. Peter Adams even invited some Jewish folk-musicians from his home-town. He was convinced – the chance of good luck was worth the effort.

Shamaness Susamee cared about the proper totem animal and couldn't decide between extravagant extremes, she didn't however publish.

“No-one can do without totem animal” was her credo and she pitied the parents, who didn't know or didn't care.

“Those who were born outside in nature, either in the woods or fields, needn't care about totem animals. There are always witnesses around somewhere. Each and everyone have a chance there. However, closed in, in a room - surrounded by rectangles – what kind of harmony would be likely to possibly show?”

Arundle inquired her Magic Bow on that, who discussed the matter with the Magic Stone. Neither Pooty, nor Billy-Joe or the Hares had an idea for the right thing to do. Had they been the three holy kings from the Far East, coming for to anoint her queen, but they weren't either.

All that ado for a new born child, the parents didn't even have a name for – in fact they were in doubt whether the one they had chosen – fitted or whther a better and more suitable one could be found.

So it was Arundle who donated the little creature a proper name, who she called all by herself ‘Sulamith’ meanwhile. She had her Magic Bow etch that name in the shaft of a golden arrow, the Magic Stone then covered all up in a pink cloud that lowered smoothly down to earth and came to a halt right above the cradle. There, the cloud unfolded, and had the arrow with the etching appear, thus the parents, when witnessing, believed in some kind of revelation.

Thus, the question of naming was settled at last. Both parents wholeheartedly agreed. Some drops of fresh water confirmed the covenant. That was a nice gesture of the rectangle minded beings, Susamee agreed with. Things weren't too far astray from the totem animal, she had in mind.

35. The Paternoster Accident

‘Four to six months’ it was said. Sulamith was born for a good while and there was no end of the construction work in sight. The bits and pieces took much time. And thus the teaching started only hesitatively surrounded by construction work in process all over the place.

Whole floors were locked, the Pater-noster rushed through without stop, or even slowed down, while the cabin door remained locked.

As the Teachers’ Board had decided on high hurdles on entry for candidate from outside, there was no hurry now, anymore. Had it not been for the nuisance, they would have managed very well with the available space and facilities for the time being.

Would those empty floors and corridors really be nicer, if they had been ready? Nobody could tell – as long as they remained empty.

More than twenty floors, some kind of strange, though, had to be furnished. None was alike another, because the natural shapes had been used, and channels - the water had been digging over many centuries - had been taken into account. – “As far as possible” – it said from the architects, who were very proud of the ecological concept. With twenty individual floors you had to be aware of the unforeseen.

Had it been too much of the unforeseen? Was it a miscalculation? The unexpected occurred, everybody had been afraid of, and kind of worst case as well. It happened like this:

The dwarves couldn’t stay away from the Pater-noster shafts for once. They improved their work continuously, be it for the speed or the air circulation, or the like. Things, they felt very important, anyway.

As they were used to a life in the underground, they knew better than someone who was just passing through for half an hour or so, going up and down, the more so as

the cabins were closed and had their own oxygen supply which always started working as soon as the air outside became intolerable.

The unexpected happened – while accidents occur when least expected. The dwarves might have drilled a little too deep or grinded and polished too forceful, or they had miscalculated the thickness of the wall. And that, deep down under, some 500 yards below surface.

Water came in. First in drops, than as a small rivulet than finally flooding the whole lower part of the shafts.

The whole fine work was ruined. In hurry divers dived down from the surface and the Nautilus was set in march. The leakage was thus found at once, and a provisional stuffing by means of a leakage sail could be managed, that was sucked in by the pressure difference in- and outside. The immediate threat was thus banned.

“Imagine, there had been people under way from one side to the other” Marsha mused when the message came in.

Right in the centre point where the water stood highest and any rescue seemed impossible, low hammering was heard from inside out of a cabin, as was heard by the divers.

“Knocking says, they’re still alive” was the obvious conclusion. But for how long?

Immediate action was required. Unfortunately, Dorothea and Scholasticus were on shopping tour in Sydney with little Sulamith, so everything was up to poor Marsha again, who didn’t have the nerve for that.

In her distress she called for Arundle and for Pooty, the keeper of the Magic Stone. They could perhaps do wonders again.

The Magic Bow negotiated intensely with the Magic Stone, but didn’t come to a positive result. Arundle didn’t understand nor accept such conclusion. She remembered many similar situations where people were saved by magic. There had been much worse circumstances, she brought to her bow’s attention.

“This is different here and now” the Magic Bow let her know. “we would be asked to offend one of the major

laws of metaphysics, which says that devil's work cannot be supported, and would be regarded as a demonstration of power, as seemed the case now and here.”

Arundle didn't listen any more. She was upset. There was someone in danger of life and they didn't want to help.

“What kind of demonstration shall that be, after all. All we want is helping...”

“Well, that is the mistake. You want to interfere, and stop the wheel of fate by indecent means. We cannot serve such a matter. That's out of our range.

“Well, over there in Atlantis the other day you did also help us to get away as soon as things went from worse to worst.”

The two magicians started chatting again, in their specific inaudible way. Then the bow raised his voice and let them know: “What we did in Atlantis we will have to stand for, no matter how hard the punishment will be, but now and here things are entirely different. You've got to help yourself.”

That was it then. Arundle knew by experience that it didn't make sense to push any further or fight with harder weapons, while the hardest matter remained the stone, and this was his nature.

The dwarves seemed to have foreseen such outcome and had started to work themselves down from cabin to cabin. To do so, they had the divers to connect them with soft elastic tubes, and had them fixed to the cabin doors by suction and pressure. Then the dwarves cut holes, and had air blown inside out, thus getting to the crucial site, where the locked-in already showed symptoms of suffocation, because the interior supply of oxygen had been used up all too soon. They were sitting there for almost two hours.

Three witty teenage-dwarves had taken access to a cabin, by stealing the general key to the shafts and the system in the engineer's booth, when the work-force had left for lunch. The teenagers then started the system, that had been stopped for urgent repair-work in the shaft.

“Those guys could get the system started undetected only, because the workers were gone for lunch” the shocked engineer in charge pointed out all over again.

When the system was in operation, it happened. A supporting crossbeam crashed and went downwards almost unhindered some two, three hundred yards, like a ram and cut a hole into the wall, being rather thin at that point, thus giving way to the water pressure. That was the preliminary explanation, how the accident had happened.

When the teenage-dwarves were saved, everybody was relieved. It was great luck that South-Michel had been near, because the youngsters behaved like wild cats and didn't accept any treatment but tried to escape, while they didn't even know where they were.

They had been taken to the medical surgery on board of the Nautilus, that was still on stand-by at the site of the accident, waiting for new orders, while the initial job was done.

The youngsters seemed to respect South-Michel, the more as so he kept swaying and didn't touch the ground, because he wanted to be present only virtually in the Nautilus.

The three Isnogoods had to endure for some more hours, while they strictly denied nutrition. The tea that had been served, they poured on the floor or on the walls, with all signs of disgust.

Thus, the crew was happy to get rid of the goblins finally, when they were picked up by a dwarf-police-force neatly dressed up in cute red uniforms, as soon as the boat moored at the home dock.

When Arundle learned of the circumstances of the rescue mission, she finally realized why her Magic Bow didn't want to help. Couldn't the two mystery-mongers have said a word? Obviously they had had an idea whom they would find in the cabin. Therefore they stuck to the second or first most important universal law of white magic, that says – “Never lend your power to the services of evil.”

A law, rather high-brow, Arundle wondered, and less clear than the wording suggested. As usual, it was a matter of interpretation, and in this case the question was, whether three misguided youngsters could be pushed over the line of good and evil.

Doing so, might be kind of backfiring. Who were they to make such commitments? On the other hand, a lot of damage had been done, and much more could have happened, even more so as the evil had pulled the strings. Yes, it would be strange, if Malicious Marduk would leave them alone. He surely was looking for his chance and would take it. Chaos was his profession and terror his glee.

It might be a good idea to have those goblins vaccinated as well. There was still enough serum left over and on stock even in the Nautilus.

However, it was too late now. The three rascals had been taken away and had disappeared in the depth of the earth, where only dwarves and goblins find their way, and even those only with map and compass.

Before the shafts could be emptied from the water, the leakage had to be repaired. Otherwise the provisional leakage-sail would have been broken, because of the high pressure from outside. That was immediately clear to the experts.

That was why the repair work turned out to be tricky and time-consuming. The workers had to fix things first in stiff diving gear from outside. They built a waterproof cabin and fixed it to the wall of the shaft. After that the bricklayers could enter with their facilities through the sluice to repair the breach.

After that, the water could be removed, which was also a difficult task, because it had not only to be moved over long distance, but also against the force of gravity.

South-Michel apologized a thousand times for the three naughty goblins. He insisted on that way of putting things, and explained such as follows:

“A dwarf’s life lasts usually twice as long as a human life. That’s the reason why dwarves develop slower. Before they are really grown up, it takes some thirty years. The phase between twenty and thirty is therefore called the goblin- or Troll-phase. Each dwarf was a goblin in his youth. Even I was, while it’s a very long time ago.

Goblins have all kind of nonsense in mind. They love pranks and don’t stick to rules. They break all orders and fight even each other, if nobody else is in range.

All dwarves know that. That’s why we take precautions.

The youngsters are separated from society and live in lonesome shafts, where they cannot get out. Be it, that something happens and then they manage a flight, like in the case, we are just investigating.”

Now the humans knew the facts – ‘lucky we didn’t vaccinate the youngsters. The dwarves surely wouldn’t have liked that, first of all South-Michel’ Arundle mused.

Since that box fight with the Advisor and the broken nose, it looked as if he had returned to his goblin-phase, while this was surely exaggerating things hopelessly.

Arundle decided anyway to report about the construction work with Dorothea and Scholasticus. In a way it was of course advantageous, on the other hand they became quite dependent and vulnerable.

Who decided on the Pater-noster in the first place, anyway?

“That’s a good question” Scholasticus agreed, when the little family had safely returned from their shopping excursion to the mainland.

Dorothea couldn’t remember. “It’s almost a year ago, and so much has happened meanwhile...”

“Was this not South-Michel’s idea, originally? Fact was, he was heart and soul for the project, right from the start...” Adrian now put in, who had come with Marsha for a cup of coffee, just as Arundle and Billy-Joe, accompanied by Pooty of course.

It was one of those beautiful summer days. The sun was laughing down from the cloudless sky, and therefore the guests preferred cold drinks to coffee.

The Pater-noster wasn't yet in operation again and thus, the two newly inscribed students on the 'Island University' had come over by boat, you could see it moored at the landing-stage, because the Slyboots house - they still resided on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth - had access to the waterfront. How could it be otherwise on such a small island. – Well, the houses opposite were blocked by the harsh crown of the outer rim, while the exit of the Pater-noster was close to the other side.

Everything was near here, anyway. While the diameter of the round-shaped Isle of Wisdom-tooth was only little bigger than the twin – just about three quarters of a mile.

The deeper you went, the wider the shafts became, as soon as you had left the upper region, where wind and water had done their job, washing away the soft material. Thus, the upper neck had become thin and vulnerable in parts.

Those craters were filled with soft material and seemed to end on the base of the socle, while nobody knew whether this was so, or whether the shafts went further down to the soft boiling kernel of Mother Earth.

However the inhabitants hoped for a more shallow ending in the concrete of the mainland that was putting its umbrella far out into the deep sea, resting on millions of similar pillars as the two, just being mentioned.

No geysers or smoking outlets were found nearby however, and thus, the geologists were optimistic that the area would remain stable and calm, as had been for the last ten thousand years, at least.

Any openings most likely had been closed by a tectonic move in ancient times, and were now further out in the South sea area northeast of New Zealand.

On such assumptions the whole concept relied. Otherwise life would have been too much of a risk over here. Nobody would have dared to build some twenty floors down into such a crater, where over one hundred children and teenagers lived, while a second project of

the same kind was now erected in the adjacent twin, encouraged by former success.

The Isle of Wisdom-tooth was regarded as relatively safe in an area of tectonic instability. The danger of becoming rolled over by a gigantic monster-wave was much higher, than any volcanic activity in close vicinity.

While this was also against any realistic experience, and nobody had really to worry about, because the upright rims on both islands were in part almost one hundred yards high above average sea-level, and only the small landing stage and the lagoon were really endangered. Therefore, you could certainly do with such risk.

Thus were the facts. The deeper you went down under sea-level the wider the socles became, and wholly met on the final ground of the shelf.

And right here, where the socles met, the geologist spotted the crucial point, whom Scholasticus had employed for investigation purpose of the cause of the accident, where the water must have come in. However, this area could under no circumstances suit with the explanation given as to how the accident had happened. While right here, the tunnel of the Pater-noster had to go horizontal, as it was the turning point of the system, where the deepest point was reached.

How could any pole or ram hit right here? That was absolutely impossible if that thing had crashed down inside the shaft. Something else must have done the damage, in order to have the water break in at that spot. Something from outside, to be precise.

36. Dwarves at Work

Now, after the accident the humans asked themselves how the dwarves worked. Dorothea, as the responsible person in charge of the whole project put a formal request forward to find out, with the architect's office in Sydney.

The result didn't surprise. For such a tunnelling project of that size, you needed at least a planning period of some two years, depending on the expertises about the conditions and substance of the ground. Only if things turned out advantageous, you had to figure at least two further years for construction. The cross-tunnelling would certainly be the major challenge. The insertion of a suitable drilling device would be a complex task, and you had to reckon with unforeseen circumstances.

Together with this advice, Dorothea received a schematic draft of the project and the form, the tunnels would take, that is, the Pater-noster-double-tunnel, as a matter of fact, because the cabins had to run back as well, like in any such systems - like ski-lifts or other alpine cableways.

Because of the widening of the socles in the depth you had to plan the tunnelling not in the V-shape, but in the U-shape. While the 'U' would combine roughly two 500 yards vertical legs and another some 500 yards of a horizontal leg. While only one hundred yards led through populated areas - half on each side. All the rest was blind-folded - so to speak.

This was what the draft showed. Who ever managed such a construction, was a master of his art, and would be years and years ahead of his time, it said in the final conclusion. It would be advisable to have the horizontal leg completely covered with steel-tubes, in order to avoid the risk of damage, as the pressure was very high so deep under water. However, details had to be reckoned at the site by experts. A very careful check would be advisable in any case, before setting the existing system in operation again.

"That's what we are doing right now" South-Michel let the established task force on this purpose know, that had been formed by miscellaneous individuals from both islands. When the plans and advice from the Australian architects were discussed and evaluated.

"However, instead of steel we are working with hardened gold, which is doing well, and we do not lack

of it, just the opposite, we would have trouble with the making of steel.”

Dorothea had the costs in mind, such material would demand, but then she recalled that the whole project was done for free, and thus, she kept her mouth shut.

Meanwhile, the students on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth went on travelling with the common lift, still in use, or went on foot all the way up or down, depending which floor they were on.

On the other side however, the Pater-noster was badly needed because it was the only means of vertical transport available, while climbing or descending on foot was of course still an option.

Thus, the plans of reconstruction should be realized as soon as possible. And would be done as South-Michel assured, but wouldn't find out about the initial cause of the accident, while it seemed clear by now that the three youngsters weren't responsible, at last, while considerable damaged had been caused by them anyway.

The dwarves were relieved and went to work highly motivated and courageous as soon as it became clear that they didn't do anything wrong.

They were however as eager as the humans to find out about the cause, so the Nautilus was ordered once more, as this was the only means they could think of, neglecting the nixes and naiads, for what reason ever.

The leakage had been closed and the preliminary coverage was removed. The site could now be examined carefully. If there had been an outer cause, they might still find traces.

Thus, it was done. South-Michel took part in the excursion in his own way. The divers disembarked and collected at first what was left over by the workers, as well as rests of the leakage-sail. Then started looking for traces of any kind, and soon found something interesting. Under the sail the ground had been conserved, thus the divers noticed at once leftovers of a phosphor-bomb, that must have exploded right there.

The cause of the leakage was found. And the dwarves were thus out of the woods, so to speak, and the goblins weren't responsible for the flooding of the shafts. While their prank still was a weird one and inexcusable. They still had pinched the keys, and had operated the system illegally.

When South-Michel learnt of the phosphor-bomb and saw with his own eyes the traces of the explosion – by looking through the panorama-panes of the Nautilus, he became thoughtful at once.

He should no longer keep on ignoring the negative tendencies some of his disciples of the ocean were taking, who adored him on the one hand, while kept on doing as they pleased on the other. Little could be done, from his side. Their devotion meant not very much.

Was there a guerrilla building up in the underground, unnoticed? Those sea-sprites were no goblins, who enjoyed pranks of all kind but were miles away from murderous assaults of such sort.

He had noticed what was going on since democracy and vegetarianism was on the march amongst the semi-nomads of the depth, and had learnt as well of the vaccinations that had been going on in favour of the new course. He hadn't been fond of such measures. On the other hand, he saw the good coming from the new course and highly appreciated the progress on all levels.

What were his options? South-Michel was somewhat at a loss. From his exulted position little could be done. Somehow he had to get closer to his disciples, the more so to the wild ones – now being pushed aside or even banned. How could that be achieved?

South-Michel wondered to and fro, and back and forth until he had – what he meant to be - a brilliant idea. He recalled, how the drylanders had become upgraded, when he presented himself in their company behind that panorama-pane. What would it mean if he fully charged his possibilities as Emissary, as he never yet did? He didn't yet see the need of doing so.

While now things were on the verge. Serious consequences were threatening, he was short of good advice. While there were still two angels at his side – that

is the side of the Emissary's, he could set in action as he pleased, thus it said clearly in the creational master-plan.

In order to be very sure, he reconfirmed, whether he could determine those two angels by himself or if he had to take them from the general angel pool.

"There are no limitations" the heavenly advice said. "Do what you think is right, dear son" the answer read, somewhat stealthy, South-Michel noticed, but thus was the old man after all.

(He felt more like the buffoon than the 'dear son', when thinking back what fate had held in the backhand for him.)

After all, he got green light. Thus, he made Adrian to his arch-angel with the flaming sword and called him Heskiel and Corinia Hare he made his angel Bionike with the green peace-whisk.

As he knew how to convince people on something, they liked doing anyway, he emerged for them in a dream, in the most holy and most convincing appearance, they couldn't resist – he knew by experience – and that was a speaking cloud. That always did it, and came about authentic. Because the holy flames got at the called and enlightened them the proper way, which was of course his in that case.

In fact he didn't want them to do anything spectacular. They should only keep their eyes open, and find out how the splitting was going on, and what could be done to glue things together again, without having the one or other side losing their face. While the supporters in the old dominion for the little Robin Hoods of Australis was growing considerably. Among the traditionalists in old Melisandria on the other side of the world those Australisan rascals were styled as the last upright manikins.

The question no longer was, who would guide the proper course. However, as clear as it seemed in the first euphoria of victory after the revolution, things weren't any more. For the vegetarians and democrats the matters

of the state surely weren't as clear and decided as they used to be.

Prime Minister Boetie had a hard job meanwhile and required any support she could get, and highly appreciated Corinia Hare's additional support as a heavenly ambassador, causing wonders and was hopefully turning the rudder to the better again.

The role of the archangel with the flaming sword, as had been chosen for Adrian, wasn't quite as clear. For him there was nothing to be done yet. Or was he expected to knock his flaming sword in a destructive manner, thus destroying tunnels, that were disturbing the proper course of the world?

South-Michel overdid. No more better fitting examples came to his mind, in fact, and no more unfitting ones for the archangel with the flaming sword. What else was such a creature supposed to do but demolish and knock down what came along his way?

Should he reconsider the use of such angels again, before letting them free?

Had that foolish archangel with that silly sword caused the accident unnoticed after all? Had that sullen being been busy in advancing obedience, following the guidelines of the new power, the heavenly father had known beforehand - almighty and omniscient as he was?

Were those traces of a phosphor-bomb explosion in fact the notches of the flaming Arch-Anglican sword?

Such opportunity of revenge the Advisor would not let pass unused. South-Michel did feel a strange itch, though. No matter how unlikely it appeared. Thus he cancelled the two angels right away, to be on the save side in future.

Corinia and Adrian would know anyway what should be done, and would do everything they could in favour of the mer-folk. They might have to be slowed down here and there a little, but all in all they had done a good job so far as ordinary saints.

And democracy wouldn't harm meat-eaters either, if they didn't want to give up their bloody toil all together. They might even become aware of the absolute value of life as such.

Besides, he had an idea of how to undermine the awful rites of sacrifice. He had to invent a language of signs, that could be understood by the silliest of the meat-eaters.

While up to now things went totally wrong, because the more he rejected the cruel sacrifices, the more they slaughtered. He kept on yelling “stop it, stop it” and they pretended to understand “stab it, stab it”.

As soon as he got a chance, he would send them the Advisor. Who would teach them the hard way, what it meant to misinterpret voluntarily what was said by a divine force.

He would bid the Advisor therefore to come down. Perhaps with glowing tongues, South-Michel imagined. Then his naughty followers wouldn't get away with their foul rubbish any more, and would notice how self-destructive, silly and cruel they in fact acted.

Because of all such eventualities South-Michel soon couldn't help it anymore. What, if they started eating one another, came it to his mind. That would be even more horrible than everything up to now.

Then he had an idea of how to kill two birds with one stone, so to speak. He would ask the two parties to execute a sacrifice tournament. Both parties should erect stone altars, and pile their food, and burn it symbolically, as things like that normally don't work under water. He could demonstrate his likes and dislikes that way.

Thus, he visited the priest of the meat-eaters in a dream, and ordered him to do accordingly, which he then promised by all means.

While Cory had a word with Boetie on the other side, who South-Michel made aware of his intended measures. Thus, she could pass that on to the Prime Minister. So it was done this time again.

Prime Minister Boetie also doubted that you could light a fire under water, however, she trusted in Cory, who said –“let me just do it”. Her only prerequisite was that the whole procedure had to be celebrated in the light of the full moon. - Both sides agreed on such conditions, without further argument.

The altars were built, and the goods were piled on them as soon as the full moon rose – things were done in shallow water, as was agreed in, because the moon had to be seen. The false priests were still busy with their bloody task, when flames arose from the pile of seaweed on the Vegetarians' altar, and burnt up in no time.

The false priests were perplexed, and the naked horror was in their faces, while they did what they could, and kept dancing around their sacrifice, even carried by glowing debris from the depth - a clever fellow brought. But in vain, the meat didn't burn. The lava became soon black stone and the flames died even sooner. The bloody pieces remained as bloody as they were. A light and clear fire, as that on the Vegetarians' altar wouldn't appear.

Now the meat-eaters' priests couldn't escape any more. Adrian, although suspended of his Arch-Angelical mission emerged with the flaming sword, and hewed about left and right. And it was great luck that he didn't have his glasses on, thus his strokes went astray.

Still the false priests fled and were very much ashamed, that they had cheated the people for so long a time. They had in fact known ever since how false their way of sacrificing was. And not only their way of sacrificing, but their whole way of life.

South-Michel was highly satisfied with Cory's trick, she had read somewhere. In ancient times one of the prophets did likewise, and no matter whether it was said how he succeeded, Cory could add two and two. Besides, she was an eager pupil, not only interested in deep sea biology but as well in chemistry, that was closely related to biology.

And while everybody was talking about the phosphor-bomb, she remembered. Phosphor ignites with oxygen in the water if fed with burnable matter. Phosphor looks like stone, thus it had been easy to pack some of such stones water-proof, and bring it down here. She then had to unpack and mingle with the seaweed on the altar and the flames went up right away.

South-Michel overlooked the ceremony from his heavenly stand-point below the feet of his disciples, and

highly appreciated the sacrifice of the Vegetarians, while denying that of the meat-eaters and their false priests, unmistakably.

Nobody could turn around his appreciation, and have it the opposite. Over were the rumours, the Vegetarians would follow the wrong Emissary, because he once showed from above.

South-Michel's South-Michel

From above or below

Will never be shoven to and fro

The followers of vegetarianism and democracy chanted, somewhat queer and without much sense, and made Cory their High Priestess.

This kind of service she liked better than the angelical job, South-Michel had intended for her, but luckily rejected soon enough.

(‘Who on earth would ever believe that someone like this - not only did commit that he made a mistake, but have it corrected right away’ – the Advisor commented on such alterations down there, as soon as he learnt of what was going on.)

37. The Bombing Raider

Soon it became clear that the ‘semi-nomads’ as South-Michel neutrally addressed them, weren’t capable of such assault. While proving their incapability in that sacrifice competition, where they failed. Had they known about the pyromaniac effects of that material, they’d surely have employed it for their bloody sacrifice.

“They might have laid the bomb without knowing, how it worked” Cory wondered, and Adrian agreed: “Could well be” – then he went on: “I’d reckon, they are well able to do so. Someone who slays whole villages, doesn’t mind blowing up a tunnel, as long as he can do harm...”

“I don’t know. Perhaps they are appeased to a certain extend after South-Michel denied their way of living clearly” Cory answered.

“Well, that’s now, but what was it like before?”

“Anyway, seems very unlikely, though” Cory objected.

“Who’s then the assassin?” - Both didn’t know the answer.

They were waiting for the Prime Minister, who was in a meeting. Much time wasn’t left, because the moon had clearly started reduction. They’d better be going right away, anyway. However, they relied on the Nautilus somewhere near this time. The submarine would certainly pick them up, and would save them half a day, they could spend now.

Corinia was in her element down here, she noticed time and again. In favour of her sister and Arundle she had taken up general Archaeological studies in Sydney, where the three stayed together because of her. While her very subject was deep sea Archaeology that was taught here. Unfortunately the whole institute was on excursion for this term somewhere in the South Sea.

Things were all different now, because of the new ‘Island University’, as the newly built place would be called, if no other name could be found. Hadn’t it been too misleading, they might have chosen the name ‘Roland-Waldschmitt-University’, while ‘Anonymous-University’ was probably too impersonal or also misleading.

The new institution would have an own deep-sea section, that was quite clear. They even had a very suitable vehicle for that in form of the Nautilus. Thus Cory was very optimistic and so was Adrian Humperdijk, who reckoned to promote one way or the other.

Finally the Prime Minister was available. Adrian formally reported of the sacred performance, and Prime Minister Boetie was very pleased about the outcome. She gave Cory a thankful wink and thanked them very officially for their efforts.

By means of such heavenly feed back she got further ahead with her programme a good deal. The news

spread about in all Australis soon, although, there was no TV, and people had to rely on audio waves, which were also very effective. Thus you could speak of some kind of radio in a way. A system without receivers. The waves had to be emitted with considerable strength and on the proper frequency.

As soon as they had finished their report, the two Convertors hurried to get away. The Nautilus was near by and soon came in sight. So they headed for it and signalled permission to come on board. Clear signals, as they thought.

The crew enjoyed the company outside and waved back friendly. They took it as entertainment because they were young and inexperienced, and didn't know Adrian and Cory. Or they couldn't recognize them through the thick pane. While they didn't take any necessary action to get them on board.

The more and heftier the two returnees waved from outside the friendlier the watchmen answered. They laughed and clapped their hands of joy, when the two started gasping for oxygen. They realized for the first time, how South-Michel must have felt for being so badly misunderstood by his disciples.

A stone from the ground smashed at the pane and ended the farce. The watchmen realized at last, that they had to do with a matter of non-routine, and notified the Skipper, who took immediate action, and saved the swimmers, who were re-converting meanwhile – in the very last moment from suffocation.

The Nautilus was searching for the bombing raiders, thus it said in their official order that was supported by South-Michel, who also wanted to find out the truth about the assault. The truth might help those banned semi-nomads to find a way back to their former community, thus, was one of his options, as he also knew what sort of rascals they in fact were, and that a bombing assault wouldn't be the worst deed on their record.

But were they really capable of such a tricky deed? Were they able to do the planning? Had they the means to start ignition? As cruel as they were, as dumb they were. There must have been a brighter brain involved, one way or the other.

If it was no-one from down there, he must have come from above. No other option was likely. Without technical support and proper devices no-one would dive some 600 yards, without risking injury, and have a bomb placed and ignited, precisely at a certain point, to cause such severe damage, as was done by the assault.

They were dealing with a carefully planned and executed attack, prepared in the long run, with precise knowledge of the whereabouts and location. This was no incidental matter, surely not.

Not even Dorothea knew what exactly was going on down there, who was in charge, and was best informed anyway. So how could someone else know more than the best informed insider?

The Pater-noster site had been wholly out of range of the Australian builders. Only the dwarves were familiar with what was going on, and even that was doubtful, because they didn't do much planning and coordinating and each just did, what he or she did, while the outcome was really remarkable.

Had they a mole in their ranks? A dwarf on the payroll of the wicked? A spy right here, where for centuries no-one broke in or even noticed that there was life at all?

Executing such an assault would hardly be a matter of the little ones. They stayed away from water by nature and would never cover up with a diving suit. Besides, such suit wouldn't fit anyway. Dwarves were short-legged and stunt.

They loved the soil and didn't mind thick layers above their heads, while others might suffer from claustrophobia. But with water it was something else. Water, you couldn't push aside and form or dry.

Knowing that there was only a thin layer of concrete matter left, made them uneasy. They seemed to smell water over distances and through thick walls, and cared for safety ranges. Thus, it was very unlikely that

they accidentally cut through the wall, while working on the tunnel.

The Pater-noster system had been operating alright before, and was shut off only for further advancements in the tunnel. Of course, those in charge wondered now, why the act of sabotage occurred coincidentally with the youngsters' prank, when the labourers took their lunch break.

Once more, very intimate knowledge of the whereabouts of every detail, must have been available on the assassin's side. While the three young goblins were the unlucky ones being at the wrong time at the wrong site, and without doubt had nothing to do with the explosion. They were surely no trained suicidal assassins. In fact, they had hindered the worst when giving alarm. Otherwise the leakage wouldn't have been noticed at such an early stage, and might have cause much worse damage all day long.

No matter, where the experts were stationed, either in the Nautilus, or safely at home, or in one of the study groups, no-one came about with a convincing idea of how the assault could have been planned and executed.

Therefore, everybody now reckoned with the enforcement of the inner protective casing, to have the Pater-noster system made as proof as possible against assaults of any kind. Everybody knew of course that this was not possible at a hundred percent. Such a system would always remain vulnerable, and would offer the rapacious wolf, luring somewhere in the hide, always an unprotected flank, so to speak.

Should they make up their minds and give up the whole project as such? And travel by boat again back and forth as was done in former times?

But what would the dwarves say, who had put in so much effort and know-how in the project? What would South-Michel say? Could they remain friends, and even advance friendship and understanding, when doing so?

Did they really want to risk all that? Surely not. However, they had to talk. They had to talk first of all

with South-Michel and find out whether he was going to lose his heart on something probably not worth it.

The dangerous murderer and former assistant of Professor Henry Baranasias of the McGill University in Toronto, Canada had been deprived of his civil rights. - Catalanius, as was his name, was kept under special warranty in the state prison of Adelaide, where he succeeded in the most spectacular flight ever since.

Of course, there was black magic involved. Things like that never happened without support of the evil forces who owed the tendency to draw their disciples deeper and deeper into the hellish abyss, thus, no way led back to decency and civilised behaviour with every ruthless deed. So it was here as well.

With the help of Malicious Marduk, Catalanius started a riot of the convicts and set the death-row in flames – some hundred convicts and wards died in the fire, as a consequence. Whether Catalanius was amongst the dead could not be verified, while the corpses lay cramped in clusters before the locked exits, which had in vain been tried to open.

However, Catalanius was not among the dead. When in the prison the phosphor-bombs exploded, he was already gone and threw the corpse of the laundry-truck-driver into the deepest abyss, where it would never be found.

His flight was well planned. Some miles behind the prison a helicopter was waiting at a lonesome site of a former factory that picked the escapee up and fled with unknown destination.

Some days of rest Malicious Marduk granted to his disciple in a previously arranged hide, to get used to the freedom again, and to feel the old strength again, he had missed for such a long time. Strength that wasn't his own, as he still not quite understood, but was let by Malicious Marduk, who was going to use him again as a willing horse.

The search by the police for eventually fled convicts was more or less a matter of formal plight, while nobody knew whether there had been survivors of the flames. Thus the investigation was soon given up. - The missing laundry-truck and driver was handle as a separate case.

As soon as Catalanius felt fit, he went to the southwest coast. There was an old former military camp, where recruits had been trained for the war in Europe. Here, Catalanius experimented with all kinds of rocket-ramps, and Scud-rockets, which turned out to be not precise enough for his purpose. In order to realize the perfidy Malicious Marduk had in mind, precise smart bombing was required a hundred percent. Besides, the range was of major importance as well.

The shooting and bombing towards the Southern Polar Sea didn't bring the wanted results for a long time. Then however, he made it. The rockets crashed right at the aimed spot.

Next, he had to find out about the exact depth of the target, where the bomb was destined to explode. Then the plan would be perfect.

How perfect it was, you could see by the effect. The Pater-noster tunnel between the islands of the so much hated competitors broke, and no-one was able to find the proper cause. Thus, this was an assault, Malicious Marduk was fond of.

The Nautilus returned home from its unsuccessful mission. At last, two Conversiors had been rescued. Some good the voyage did have at last.

Cory's trick with the phosphor, she was reporting, raised the mood a little. By means of that trick the newly appointed High Priestess of the mer-folk managed a real coup.

South-Michel's position was settled, the desperados remained in the shade, if not altering attitude, and return back to decent manners. It was certain now, that they had

nothing to do with phosphor, because if they had, they would have used it for burning their sacrifice.

Dorothea at last found out about the right track, at least one of the more promising traces, they had been following up to now. When reading the newspapers, she came about three articles that were raising her curiosity.

One was about a riot in prison and a conflagration in the state prison of Adelaide. Another was about strange explosions of unknown cause in the Southern Polar Sea shortly below Tasmania and a third one about the theft of some modern missiles from the atomic secret depot of the Australian Military Forces.

On request, Shamaness Susamee confirmed the explosions in the Polar Sea. Tibor came with the news up in hurry, as such explosions had been not far from Susamee's Island, as a matter of fact.

Finally Arundle was supported with her general suspicion once again. None of her friends seriously doubted that Malicious Marduk had been pulling the strings again once more, and was responsible for the Pater-noster accident.

The Australian Forces also had come to similar conclusions (while different suspicion, though) because you could see some speedboats cruising about rather close to the site of the explosions. While the one blow towards the Isle of Wisdom-tooth seemed unnoticed by them luckily, as otherwise the secret School would have been detected, and the veil of secrecy would have been lifted for good.

When the extent of the catastrophe was finally realized, the shock went deep. Malicious Marduk developed incredible power and betook as it seemed to unlimited possibilities to commit his terror.

Was such concentration of the evil might allowed at present, or did this offend the interstellar directive of proportion? - as Arundle lately had learnt of - without in fact remembering however the exact details. It made a newly arranged visit to the Advisor unavoidable and peremptory.

Thus, it was done. Billy-Joe and Dorothea for this time - headed for the virtual centre of all universes and

galaxies, together with Arundle, where they met the Advisor without any circumstances, which was more or less uncommon with him.

Arundle brought forward their claim and Dorothea was able to enrich the tale with brutal facts, she had collected. She made very clear that it was absolutely impossible for human beings to enter an atomic depot of the Australian army in order to steal missiles and rockets and stuff the like. And so was the conflagration as well as the flight of the murderer Catalanius from state prison of Adelaide, without magic means – “that is black magic means, to be sure what we are talking about” she added, with a meaningful gaze at the little appearance she wasn’t yet used to as much as Arundle or Billy-Joe were.

Arundle had even seen him in a nightmare, when escaping from the death-row in flames.

Not to mention the training exercises and the assault on the tunnel. Their very simple question now was, whether Malicious Marduk was entitled to do all that in the present. “Can his power over human beings here and now be absolute?” Arundle summed up their quest.

The visitors saw the Advisor winding in trouble. But they didn’t give way. At last he resumed in a lengthier monologue about the self-contradiction of the evil, which didn’t really help.

He even referred to one of Germany’s greatest poets, who saw in the devil some kind of servant of the Almighty by having him say:

‘Ich bin ein Teil von jener Kraft,
Die stets das Böse will und stets das Gute schafft.’^{vi}

It might well be that the one or the other of their projects wasn’t yet ripe for the time being, the Advisor added after a thoughtful break, while Arundle could see how his Tinnitus was getting at him again, which raised bad feelings against South-Michel and his disciples the mining dwarves.

“Cui bono” – he sweetly screeched while fading and had them stay back without advice, and without

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giving them a further gaze. He wanted to let them know by such exalted behaviour that they had overlooked something very important, they should think over first.

Perhaps her former Mentor, Professor Grisella, Lady of Griselgreif to Greifenklau-Slyboots might know better. Arundle would ask her, what it was about that mysterious ‘Cui bono’, and the whole context, that it was in. Perhaps, Grisella could make use of such mystery and saw sense, where they waded somewhat blindfold in obscure mist.

38. Claustrophobia

The Professor knew a lot about such matters. She became alert and almost busted of the huge quantity of knowledge, she had gathered.

“Cui bono - this is, what the Advisor told you?” she asked somewhat rhetoric, when Arundle reported what had happened. The reference to Goethe she just about managed all right, but that she didn’t need, as Grisella knew everything at once.

In fact this was the basic theme of the whole drama, that went on in the second part and turned out to be true, she confirmed.

Arundle once more noticed how far she was away from real knowledge. She was still a beginner. There was so much to be studied. So little she knew, and so much there was to be known. While you were lost in this world without knowledge. Perhaps it was that, the Advisor had wanted to let them know. However, Dorothea saw things somewhat different. She didn’t understand the Advisor that way.

“I understood that we should stay away from that tunnel-project. We also should be careful with those dwarves, and have us not involved into affairs we do not oversee or agree with wholeheartedly.”

“There is somebody who learnt how to listen to the substance” Arundle thought and admired Dorothea for that. Because such clear message hadn’t reached her senses. Perhaps she had again only listened with minor attention. As she often did. She couldn’t listen to the Advisor properly. And perhaps he then realized such, and this was why he retreated the way he most often did, and she felt left alone with the most challenging questions. While he in fact answered and she just didn’t notice.

She would have a word with Billy-Joe on that. For now she had to pass on the message at ease.

Adrian Humperdijk felt closely related to South-Michel, and so did Corinia Hare, for they had been chosen to be his angels. Such affection was not spoiled by the fact that the angles’ option had been given up, the more so as Cory had become South-Michel’s High Priestess of the mer-folk.

The worries about the Pater-noster troubled Dorothea, while the golden tunnel was ready for use by now. The dwarves were very proud of their achievement and would have been deadly offended if Dorothea had cut off the whole matter. This was definitely no option any more.

The teachers and the students were looking forward to the comfort of this means of transport. Some had done the trip back and forth up to four times daily. And they would be rather frustrated if this service was cut for what reasons ever.

Some enjoyed for the food – back home, as they put it - because they were used to it. Others came to see friends or get placed on the favourite seat in the library. While their new dormitories still felt strange enough for the former school-leavers.

By ferry they wouldn’t have intended so many visits back and forth. Provided the system was working, you could just jump on the device and got comfortably seated in soft cushions – you could relax, or dream, or

chat with the neighbour, and in less than thirty minutes you had arrived, depending on the floor, and how often the cabins had to slowed down for embarking or disembarking purposes, while somebody had to be taken with a specific cabin, instantaneously and in no other.

This was the situation. Dorothea hoped in vain that the attraction of the novelty would fade by the passing time. The longer the system was in use, the better it was liked. While now people urged her to get it started again, as soon as possible, which could be done any time, when the dwarves signalled they'd finished with the final coating in the crucial segments.

Life was normalizing over here, while the construction work came to an end. Now the emptiness was felt when no-one disturbed the peace, but had to be endured instead. The Island University was filled only by some twenty five percent. There were five branches and you could notice the process of organisation, in the initial stages everywhere. There were no libraries yet ready, and you couldn't get the literature you needed.

Thus Dorothea referred to the Internet, where you could order books or copy them down, if you didn't like to read them online, or have them sold after use to the library. Which meant a steady improving flow of specific literature.

Scholasticus was occupied by the role of a new-born father, so to speak – far more than by his occupation as a President. However, he wanted to spend as much time as possible with his daughter and accompany her development. He thought to know about the singularity of this experience, because both parents weren't the youngest any more.

Dorothea was late with thirty seven for a first delivering mother. Scholasticus was no youngster either, shortly before fifty, thus they added up to over eighty on the scale of life.

In order to manage with his new tasks of caring and advancing his daughter, Scholasticus ordered a lot of more or less suitable literature, and asked for advice from

all sources you could think of. He wasn't afraid of asking inconvenient questions. So he trusted in Shamaness Susamee and relied on her the more so as she cured the unavoidable infant diseases just before they were breaking out.

Furthermore he initiated an infant nursery. Because with the extension of University Island there had been a considerable increase in personnel, many houses which were built for the staff, now was also filled with young infant life.

Together with an expert the young parents trained and performed all kinds of activities with their children, like baby-swimming, or gym exercises as well as singing, and eurhythmy.

Scholasticus was present everywhere. He movingly cared for his infant, fed and changed nappies, cared for fresh air and walks, when he had his child bound the African style on chest or back, and accompanied her first movements, whatsoever.

No wonder, Sulamith's first word was something like 'dad', and this seemed only just for the proud father, who was happier, as can be. Scholasticus adored his little princess unspeakably.

While walking around the island daily, Scholasticus noticed how small both islands were. You rounded each in less than an hour. Now he got an idea of how the relatives of the teachers and employees felt, who had not the daily workload to overcome, and had to face this narrowness every day.

The more so in the beginning where there were no tasks for them, many a one was overwhelmed by fits of claustrophobia. If you had no definite task to fulfil daily, you risked being overwhelmed by depressions.

This might be one reason, why the Pater-noster was so well liked. It was some kind of diversion – and not only that, because the trip through the tunnel conveyed an impression of far distance and greatness, and promised a kind of virgin land on the way and on the other side, which of course was an illusion. While there was always something new to be detected as long as the constructions work was in due process.

By means of the underground connection the area of the islands doubled not only but increased manifold, as the water in between turned out to be some kind of lagoon in fact, that was part of the land. An impression that was enforced by the steel barriers all around the lagoon against shark attacks, which had been installed after the horrible experiences with the killer-sharks.

Dorothea now did her best to improve this inner 'lake'. First of all she had the barriers enforced and increased in height, thus they served as breakwaters, while the sides went down now some sixty feet, and the floor was put underneath as a kind of steel net over the whole ground, preventing thus any attack from the depth.

Nothing and nobody who was thicker than a man's arm would gain access into the 'inland lake', as the construction was swiftly named.

In addition, Dorothea ordered some fifty house-boats, some she just bought second hand, others she had constructed after her special design, which were brought from the mainland when the sea was calm by towboat. Thus, the lagoon was embroidered by house-boats and received its specific character and charm.

The houseboats were very well accepted and soon Dorothea had loads of inquiries. Each family wanted to have an own houseboat, to spend the weekends there and have thus the illusion of width and luxury.

Those who thought that Dorothea's imagination would be exhausted by such achievements failed. Dorothea had more in mind, and something entirely different. What she intended was in a way tricky and implied opposing aspects.

Since she had installed that archive of the former students, she hung on a world surrounding dream, while the Isle of Wisdom-tooth formed the spiritual centre, that sent its rays into the world. And for that you did not only need brilliant ideas and stunning research but also multipliers in a worldwide web.

The archive of the former students formed the base of her ideas. And on this base the web should grow. If they managed to establish some kind of swimming

paradise right here in the lagoon, this would certainly meet her imagination – some kind of hotel, consisting of individual houseboats. Space was there enough.

The archive of the former students stored the addresses of most former students. All she had to do, was to let them know about their former home base, where they received the basics for a life outside. She had to attract them for their former spiritual centre and even remind them of their promise, or on their singularity.

There were reasons enough, to come here on the way back to the roots, and combine with holydays on a paradise island.

The clientele was limited and chosen because of the status the former students had. While they might want to bring with them their relatives, who might not share the singularity.

The Grand Assembly of both islands should decide on that. They had to decide on the whole project as such, of course, anyway.

Dorothea's plan split the community into pros and cons. The cons insisted of splendid isolation and referred to the secret status of the School of Inbetween. Nobody was able to grant for the formers, who might have changed, and even less for their relatives, who might be wholly ignorant subjects.

With horror they recalled the festivities of the opening of that archive and all these failures, that followed. Things like that the cons didn't want to experience again. And a hotel, where everybody could go in and out more or less uncontrolled, would grant for more confusion and even chaos.

The argument was so fierce that Dorothea stepped back with her proposal. Such a severe cut into the lives of all of them, she didn't want to have done by a majority vote – no matter the outcome. It would mean the end of peace and consent. Thus, the plan was postponed for the time being.

A huge safety-double sluice at the air terminal had been built, just in case. Where four people could be

screened and examined for their colour at the same time.

Dorothea didn't let arise any doubts, that the islands could only be entered by the called.

"What about their relatives?" – The relatives and acquaintances were the weak point of the hotel project. "What do we do with the relatives?"

"We can't send them home or put them under quarantine – or could we?"

"Why not?" Dorothea wondered.

For the time being she gave in. At least she did as if she gave in. Scholasticus knew her better. Dorothea was not the type for that. She only searched for another way to the target, but that she never lost out of sight. In this she was very alike her sister Grisella, who supported her in this case quite different to their argument about that Cardinal Mistake.

The 'Splendid Isolation' as the position of the opponents of the hotel project was called, had a great idol in the policy of the USA before the First World War. They were certain that isolation was the only way to protect and keep all those secrets in their range and vicinity, whether mer-folk or the little ones.

For both their discovery would have meant extinction – sooner or later. You just couldn't imagine what would happen if the international press would start up with a merciless hunt. While scientists wouldn't be any better, and might even treat them crueler, as soon as they got hold of them.

There was indeed a lot to be considered.

Dorothea encouraged the students of all ages to invite their families. She did receive loads of requests anyway, she so far had repelled up to now.

Any disqualified guests were put on the 'Three Days' Package Tour' and were shown about the islands in closed vehicles, similar to a Safari Park Tour. For this purpose a small railway had been built, on an adventurous route along the peaks and lows of the rocky rims.

On the second day they were invited to the Archive of the Former Students, as well as to a Pater-noster trip

back and forth. The special highlight on the third day was then a one day trip to Susamee's Island with the Nautilus, where the tourists stayed overnight anyway.

As to Dorothea such family visits didn't need extra permission, as they were covered by the existing rules, which were of course a matter of interpretation.

Not too long ago some fathers had been allowed to anchor their yacht down at the landing stage for a couple of days. (After passing through a very tricky maze out of view of the coastline, where they lost control of course and location.) Thus, secrecy had never been absolutely strict, but was more or less granted.

39. Isolationists versus World-Citizens

The Hares had settled meanwhile in their new premises. Their furniture had arrived, and the front garden was set, and job-wise things developed as well to Professor Hare's satisfaction.

The categorisation and evaluation of all the material from Atlantis would take months of acerbic toil in the laboratory which was established for that purpose.

Such task was tackled together with Professor Grisella, Lady of Griselgreif to Greifenklau-Slyboots, who was dearly engaged in such mission since she had been in Atlantis in person.

As former mentor of Arundle she could motivate her for a joint march to that site once in a while. And thus a merry flock marched along the time-scale with a gay song on their lips seemingly out into nothingness. Quite similar to those children of Hamelin, who followed the Pied Piper, when the citizens refused the proper pay – as the fairytale goes.

Grisella was still afraid of travelling by air or the like. That was why she stayed back soon and had others go on her behalf. Too many sudden rescue coups had been taken in the dying and dooming land far, far away.

It was Professor Hare who wanted to see with his own eyes what it was like to be viewing a dying culture. No matter how empathic he felt, he was nonetheless fascinated of what he got to see. Professor Hare was one of those scientists who would do everything for their science. Therefore, he wished to involve colleagues of his from outside, no matter whether they fitted the strict requirements.

By that, the little family was torn apart. Florinna stayed with her daddy, while Mrs. Hare took the position of Cory, who was strictly against the opening up and the new project, and would have better skipped the Island University as a hole, but have made concessions. Even those submarine excursions some of the fellow-students undertook with their families, she viewed as risky and even hazardous in a way.

While it had been the Nautilus, which attracted those witty teenagers from the ground to show up and perform for an attentive audience. It didn't need much effort these days to have pictures sent in no time around the world, taken from those dancing naiads and nixes in front of the panorama pane of the submarine. And you could hardly imagine what storm might be lashed out by that. If they raised the curiosity of the right (that is in fact – the wrong) people.

In vain, Flory argued what kind of people those relatives and guests were. Nobody would be allowed on the islands without the colour-test screening at the terminal on entry.

In vain the pros asked for more confidence in the security-system that had been reinforced and extended as part of the construction work. So nobody would be able to spot and locate them, if not guided by black magic or by a mole in their own ranks, as had been the case formerly. 'The system never fails but people does', they said. But this couldn't be helped by isolation. Because isolation led to ignorance.

"All visitors are kind of brainwashed on departure automatically and any reference to the position is thus erased in their memories", Arundle added.

“Yes, and the general defence of the whole functions in a way, we do not quite understand ourselves. We are only allowed to believe and hope and trust, that the system works. This is how Dorothea explained it” Flory ended her hefty plead with pathos.

For her mother, who was present, things were thus clear and straightened out, because Flory had been very convincing. However Cory had other aspects in mind which weighed much heavier in her eyes

As High Priestess of the Emissary South-Michel of Capricorn she knew about the needs and hopes of the mer-folk, as well as about the dangers threatening from above. There were very few untouched spots left on the ground of the oceans. A trip around the world from Bermudia to Australis was kind of suicide mission. Meanwhile it was much likelier of not getting through, than the other way round.

First of all, the aggressive methods of the fish-trawlers caused the trouble. They wouldn't get caught, therefore they were too clever, and if it happened, they cut themselves free. While really dangerous were the harpooners with their bow-cans and dum-dum bullets, which smashed everything they hit.

Those trawler-crews called them sea-cows, as the naiads reminded them on human-like animals – this is what you could hear in the taverns from drunken, boasting fishermen once in a while, but nobody cared.

The conflict between pros and cons began to dominate the meetings on all levels, especially among friends. Cory told of course what she learnt from the mer-folk about prosecution by the trawler-crews. She was very upset when this basic conflict was put on a shallow and false level of secrecy and trustworthiness into existing security-systems. Meanwhile the endangerment was a far wider, and the existence of the mer-folk was on the verge of extinction.

“My ancestors were also denounced of their humanness by the whites” Billy-Joe said and a sad look

came into his eyes. He also took the side of the isolationists.

In fact, his relation to his mentor had never been so close, as would perhaps have been wishful – neither vocational nor human.

Thus Billy-Joe opposed him in this question as well, and didn't accept Dorothea's somewhat sophisticated arguments, which Scholasticus accepted as his own – being her husband.

Arundle realized the conflict between the sisters near-by, because she lived with the Hares for good now, and therefore, Billy-Joe often came for a visit, the more as so he was – in joint cooperation with Pooty – the keeper of the Magic Stone - thus still responsible for the marching tunes and rhythms on the way along the time-scale towards Atlantis.

Vasantha Hare still suffered under the burden of the British colonialism and imperialism, she and her family had experienced partly in person still. For that reason she did understand mistrust against well-phrased arguments, which sounded so nice for the moment, but were soon gone with the wind of time.

Nonetheless, she felt that Corinia overdid, when she focussed on the dangers threatening the mer-folk. Nobody on the islands agreed with the methods of the fishing industry, that was going on for years now and had done great harm, but couldn't yet diminish or even reduce the number of individuals down here. This was done by interior troubles to a far larger extend.

Vasantha Hare could see the chance that was hiding in Dorothea's idea as well, and why she felt attracted. She saw the chance of change to the better in the world as well, and Dorothea's project could be seen as a kind of spearhead mission.

A new value system had to be spread, and for that reason the 'Splendid Isolation' had to be given up. All registers had to be pulled, all friends and co-workers had to become motivated and attracted. Here, right in 'the

Hub of the Word' was the centre of the new power. Here, those in the know had to be gathered. Enforced and with fresh spirit and new ideas, they would be sent out and back into the wide world spreading such impulses, the world was so desperately in need of.

There they were again: those well-sounding phrases. But what happened, when you dug to the depth of such superficial words? What was there to be found?

A new value system, that based on time instead of money. And offered the chance that the relations between people changed. But what, when the negative utopia realized? What, when an even worse system of exploitation would replace the old system instead?

There it was again – the question for the Cardinal Mistake, that had come into Man's history, and was so hard to spot and hence to overcome.

If the new value system could be installed without Cardinal Mistake, the aim of history would be accomplished.

The Isolationists with their objections didn't see or didn't want to see this exigent target. Their worries were of a different quality and didn't meet the real challenge that was due right now. They were looking backwards in a way, and still dealing with matters too closely related to the past, and therefore outdated and obsolete.

Didn't they have access to the processes of consciousness and the theoretical construct where it stemmed from?

It wasn't quite so. Billy-Joe was well able to see the point, while having problems in showing Arundle such contradiction wherefore there was no answer yet. He only knew he wouldn't succeed in getting her out of Dorothea's influence.

"You know, what we Isolationists really mind?" he one evening said, while the extended family Hare was sitting comfortably on the porch: "It's your forced optimism with which you talk yourselves crazy, and mix up your high-brow ideas with real sound facts. Each of us

happened to fail that way, each of us has talked him or herself into fierce rage and was stricken by his or her ‘Ultimate Overall View’ (like the Advisor), or by his or her ‘Ultimate Perspective Discernment’ (like South-Michel).

From both we can learn something. Depending on your standpoint, your sight is going to change, while you look at the same thing, and see everything your friend and fellow sees – but from a different perspective. And then it is not the same anymore, but becomes something else.”

Arundle protested. The hotel-project was something real and sound, that was Dorothea’s strength, she said.

“Here you are again, you put things upside down. Dorothea doesn’t want a hotel-project as such. She wants to create some institution capable of multiplying an idea and spread it in the world. And this idea has its centre right here with us on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth.

Dorothea believes in this idea, without having understood it right or have it made her own. She acts in blindfold belief, because she assumes that her husband, and her sister, and you, Arundle, have the ‘Ultimate Overall View’ that only have to be spread and that’s it, and the world is saved, the history’s arrived at its target.”

“Dorothea witnessed almost everything that happened” Arundle answered: “The trouble with Anonymous, those raids of the Miseriors, and everything that is coming up on us. She knows what she does. With her project she wants to steer against a development, that is threateningly in sight...”

“How do we know, that we are really ‘the Hub of the World’? Only because your father changed sides and came to us, it doesn’t mean that we have found the king’s road. Perhaps the real opposition has much deeper roots. Perhaps you find it in Tasmania or in the Australian outback, or somewhere in Mongolia, in Patagonia or even under the shelf with the mer-folk and even below, where the dwarves live.

If Mankind gives up such last battlements as well, then Malicious Marduk has really won, and then comes

what we see coming up threateningly on the horizon of the future. And the whole nightmare becomes real.”

“Ah yes, and you are becoming Shaman in Laptopia and I the Princess at the court of the almighty Rolandus? I see, what you mean. And thus it’s convincing. The whole is some kind of scissors, that was getting apart more and more, while both blades belonging together eventually...”

Billy-Joe didn’t quite know, what Arundle wanted to say with the scissors. At least, she seemed to understand him. What he said, wasn’t new for her anyway. But no-one had always everything in mind.

One of the great skills in life was to have the right thing available at the right time.

“Should the alternative really be either to refuse radically the whole civilisation and become naked like in the beginning of mankind, leading a scarce and endangered life? Still a life with an almighty brain, and well cared in the dreamland, and connected to eternity, well equipped with spiritual gifts of empathy and telepathy, and the inner richness of the universal soul?” Arundle said with a meaningful glance over to Billy-Joe who nodded with so much agreement and openness and preparedness in his eyes, that she felt like a bee, approaching a longing cupula stretching out towards her.

“Well, I’m afraid, this is not where mankind is standing right now. And this beginning mankind will never meet again, at least the mankind as we know it.

I’m with you, when you demand that we care about the losses, that we take serious, what we are lacking and the so called primitive still owe. However, I deny to believe that such abilities are inseparably connected with primordial suffering, or that the wide great dreamland can’t be conquered again. Over here, in the School of Inbetween, many things work, don’t you think so? And we do live all in all rather civilized, don’t we?”

Arundle smiled convincingly and even infested Billy-Joe by that. Perhaps they were really on the king’s road. Perhaps their island was really the ‘Hub of the

World', Billy-Joe thought, and perhaps were the Isolationists just too narrow-minded in a way.

40. The Hotel of the Hub of the World

The arguments were all laid open by now. Both sides did understand the other rightfully. Now they had to come to an agreement.

Neither side refused to be 'the Hub of the World' any more. Quite the opposite. They all believed that something great had been accomplished over here. Something, that had been lost and conserved in history, and had been re-discovered and activated by them.

Both sides were unable to explain in detail what that was, that had been re-discovered or reproduced, to have it described in clear terms. While they of course were able to describe what had happened, and what was going on, but that was not the essence, both sides felt, as soon as they tried to exemplify.

Thus they couldn't do better then talk of 'the Hub of the World', hoping to express what really was meant, while both sides agreed that what ever went on in this Hub of the World was prepared to shape the world and grant it a renewed and better face. By gaining influence on a development that was on the way anyway. As evidence they held in hands their own studies on Laptopia and the bitter revenge of Anonymous about the secret doings of the time-mafia.

You couldn't really rely on reports from the future. There was no definitely defined future to come any more. Therefore Arundle suggested another look at what emerged as a multitude of futures "each lining up along the time-scale (which is in fact an infinitely wide highway.) Thus, futures may show similarities, but never become identical. Just as no leaf that's falling off each tree ever is identical with any other leaf ever.

Each leaf remains a leaf that's certain, but that doesn't mean leaves are alike. There are differences, and they might be neglected on the first sight, however, they are there, I daresay.

If we transmute such example on the futures of the world, then we see on a large scale what it means, and we also see the whole, that is in our case, the value system based on time. That's going to come, as it looks. But the way it is shaped, how much injustice comes along with it, who will become the profiteers, and whether the masses will be the big losers like in the old system, the future doesn't automatically prove, despite the negative outlook we already experienced.

What we want is clear. The new system has to be used to the benefit of mankind. And for that the course must be set now. A sense of agreement has to come over the world. And this is where we come in, and the Hotel of the Hub of the World, as a locomotive and stronghold of the new consciousness.

Ingredients we support from both sides, whether 'Isolationists' or 'Citizens of the World'. The better future we jointly strive for. Thus, we may jointly reflect and weigh our paces, we have to undertake, in order to approach our aim."

Hefty knocking of eager knuckles signalled agreement, as Arundle had hoped. Nothing would be more wrong than a majority vote here and now. Not the domination of a certain position was the aim, but a joint strategy to overcome the misery of the world. They had to strive for trust and should never give up hope to gather enough people of good will, as long as there was still time to do so.

"Can you see now, what I mean, Billy-Joe?" Arundle asked – "let us do everything we can, that you never become a weird Shaman of the Churingas, and I not the silly princess at the court of that strange Emperor Rolandus. That much openness must be in the damn future, for heaven's sake. Malicious Marduk mustn't have the last word."

"Your trustworthiness in God isn't really what it could be" you could hear the Advisor just swaying in.

South-Michel agreed stunningly. Arundle's curses had made him shiver. "No one escapes his or her fate", he said sweetly when he had himself back. He pushed his thumbs in the armpits of his waistcoat and jacked up and down on his toes.

For now, the Advisor did agree no less benevolent. Was this the beginning of a divine friendship? Dorothea glanced over to Arundle meaningfully.

All the assembly noticed the swaying mood like an air-stream through the hall.

"Don't you make a mistake now" Dorothea swore to herself and started feeding her baby, to keep her busy. Besides, a feeding mother was an image well liked by the Isolationists.

Dorothea couldn't escape her way of being and that was half calculation and half chasing effects. She always played with something, most she did so with her female attributes, or like now, with maternity.

Little Sulamith enjoyed her attention nevertheless.

The project received a broad base and was accepted by an overwhelmingly vast majority. In fact there were no opposing votes at all.

Now they had to figure out a set of rules. For that purpose mixed study groups were formed, with equal shares of Isolationists and World-Citizens.

Dorothea could go on now with the construction work in and around the artificial lagoon. She planned to have the outer edges embroidered by houseboats. In the centre the main hotel building was planned, with reception, dining hall, kitchen, bars and fitness studio. In addition, she planned a modern sub water recycling plant for waste and fresh water regeneration, combined with an adjacent garbage funeral. The heat of which would be stored and transformed into electricity.

All houseboats were connected by water- and waste-hoses in closed circuits. The ecological disturbance factor tended thus towards zero.

Wide footpaths went through the set up star-like, centring in the middle. Thus each guest could reach the main building on dry foot, as well as the neighbouring

houseboats. The whole set up looked from above like a spider web, the centre of which was the main building.

Ten Chinese arched bridges granted free traffic on the water by low boats, while masts had to be laid down.

Sailing and water sports were however still possible – outside, as in former times – in the lagoon on the other side of the Isle of Wisdom-tooth adjacent to the outer landing stage and the submarine dock.

With her construction plans Dorothea killed three birds with one stone, so to speak. She shortened the way between the islands to some 600 yards walking distance, and enabled hotel-guests to get to their dormitories on foot, while their luggage was brought by boat, and she devaluated the Pater-noster system to a certain extend.

While the route through the underground still remained attractive in bad weather and for the tourists anyway. The dwarves took the chance and built in all kinds of discernments into their world on the dull vertical part. Thus, the trip reminded more of a tour through the fairy-land of a pleasure park, then a means of traffic.

All kinds of mysterious images, golden devices of undefined nature, blinking stones in all colours of the rainbow – even little ones, dwarves and goblins were to be seen to the lucky ones – thus, the trip was a real highlight and touristy attraction.

Dorothea let the dwarves prevail, did however ask, why secrecy was of minor importance here, that was a major topic normally, and therefore put in a formal request to South-Michel, who argued that for dwarves such performances were common all over the world in each pleasure dome and the like. Tourists would certainly not ask what kind of little ones were acting, as believing in such mysteries was outdated, anyway.

As a matter of fact, Dorothea didn't decide on such matters alone anymore, but had her plans approved by a joint commission of Isolationists and World-Citizens. She even asked for assistance when producing a brochure for the former students. The resort had to become known as such to the respective public.

Representing themselves as ‘Hub of the World’ required sensitivity, while pushing suspicion of megalomania aside, was certainly a tricky task, they not quite managed to perform.

But quarrels the like did bother the formers far less than the PR management feared. Perhaps those formers lived already too long being aware of their own singularity.

The programme sent to all former students was indeed exceptional. Arundle even arranged with the Advisor a weekly date for Anonymous, where he would present and defend his opus. Any such gig would be a sensation as a matter of fact, because the author was regarded as gone astray.

When Arundle met him thus again, she realized a certain progress in his esoteric career. On his relaxed mime she noticed deep peace, while he seated himself cross-legged slightly above the ground, and had his transparent hands wave through the air once in a while, but never hectic or impatient. No matter how silly the questions or provocative the comments were.

This was not the person who once had been her father. The wrath and frustration had gone altogether. His answers were always precise, his comments witty, and his knowledge seemed inexhaustible.

Thus, this weekly exercise became a great success. Many visitors only came to see Anonymous. The success of the seminar caused South-Michel to encourage his disciples to go on with the embellishment of their tunnels, as those visitors would go the Pater-noster-tour at least once.

The dwarves were free to instigate all kinds of themes, they were devoted to or attracted by. They paid their tribute and toll likewise to the visitors’ expectations, all the more so as their intentions matched. Dwarves liked mysteries and mysticisms of all kind, as long as they were subject or part of.

Treasures – hidden or found ones - enjoyed their souls, and made them feel important, - a feeling, they strove for more than anything else.

When Cory brought forward a formal request of Prime Minister Boetie, suggesting a water ballet as tourist attraction, the alarm bells began to ring at last. They were on the verge of giving up secrecy, if they kept on following such trend.

However, they didn't want to disappoint their friends and suggested in return whether a film could be made instead, showing the same scenes but alienated by the medium, with an entirely different effect. At least this was the hope of the commission, responsible for such public relations.

Naiads were of course common already in numerous films, just like cowboys and cattle. None of the audience would suspect real nixes and naiads, but well disguised actors.

A film could eventually be shown without running the risk of delivering the mer-folk to discovery by press and public. So the film was made and became a great success and a highlight when shown in the hall.

Former Convertors amongst the former students were of course most interested in paying a visit to Susamee's Island, the new refuge of the Convertors. While they had to accept that the former grounds of hidden lust were occupied now by busy students. Thus, they were carried over to Susamee's Island without much jostle by helicopter or submarine.

And if it occurred, and the full moon was standing over Susamee's Island, you might hear strange sounds intermixing with the common ones.

Where else, if not here, was this allowed or even desired?

And when then the circle of the carefully listening audience surrounded the horse-headed violin, that was producing the sweetest, most stunning melodies and tunes autonomously;

...and when a yellow she-dingo-dog tuned in with the clearest voice on the highest possible pitch;

...and the others tried as well as they could to tune in likewise;

...then it could happen that the stones surrounding the blood-pool near-by, started sobbing and had big tears thinning the obscure liquid they hosted. While a phoenix swung off the hearth-flames of Susamee's open kitchen-fire, topping the singing ever more in utmost jubilant joy.

41. Emeritus Hans Henny Henne

Nobody on the grounds of the School of Inbetween believed in a rocket attack. The protective screen prevented from such attacks. This was the decided opinion of the community, who felt safe under the protective cloak, that disguised to place not only, but also cared for absolute security.

Only in case of emergency – for rescuing survivors after a storm - drifting about the area, or risking to get smashed to the rocks and cliffs all over the place – such protective cloak was lifted for seconds, to enable a rescue team doing their job.

Survivors were taken to a mainland hospital as soon as this could be done, and hardly recalled that they had been meanwhile safeguarded by other sources before.

Still, suspicion arose of the Isle of Wisdom-tooth that the leakage in the Pater-noster tunnel could only be caused by a long distance smart bomb missile. All other options were eliminated. All traces had been analysed and investigated thoroughly until the final and only option remained.

Certain debris on the ground of the sea near the leakage spoke a clear language and guided towards such cause. Which didn't make things easier. The safety-measures taken and in use, didn't allow such assault. That was the dilemma.

The position of the Isle of Wisdom-tooth was revised daily. The code was produced by an old enigma

system from the Second World War. The island emerged on each radar screen daily somewhere else, and couldn't be seen with plain eyes anyway. And an energy grid prevented any kind of collision by air, water or land.

Energy was derived from the inner of the earth by a bionic photon-exchanger on mega-nano-transmission basis.

The ancient inventor and constructor of the instalment had been missing for decades, and hadn't been amongst the tourists that were now coming towards the Hub of the World, either.

He came in the end, finally – most likely too late.

The commission, still dealing with the leakage after over one year of severe investigation, was happy to have finally now found an expert, that is, the inventor and constructor – but he was very old and not so fit any more.

He tried at best he could, but couldn't find any mistake. Coding and energy-transmission worked still perfect, as far as such could be seen on a first sight.

– “...With one restriction” the old Emeritus Professor Hans Henny Henne warningly announced.

“During the last months of the war, the Allied managed to unscramble the code of the German Enigma Coding system. That didn't mean of course that now all the world was enabled to decode the many messages that were on the air, because the breach remained strictly top secret confidential, and was only known to a very limited number of selected individuals”, the Professor explained.

“Who ever is now fiddling around here, must have access to the secret circle or to the secret reports left behind. There is no other way of cracking the code.”

“Yes, but how come nobody detects us, who passes by the island or collides, because he doesn't see? That will remain an eternal riddle. As much I do appreciate the fact as such” Adrian Humperdijk, the former Vice-Headmaster, who was due to become reappointed again because of the tremendous increase of workload.

He was member of the committee therefore, consisting of his wife, the Commissary Head-Mistress,

who had taken over from Dorothea again, after the baby and all the additional tasks.

They welcomed the ancient Emeritus Professor Hans Henny Henne as a special guest of honour, who once designed the blueprint of the protective screen, under which they were hiding ever since.

“The energetic grid simulates something like dust or mist” the latter just explained “and transform the image at the same time somewhere else, where the island becomes visible, like a Fata Morgana. Who ever tries to steer towards the island, will be diverted by a gentle semi-bow. He will reckon such as the drift of a hidden jet stream or current, if he realizes at all, as the islands are in fact very small”, their guest went on.

“And how come, that once in a while boats come here in heavy sea and bad weather?” Marsha wanted to know, who still worried about such events, while being years ago now. A sailor had been rescued then out of the boiling sea in one case, while the other was a yacht to be saved last minute from the grip of a greedy cyclone.

“The system reacts on the international emergency alarm code, if the circumstances demand. This must have been so in the two mentioned cases. This is the only explanation why the ship-wrecked managed to get through the protective screen”, Hans Henny Henne explained and looked rather proud of his never failing system.

When asked for the forgetting charm, Hans Henny Henne just shrugged and said such was none of his business.

“I’m scientist – by the way – what is there to be forgotten, anyway, when nobody knows what he should remember. Even those who set foot on island, didn’t know where they were and you will not have given them your exact position, I assume” Hans Henny Henne said laughing.

They didn’t indeed do. After a short stay in the hospital, the ship-wrecked was sent to Sydney by helicopter, while the other went on after the storm on his own, as soon as the weather allowed him to do.

As proud navigator he was eager to define the course himself, while the general course was clear anyway. He trusted in the calculations that had brought him here. No matter whether they complied with reality. Australia you couldn't miss anyway as long as he kept westward.

The rusty pensioner Hans Henny Henne – way ahead in his eighties, proved to be inexhaustible. What ever there was, any facultative event or excursion – he was with it. No matter where it went, Hans Henny Henne took part. He showed interest in almost everything. He asked questions, was charming and polite, as long as you didn't refer to his baby, that had brought him here.

His special interest was raised by Anonymous and the Advisor, who jointly appeared. The latter didn't leave his protégée unguided week after week – for almost a year by now.

Hans Henny Henne seemed to have read the book, that is - he worked it through, you could see after a few minutes of exchange, the Advisor, as well as Anonymous - realized to their satisfaction. A brilliant brain like this was rare.

Therefore, Anonymous - some weeks of valuable exchange later - asked seriously, whether Hans Henny Henne would like to come with him, or whether the bonds were still too tight and insolvable that kept him over here.

This was not the case. Hans Henny Henne felt the other way round. His sense strove for more, he was very certain, he said grinning, as if he had reckoned to be ask such question. He indeed felt fatigue, while not really being dissatisfied with what he had achieved during his span of life, however, the one or other invention was still rummaging about his soul, he should have better not made.

“Oh no, we don't view at that as absolute as you may feel now” the Advisor tried to smoothen the upcoming enthusiasm for the supernatural and transcendental on Henne's side.

“Visit means visit... - well, for some it became more than that indeed. Well, we'll see...” the Advisor said, and took the Inventor Hans Henny Henne by the right hand, and Anonymous took his left hand, and all three peacefully drifted off, not much different than before, when the two divine guests swayed in that way.

Somewhat short – and for the remaining lumps of mortal clay disappointing in a way - the lengthy advertised event ended all too soon and abrupt. While they then became aware that none of the present had understood the book. Some even had forgotten about the title.

Was that the educational level they had achieved? Was that the effect the Isolationists feared? Did tourism undermine the substance by sensation? Was the steady suction of passer-bys killing the substance?

Perhaps the entry-test should become widened by a quick-test on the book? - Those in charge wondered, as they feared that Anonymous and the Advisor would never again show up in future, after such a scandal, because the lack of knowledge of course became obvious, and couldn't be hidden before the divine entities.

More than one thousand former students Dorothea had on records and was very happy what could have been done in one and a half years – neglecting the substantial loss and its contra-productive effect in reality.

Had the expectations become true? Did the multiplication factor apply? What was going on in the world in matters of a changing paradigm? And what about the justice in such processes?

Had they put the bet on the wrong horse? Dorothea wondered, because she stood with both feet firmly on the ground. In the Internet ideas and news were spreading by millions in a few hours. A thick book however was something else. But the quintessence, the message as such, should get at the masses and perhaps the Internet was the more adequate lever in getting at the billions.

Or was she only disappointed, since that swirl, when the Inventor Hans Henny Henne was elevated, while Anonymous shocked the audience, which turned out to be absolutely incompetent?

The warnings and reservations of the Isolationists hadn't been all that wrong. Many of the formers didn't look for anything else but an additional and exotic kick, as was advertised, and offered in fact, and didn't care much about the message, they should spread in the world henceforth. They weren't able, because they didn't understand what they were expected to do.

Did they make a mistake over here on the islands? Had the dark side infested them with further agents? Was it the pressure to success, they had built up on their own? Or did things tune in just like that without additional cause?

The colour-screening was no obstacle any more. Those who came in passed it eventually. And if there was nothing to be seen, the controllers didn't look so close. The more so as most of them were beginners and were just learning the other way of seeing themselves.

In dubious cases it said – “a scarcely noticeable aspiration of light grey – or - a tender pale greenish outer rim – ice-blue, very faint stitch...” and the like. The counter-controller waved the aspirants through, as soon as the first hurdle was taken.

There were few complaints for that, and if there was one, then the controllers referred to the workload or their lack of experience. The controllers nor the controlled had to fear consequences anyway.

Was a guest through the control, he changed roles and became king, the entourage of the islands obediently served. What was originally meant as earnest instruction soon became mere folklore, like everywhere in the world, where tourists goofed about.

Thus was the twisted situation, when Inventor Hans Henny Henne turned in, as a strange precious piece of primordial matter. He was himself a very child of the Isle

of Wisdom-tooth, and was still infested by that strange passion that each real disciple somehow caught, and held in its grip lifelong.

Besides, Hans Henny Henne was marked by the prevailing causes, and was now saturated and well resting in himself by a completed life. – He was now ready for the coming world, prepared to return home finally into that ominous ‘Unio Mystica’ he never gave in dreaming of, and would never be able to, no matter what would happen to him.

“And had it been just for the one, things would have been worth while”, Dorothea said somewhat defiant and proved her instinct for trustworthiness. She felt, more than she could bear, and was hiding behind her extrovert façade – who she was dealing with. She could have started crying without knowing why.

Yes, Hans Henny Henne had an air that raised her tears, while at the same time made her laugh just like the name as such did, - what a name: Hans Henny Henne!

Therefore, she suggested as soon as there was the chance, to look for another way of publishing their ideas - a way, they had neglected so far.

“We’ve got to go online” she summed up her musings, which Hans Henny Henne had obviously stimulated without intention. – To be precise – her musings were such, which turned up by the fierce contrast to the group of accompanying tourists in their obscene innocence and ignorance, when they smuggled themselves by the balanced control mechanisms of the islands, and thought it a victory when they succeeded, without minding the risk they ran. Their triumph was all fake and false, while meaning a further blow to Dorothea’s grandiose intentions – deadly blows in a way, she couldn’t compensate.

This might be the true cause for her tears or for the Homeric laughter she had kept under and behind such tears, breaking through once in a while. What else could you do but laugh?

It was no big thing to strangle the flow of tourists. All you needed, were suitable controllers, who took their matter serious, and knew their job.

Soon the information got round that only few inquirers were accepted for entry.

Fact was also, that the number of former students wasn't endless, and most had either come or wouldn't come at all, for what reasons ever. A premise like the School of Inbetween neither attracted the masses, nor would have been able to handle them, if they had come.

The lobby on the centre-pontoon became quiet. Many house-boats were empty, or were charged back by the former residents as a week-end domicile again.

Billy-Joe finally got his solitary site in the open under the nightly dome of heaven, as he was used to since he was a little boy, and never gave up striving for.

Inhabitants on both islands felt relief – at least those who noticed the change, while those responsible for the project got a chance to accept the facts which had been all too obvious already beforehand as well.

The 'Hotel to the Hub of the World' didn't suit the demand as lever of change of the course of the world.

The most valuable achievement might have been the coming home of the congenial Inventor Hans Henny Henne. Perhaps the Hotel had a right to be only until Hans Henny Henne had come home and fulfilled his fate.

A hectic, breathless time was over now. Peace and thoughtfulness returned and the people realized how they had been occupied by the activities, no matter where. The effects had been noticed everywhere.

What was the matter with the congenial Inventor Hans Henny Henne? Did he take his most important secret with him? What was it, the Advisor had to talk over with him and Anonymous? Would he send him back some day, eventually? And did Hans Henny Henne know, where he was going, and what was waiting for him?

Hans Henny Henne appeared like a promising comet of hope on the horizon, unnoticed by the world for a long time and only enlightened for a short period of time before he vanished again, shortly before his final aim. While he shone, he spent bright light and cosy fire and filled the hearts of the human beings who became aware.

Perhaps they'd been well advised if they had also started looking for his testimony, those in the know on the islands asked themselves, and Dorothea had at once an idea, where they could begin with the search.

Many weeks had passed since the congenial Inventor had gone. The house-boat of his, still housed his property, and was attended as if he still lived there. All his property was still stored and safe-guarded.

There were no relatives to be notified of his passing away, while the doctor confirmed and certified the facts as such by means of a document. Just in case things weren't set as they were, Arundle and Billy-Joe took a trip again to the virtual centre of all galaxies, and asked for an audience, which wasn't granted however.

Arundle wasn't even allowed to see her father. The Advisor was kind of rude. At least he confirmed that Hans Henny Henne preferred to remain up here, as he could go on in peace with his researches and bring them to conclusions. Anonymous did take refuge very similar some years ago, the Advisor mentioned.

"Our friend doesn't need anything from down there" the Advisor confirmed with a smile to Arundle's unasked question. "Nice of you anyway, to think of that, its all yours now."

So they knew what to do. "Normally you leave behind a letter or something, when you do such step" Marsha Wiggles-Humperdijk, the Commissary Headmistress of the School of Inbetween, objected, who was looking after formalities as was her job.

"Well, well, he might not have known what was going on with him" her husband, the former Vice-

Headmaster, Adrian Humperdijk, thoughtfully said, while all in the round nodded, when welcoming Billy-Joe and Arundle back from their journey, being all curious about their report.

Dorothea was officially asked to open up Hans Henny Henne's locker, the key he had still on him as it seemed. Arundle had forgotten to ask for that, while she had had other things in mind, and didn't want to bother the Advisor with lapillus, who had been so short-cut and closed up anyway.

They weren't explicitly allowed to take care of the belongings of the passed on the one hand, while on the other they weren't prohibited either, thus they decided on their own, referring to the Advisor's 'its all yours now', Arundle did remember in their favour.

Besides, they all were curious as can be, and assumed sensational secrets, as they hoped to find Hans Henny Henne's complete oeuvre being left behind, and Grisella hoped for a similar effect as with Anonymous' work.

And so it really seemed. The small locker was packed and stuffed with tightly scribbled bundles of paper of all kinds, as could be seen by a brief look.

The stuff was something for an expert. With that Professor Scholasticus Slyboots and his assistant and newly appointed Professor, Peter Adams, the two Astronomers and Physicians were asked, as it looked.

For reasons, they both were convinced of, the two believed to have in hands evidence of absolute importance, the world was longingly waiting for, in order to lift the last secrets of time.

If you could manage to have a whole island disappear as you wished, and have it shown up again likewise somewhere else, then you certainly could accomplish other stunning things as well.

42. Hans Henny Henne's Testimony

When looking through the piles of paper both scientists had to accept, that Hans Henny Henne hadn't

been an orderly person. The mess was incredible.

Scholasticus lacked at all of patience, while Peter Adams at least tried to find access to the labyrinth of that brilliant brain, but of course would have favoured it much, if he'd have had a chance to get help, from which side ever, none the least the author himself, who wasn't out of the world, so to speak, that is, only in a way he was, but in another he was still accessible.

After several weeks of sorting Peter Adams came about with some kind of systematic, whereas the bundles were sorted in three categories, he piled in three separate heaps, in order to bring them into a reasonable inner structure, and have them copied and filed in three main files of three different colours.

As by the colour he named the first one the blue period, the second one the green period and the third one the grey period. By means of colouring he also wanted to give reference to the contents.

Scholasticus adored his former assistant for his congenial idea and had he not yet been Professor, Scholasticus would have made him one. So enthusiastic he was about the system, although he didn't understand it.

He admired any kind of systematic only because he lacked of such ability. This was clearly the limit and made him aware again how tight his possibilities were and how limited his abilities.

The first – the blue – complex dealt with the access to the coding and the calculations of the purposely induced declination. Without an own enigma they would be at the end already before they had started. The intimate knowledge of the coding device enigma was arbitrary, as well as the understanding of the systematic of the coding and decoding processes, as well as the administration of the endless slope system, only the inaugurated had access.

Where did you get such an enigma device, and who would train you the handling and the crypto clearance connected therewith?

When searching for the hardware the researchers got into a disgusting brown swamp, that was

undermining the surface of the earth, consisting of rightwing lunatics – collectors of army-stuff and weaponry of all kind, as well as of ‘Herrenrasse’-ideologists and rightwing global strategists, and there dumb followers.

The Professors had nothing to offer but money, that would have raised interest. Money wasn’t the main aspect in those circles, although, everybody was longing for, even those skull-enthusiastic peddlers on the many thousand fairs, and Internet-platforms, where they offered their obscure merchandise.

Thus, Peter Adams purchased an enigma. Only to find out, that it didn’t work. Nobody could tell why not. Was it because they were unable, or was anything missing? Nobody could tell. What they really needed was an expert, who knew such device and knew how to operate and tend. Besides, he had to get access for them to the endless slope which was as secret as anything could be.

Hans Henny Henne, in his youth close friend of the young James Edgar Hoover, had managed such hurdle with bravura those days. They could read in a memoir.

The situation had been entirely different then. While now, no threatening monster was luring locust-like, enforcing a precarious alliance, melting together what soon after fell apart in dismay for good. At least so it seemed. Time changed, and the viewpoints separated as well as the way of life, Hoover once stood for.

Their relation to the world of secret agencies was a marginal one. The only clue was an old comrade and fellow student of Peter, who might recall him even better then vice versa, because he still owed him a great favour.

However, nobody wants to be reminded of ancient debts – definitely not by someone stemming of the dubious circle which Peter was connected with in the eyes of the American Intelligence Services, where Peter’s former friend was serving.

Peter had to do all he could in order to be invited for a brief talk. During the meeting he was trapped without noticing at first and ended up as a mole and undercover agent on a free lance basis. This was the only

way of getting any further towards his aim – the secrets of the enigma.

All that he did for the science. Had he known by then what this meant in the near future, he'd run away as fast and far as his feet could carry him.

He was trained on the old enigma, that was still top secret because it still worked and still was the backbone of all coding what so ever.

Peter found out finally why the enigma which they had purchased didn't work. The two cylinders with the key-codes, - that is the heart of the device – were missing. Cylinders you just couldn't get anywhere, no matter how hard you tried, except with the Agency, he was now committed.

Their own enigma was only the outer image of the working device, and could at best serve as a nostalgic piece of history for the freaky scene where it stemmed from, meant to drape the mantelpiece or showroom of such dubious clientele.

In fact, the cylinders weren't worth a dime either without access to the endless slope, that was turning day and night since the days of invention – endless, as the name said.

For overcoming this obstacle, Peter Adams had to involve even deeper. His whole inner life had to be screened and his life became reconstructed. What he had done, how he made his money, who he was friend with or acquainted. – As he strove for the top secret level – that is – he didn't want to but he had to – otherwise there was no chance of getting any further. It was the only way of getting access to the endless slope and the entry procedures. A fact with very inconvenient consequences as Peter Adams soon realized.

For now this hurdle was taken. It was a kind of mystery, so it seemed. He was in the system, and was trained on that miraculous device of espionage prevention.

While being trained he realized that knowledge alone didn't get him any further. Not he could carry away information, instead the system required information

from him and sucked out of his fingers, what he knew or even didn't remember that he knew.

At that point he finally became aware that he had been cheated. He had taken the bait like a pupil without life experience. He had given away his soul, so to speak, in order to get information. Information he now had, but couldn't use. Instead he had been plundered and wasn't himself anymore.

His cry for help reached Arundle one night, who went to bed because strange pain overcame her in the middle of the day (on the Southern half of the globe time's the other way round.)

He managed to pass on to her an idea of what was going to happen to him and how much he suffered – over there on the other side of the world in the strong-room dormitory of a secret premise far away from any human home as an apprentice of the J. Edgar Hoover Institute of Applied Crypto Clearance Technology of Los Alamos.

Arundle immediately alarmed Scholasticus, who talked thing over with his wife as well as with his sister-in-law in order to keep those in the know as limited in number as possible. They asked Arundle to see the Advisor as soon as possible, and also have a word with Hans Henny Henne because of that blooming enigma.

While thinking things over, Scholasticus asked for permission to join her. It might be wise to have the information straight and direct, because Arundle was no expert either. Besides, he nourished bad feelings in his heart, he might get rid of that way by letting the congenial Inventor know what mess he had left behind, and what trouble he caused them. He surely could have anticipated what workload was connected with his material.

Dorothea also activated meanwhile her channels, intending to get the poor man back, and have him saved from the fatal trouble he was stuck, while this was not to the least his mistake as well.

Fact was that his record was clean. He was a Canadian citizen and Honourable Professor of a small University in process of foundation – but still...

Arundle got ready for the trip to the virtual centre of the universe and Pooty had the command. The Magic Bow activated the space cloak, after having discussed at length the route to be taken, as usual with the Magic Stone.

Why they had their argument wasn't so clear. Was it because of awkward circumstances out of their range or sabotage from what side ever – the trip didn't succeed, but ended up in an endless waiting slope with a telephone voice and a nice melody, they were soon fed up with. Time passed and passed and the endless slope did what the name said.

Meanwhile, Dorothea could prove what she was able to do and Grisella was also busy, and had her worldwide contacts work. After all, no less than the future of the world was on the verge. That was why she had to give her best.

Their image as 'Hub of the World' had gone further at last than expected, both noticed independently (with some satisfaction). The tourist business hadn't been so fruitless, but had left remarkable traces, Dorothea learnt to her contentment.

All kinds of celebrities and influential people had obviously been sluiced incognito through the place over here. Not all had made such fuss as had Hans Henny Henne, who caused trouble enough in the aftermath, with his sloppy testimony.

"So what, never think bad of the passed away" Grisella said and meant it. While Hans Henny Henne hadn't really passed away, so they knew, but that was another story.

"This may understand who's entitled" she murmured, the telephone lever still in hands between two calls. The telephone never stood still these days, while she imagined his good old face before her spiritual eye.

Dorothea had her clientele know, how close the break-through was. "The world's on the verge" she assured them repeatedly, since Anonymous had rung the alarm clock.

She praised Peter Adams at best she could, and had he known, his ears had resounded far away in detention and torture.

Dorothea gave the plot a turning by showing the dubious role of Peter's ruthless friend and his deeds in the name of the CIA. This was a course everybody jumped on right away, but came to a sudden halt as soon as they'd have to show their true colours before a tribunal.

She was able to influence the public opinion in favour of the victim, and thus turned the case instantaneously.

After endless hours in the endless slope the virtual missile was set free into the open nothingness of space, where the strivers erred about until they were caught by the gravitation of a celestial body that turned out to be the moon of Laptopia.

While being there, they searched the empty rooms and found indeed some things of interest, Anonymous obviously had forgotten or purposely left behind. Did he do so because such scripts were worthless?

There was in fact evidence of Hans Henny Henne already. How could that be? Had Hans Henny Henne been member of the Brotherhood of Infernalina as well, as it said in one letter which was signed by him. In this letter he terminated his membership in the Brotherhood, because of "insurmountable differences" as it said.

Hans Henny Henne had not been the person he pretended to be, so it seemed. After all, he had been involved in the misdoings of the Brotherhood.

However, were they not underway in a similarly dubious mission right now? In life you always came about circumstances which might lead to misinterpretations, like in case of Peter Adams right now. Still, it was Scholasticus who found the letter absolutely interesting and detecting.

"Let's assume, there is something in it" he wondered aloud – "then Hans Henny Henne isn't such an innocent character, but was sticking in the same swamp your father was in, Arundle. Don't you agree?"

“...he’s pulled himself out by his own...”

Arundle put in, who couldn’t do otherwise but agree, while Scholasticus went on with his musings: “If this is so – and there are little doubts left by now – then it was not incidental that Anonymous ordered him or was it the Advisor himself – which might turn out to be the same anyway. Perhaps Hans Henny Henne has to pass a clearing process, similar to the one your father had to undergo. That would mean, Hans Henny Henne isn’t the noble character, we thought him to be. In the end we have nourished a snake on our bosom its deadly bite is hurting poor Peter Adams right now – deadly as kind of metaphor hopefully...”

“Do you mean we can expect a similar important oeuvre from his side as we got from Anonymous?” Billy-Joe now interfered, somewhat cool.

“This might be a little late in this case, I’m afraid. Here we do have to do with a kind of last minute conversion, so to speak. While your dear father converted voluntarily and way ahead on his free will and by conviction, when he realized the full impact of the evil. – Well, let’s hope and pray for Hans Henny Henne a similar turning in fate – had been quite a nice handy chap, in a way...”

“Right, but can we be sure? We might err in his case – wouldn’t be the first time, though...”

Such a letter only says that there had been contacts, but they had been finished years ago, as you can see from the date. Seen from a scientific point of view the Brotherhood of Infernalía was dealing with interesting matter. For a real scientist this must have been rather seductive, and could have led him easily astray.”

“...Would explain why Malicious Marduk so easily spotted our island, by cracking the code of the defence system, which nobody else ever achieved.

His singular oeuvre might stay with Hans Henny Henne, while he possibly betrayed us – and that’s no contradiction.

Conscious or unconscious – we cannot differentiate now any more. However, we all know what Malicious

Marduk is able to do, and how easily he seduces human souls.”

“... and animal souls as well” Pooty made himself heard in his pouch.

“The mistake is to be found much earlier. – Yes, that makes sense, all of a sudden, everything becomes clear. And what did we wonder and couldn’t explain...” Arundle murmured, and had the crucial happenings of the previous years pass by before her inner eye, as they came to her mind and as far as she could remember:

“That assault on Conversiors’ Island, where Tika was hit by an almost deadly arrow...

The scornful voice in the wind before the crash into the sea...

The madness of the pigs...

Walter’s incredible suffering and death...

The attack from the depth...

And all those many disgraceful troubles amongst each other” – all over she meant to notice the hand of Malicious Marduk, without being able to prove it.

Meanwhile it became obvious that the School of Inbetween and the whole of the Isle of Wisdom-tooth as well as the adjacent had been open over the years and unprotected against Malicious Marduk, while the community thought to be safe under the protective hood.

This was how it might have been. Finally she understood, and felt a deep satisfaction in the aftermath, nevertheless.

All they had to do was altering the coding by inventing another system, and had to keep that secret and prevent Malicious Marduk to get hold of it. Then they’d rest in peace, so to speak. The continuous attacks and mean raids and surprising ambushes which they couldn’t prevent, because they never expected an enemy from this side – all this trouble would then be over, and they’d finally be able to live and dwell in peace.

From the moon of Laptopia the spearhead mission returned to the Isle of Wisdom-tooth without any further trouble.

“If the Advisor doesn’t want to be found, nobody can find him” Arundle explained their failure. Besides, the Magic Bow was offended and the Magic Stone was even deadly insulted because of that silly matter, Billy-Joe reported, who had been informed by Pooty.

Arundle intended to try again in her dreams. With Peter she managed as well. The poor fellow was still kept in detention of the secret services, and nothing had helped yet to get him released.

His curiosity now became his doom. He knew too much and that couldn’t be erased, if he didn’t accept a total brainwashing. However, he wouldn’t only get rid of the secret knowledge, but also of all his knowledge he had piled up during his academic career. Those in charge of the Intelligence Services didn’t believe in a forgetness charm, but stuck to their brachial methods – so it looked.

On the other hand was an Intelligence Service of a civilized state not allowed to ignore basic human rights (definitely not if the delinquent was publicly known and under constant guidance.) Therefore Peter Adams couldn’t be kept in detention for ever. So Dorothea and Scholasticus could pick him up three months later in Guantanamo. Peter Adams was broken. His tormentors didn’t put a forgetness charm on him, but they did something much more evil, they deleted all his memories of his stay, by traumatizing him badly.

Dorothea was disgusted and so was Scholasticus. That would have juridical consequences, they both agreed. They’d never accept such a treatment.

It took months before Peter Adams was able to go back to work. - As he was the only one who overlooked Hans Henny Henne’s testimony, nothing had been done while he was away.

He wasn’t so sure any more that the system he had ordered the papers were the ultimate solution still. They had a copy of this set-up anyway, so he could start shovelling around again, without risk.

The work stabilized and encouraged him, and he felt new courage to face life.

The worst during his imprisonment had been the lonesomeness and the uncertainty what was coming next. His torturers always came about with something new, that was entitled to humiliate him and to break his spirit, which had been the aim of the whole procedure.

Had Dorothea not built up so much public pressure, and had involved so many influential celebrities, they'd surely succeeded. It had been only a question of time. Not even the strongest psyche was able to stand such stress for ever.

Slowly the memory returned now. While the whole enigma-complex was deleted and gone. Only touching it caused him severe - even physical pain. His tormentors had reached their goal.

Scholasticus made him familiar with what had happened while he had been away. The whole enigma-complex was now obsolete because Malicious Marduk was member of the inner circle of those in the know, and thus had become master of the endless slope. The encoding of the coordinates of the islands had to be transformed into another cryptic system. Otherwise, the islands couldn't disappear – that is, couldn't be shown elsewhere instead.

For this purpose a specialist had been hired, who was at work already. Before the change could be achieved, the transmission of the energy-grid, that is, the most important part of alienation, - had to be seized. Because, if only one loose end would come free, not only the whole system threatened to collapse, but the islands as such, and would rant and rave them unavoidably to destruction.

Best would be if they construed a one to one model of the energy-grid-system under mock conditions. Before this goal was achieved they had to stick to the old system, which meant that they lay open before the eyes of Malicious Marduk. However, they wouldn't be discovered incidentally by cruising yachts or fish-trawlers.

Based on the instructions in the blue file a model of the system could be reconstructed and became activated.

With the model they used energy from the sun instead of the inner earth, which had the advantage of being constant. This fact had been the reason why Hans Henny Henne based his system on this type of constant energy.

“... or was it, because the evaluation of the sun-energy had been way behind those days” Billy-Joe put in.

Over there, on University Island all roofs were furnished with sun-collectors. Thanks to the hotel there were many more roofs now than just those of the centre-village of the employees.

This was what Peter Adams realized who began to pick up and return to his former shape, as far as scientific work was concerned.

Time was pressing, the islands had to be steered out of this zone of endangerment as soon as possible. Any time a sudden attack by Malicious Marduk was likely. Despite the fact of mistrust and trouble he was sowing just by keeping up such insecurity.

Tika hadn't yet fully recovered from the assault and was still hostile towards Arundle. She might never give in, no matter how long the wound had healed. The scar would remain, whereas the invisible was the enduring one in question.

The model did work, and the crypto-specialist could install and test his system. He inserted the applicable daily code into the new system and the model disappeared by mystery. The team went outside, and found it near the laboratory somewhat flimsy settled innocently in the grass.

Now he had only to find the heart of the real system, which wasn't so easy, because it was hiding under the Isle of Wisdom-tooth in an unexplored area. The device was well protected and hidden, so that

generations of students had been passing by almost daily without noticing, while their protection and security was produced and granted.

The blueprint of the system proved once more the geniality of the old inventor, as far as precision was concerned. Otherwise the model wouldn't have worked. Everything was precise by the thousandth inch, and so it was with the whole system, thus, the new encoding system could be installed in no time.

From now on they were safe and sound, no devil would be able to get in – no one who wasn't invited. The open sea swallowed the two islands (the earth could hardly swallow them) and had them appear some miles further, either here or there, on the radar screens of the passing ships or aeroplanes.

Who ever tried to steer towards such fluoresced point on the screen found himself cheated. As soon as you approached the marks wandered in any possible direction, while the energetic grid prevented collision.

The encoding system named Simultex worked by a simple principle. By means of a probability-generator you received daily changing figure codes, which were implemented automatically without manual interference into the endless slope, as soon as it had been started. Thus, a care-free maintenance was granted.

Those in charge of the islands were relieved, and so were the students. The time of suspicion and conspiracy was over now. Accusations didn't work any longer, as soon as the last Miserior was defeated and driven away.

For the mer-folk a time of disfigurement came to an end. The outlaws were detected as victims of weird forces, responsible for the bloodthirsty and murderous appeal of the befallen. As soon as they became vaccinated, they regenerated to decent beings, who were quite willing and able to give up the bloody tradition, they used to boast with.

So all misfits who were captured became vaccinated, and in most cases a grey devilish shade became extorted, that disappeared in the groundless clefts towards the liquid inner core of the earth, where they

hopefully gathered and were trapped in their original home and hell.

South-Michel had been informed, because everybody cared about the dwarves, who held residence at an even lower level than the naiads and nixes of Australis under the shelf.

Just in case, the dwarves had been supplied with the serum as well, and soon started a campaign to limit the worst forms of goblin trouble. Trolls or goblins were of course most vulnerable and were therefore suspected to house the evil spirits if left alone and unprotected, as had been the case, while the coating security shield was out of order.

The dwarves also discussed whether it might be a good idea if they limited the goblins either in number or duration. While the serum might still be a serious interference into the nature and the habitual reality, that was likely to alter the way of being fundamentally in the long run. Was this, what they really wanted?

On the other hand was the tuberculosis vaccination by now accepted and praised as an advantage and progressive step ahead, although it had been implemented from outside as well. The long life was in fact based on such measures, while tuberculosis had been a serious plague for many generations. The way of life down there without sunshine and loads of dust made them vulnerable for that. Similar to the disease the excesses of puberty with all kinds of aches and pain could be seen, and might be limited by a vaccination, or even overcome at all.

Thus, the broad discussion about the self-understanding and identity in both tribal cultures led to a more liberal attitude. The traditionalists didn't have the last word any more, because they threatened to suffocate all life under their traditional coating.

Slowly the fundamental discernment was spreading, that change would go on infinitely as had taken place ever since. The major trouble with progress was, that it was going on, no matter what the political actors intended. Change was not the culprit, but people were who tried to take advantages and privileges from such fact.

Society could only protect its members by consensus, as could be seen right now once more. Unity arose when people met and listened to what others had to say, and talked things over together until agreement was reached.

43. The Slow-Motion-Enlarger-Spectroscope

Peter Adams gradually recovered. His recreation was stimulated by the university routine. ‘Small is Beautiful’ seemed the motto. The participants seldom exceeded ten in number, thus, communication and contact was certainly intense.

Because of this concentrated care all students quickly advanced and filled their gaps, where ever they occurred.

The boundaries of the subjects weren’t yet fixed but permeable to a certain extend, and neighbouring matters could easily become of concern, as seen necessary. The more so as the young and the old Professor were closely related. Peter Adams very well knew that the wife of his former boss had saved his life by arranging his release from imprisonment. He’d have starved to death without help from outside in Guantanamo.

Dorothea could be certain of his life-long thankfulness, and more than that – his deep devotion. For that reason he became Godfather of little Sulamith, when the young father asked him to. While Vasantha Hare became Godmother. Dorothea had wished so explicitly, because she liked Vasantha despite of the fact that they had only met some months ago, when the Hares moved here as well.

The women came from the furthest ends of the world by origin and still were attracted right away, when they met, they both wondered. Their husbands on the other hand didn’t get further but were exchanging formal politeness and didn’t know what to speak with the other, as they were stuck in their limited universe of their specific subject, and personality, so it seemed.

Dorothea as well as Vasantha soon realized this fact and tried in vain to change their husbands' attitudes. Peter Adams functioned as a kind of moderator between the two men and was therefore invited as well, whenever the couples met privately.

All Professors were expected to care for open and social houses. Little societies therefore met occasionally on neutral grounds, so to speak, down there at the houseboats which were available again after the flow of tourists ebbed.

Out there, on the water it was so romantic. The subtropical nights invited for company. On his pontoon you could hear Billy-Joe softly singing with his guitar. Arundle stayed with him once in awhile, and tuned in with her dark somewhat smoky voice, thus indicating the world wide phenomenon of music, guiding towards joint targets while developing a musical sense.

The elders realized stunningly how little conventional small talk had to do with real conversation. And the Professors noticed how solitary they were at the bottoms of their hearts, and how lost in the world without their wives.

This was the main reason why Dorothea and Vasantha searched for a suitable candidate for Peter Adams, and had those in question show up at such occasions, just like that.

Dorothea didn't sack any of the personnel – now that there was almost no work left in the hotel for the girls. They spent their time mostly idle, walked about flirting with the young men in their range, and enjoy themselves. Most of the maids and waitresses were students who earned a little extra money. That was why it didn't look all that bad for the young Professor, neither way. Intellect was combined with beauty and youth, what else could a young academic desire?

“Jew should she be, after all” Dorothea said to Vasantha and her two daughters, as well as to Arundle who was in the know as well. Dorothea knew from her husband that Peter Adams was no orthodox, but still Jew enough, when it came to earnest considerations.

So the conspiratresses put emphasis on nonchalance. The bigger the event, the more accidental the encounter would become, and the more likely the initial spark would ignite the flames of passion.

Arundle felt like Amour with the bow of love, while her bow was of a more general type.

Amour's arrow hit its target as was supposed to be – two times right in the middle of two hearts. Judith was the chosen one, a graduate student of nano-physics and member of the appropriate faculty of the University of Sydney. She had been jobbing as hostess in the 'Hotel to the Hub of the World', hoping to combine recreation and a little extra money.

Judith Kornblum was a well built appearance, just right to get hold on for a tormented guy like Peter, and to have a family with, and Jewish she also was, what else could he wish?

Peter Adams felt like in the seventh heaven. From afar, from Canada - an old aunt came by – his last living relative, so it seemed, while the wedding day was fixed.

Only three months after they met, they married. The Kornblum-clan welcomed the new member of the family, be it as son-in-law, or brother-in-law, or else, by all means.

Judith had a big family. There were three sisters and two brothers. All Kornblums together – there were some aunts and uncles, and of course many cousins as well – all the Kornblums insisted on a big Jewish wedding, as it should be by tradition and old custom.

The Kornblums didn't live together but were spread all over the globe. However, Judith's marriage nobody would miss. Many tears were flowing, tears of sentiment, or joy, or of reunion, or of merry memories – stemming from what eye ever.

And then the couple left for a honeymoon in Israel, both had dreamed of independently.

Only four months later Peter Adams opened up the last of Hans Henny Henne's files, at last. Nobody cared

or dared before. The only one who'd been capable would have been Scholasticus, and he was busy otherwise.

Fit as he was now, Peter Adams engaged in the challenge of a very special kind, as he soon noticed. It took him another half year before he rightly understood why no-one else had tackled the file, but claimed workload instead, like in case of Arundle and Billy-Joe, who were busy with their final exams. They were the only ones, who might have been able to take over from Scholasticus, who failed, for what reason ever.

Nothing had been done all the time – just nothing. And that was really astonishing if you considered the contents and urgency of that file.

But for such blaming it was definitely too late now. Therefore, Peter Adams got involved all the more, supported by his wife, who proved to be a first rate expert.

The two of them needed another year of research and considerations before they brought some light into the affair, and astonishing facts appeared. And what was even more stunning, those facts were of the concrete type, you could do something with them.

This was when Judith came on stage. She saw the chance and grabbed it. And what she found out was more than any one ever could have dreamt of.

One day the young couple felt ready to present their findings to the local public. A general meeting was called in.

“What are those papers of Hans Henny Henne all about?” Peter Adams opened the meeting, that later became the most famous introducing of the one and only ‘Slow-Motion-Enlarger-Spectroscope’.

“It had been my own order, my own system that is presenting now something absolutely astounding. In such a case you have to be very careful of course. Not Hans Henny Henne, but I drew the lines and found out about connections, the former inventor might not even have seen. This you have to keep in mind. What ever is going to follow, all kinds of risky conclusions and extravagant

musings – not to talk of mere speculations in this context that are pressing forward. However, they turned out to be useful not earlier than there were clues in some kind of reality, and be it the faintest, and even fainter than there could be. While Hans Henny Henne’s ideas cover the most unbelievable tiny dimensions you could think of, that is, in fact, you aren’t able to think of, because it has to do with thinking as such.

This is the dilemma. What ever goes on, it’s moving in so tiny intervals, that there is no meter yet. And this is where Hans Henny Henne comes in. He claims to have found a method of stretching the time – a kind of Slow-motion-technology in the nano-range. –

So far the first step, but that alone isn’t worth a dime. Because you have to see what you slowed down, and to do this, you have to enlarge the sight. Enlargement therefore is the second step.

The rest of the papers in the file deal with the construction of an apparatus bound to stretch time, so you can see tiny spots of light, after being enlarged enormously – that is a million fold or even more.

Slow-down and enlargement interrelate. Only what can be slowed down dramatically can become enlarged and made visible. This way it is possible by means of the Slow-Motion-Enlarger-Spectroscopy to get discernments into the Nano-verse. While the Nano-verse – I repeat myself – is far too small and short living for our dimensions and relations.”

The key-word Nano-verse had to be uttered and all who were in the know cocked up right away. The members of the General Assembly of both islands who had been interested in Hans Henny Henne’s testimony were alert now, no matter whether they’d been dreaming or drifting away in their minds.

“As long as Hans Henny Henne lived no-one tried to actually build a Slow-Motion-Enlarger-Spectroscope. Thanks to Judith, this has changed. Judith tackled the task and I proudly present some major targets has been achieved along the way to the distant final aim. But it’ll come, you’ll see.” Thus, Peter Adams finished his report.

Mrs. Judith Kornblum-Adams raised and all could see that she was in good hope. She was married for over a year meanwhile.

With a dramatic gesture she uncovered an apparatus that looked a little like a motorbike without wheels, while the handle-bar extended into something that reminded of an eye-doctor's Ophthalmic metre.

The handles on both sides of the bar were movable and served as adjusters of the picture the user saw when looking through the ocular.

"On the right you slow-down" the young woman explained – "and on the left you enlarge. A clear picture you get in the optimal focus of both adjusters.

- ...and more than that is not yet available, not at present, anyhow. But we are still in the beginning. This prototype is the only of its kind" she added with pride in her voice.

"...and built was it by the future Nobel-price winner of Nano-physics – Dr. Judith Kornblum-Adams" Peter added jocularly.

The audience raised to standing ovations and kept on for a good while. Judith tried to slow them down but didn't succeed. Finally she got hold of a microphone and screamed:

"Thank you, thank you so much, but I'm the wrong addressee. The honours deserve someone else. All I did was following the instructions. It's all in there..." and she lifted the heavy blue file, then turned away and stroke her belly, because of the turmoil inside. Her baby seemed not to like what was going on outside.

It took a little while until all calmed down. –

"Most important is the prime mover. It's functioning the same way as is the protective cloak. There are others who are more capable than I am to explain that, I'm sure. The Spectroscope derives its energy from similar sources..."

The defence shield was indeed a personal matter of Professor Scholasticus Slyboots meanwhile.

What was he allowed to disguise? Since that new encoding system the whole matter seemed rather save –

stressing on rather – While you could never be absolutely sure...

Scholasticus decided to keep covered. He knew how easy it was to blab things out. The less they knew the better, he thought. It was so easy for a witty thing to prattle away what he or she had heard. And soon all their safety was gone again. Well, not as a whole, but still. A lot of work had been invested in the new security concept, and a frustrating work as well had it been, so nobody cared for a second trial. Not to mention the enormous costs for the new device.

“There have been enough technological revolutions this day” he concluded his scarce remarks on the energy-concept. “Our energy-supply is efficient, clean, neural and more or less inexhaustible – that much I’m allowed to say, my dear ladies and gentlemen” Professor Slyboots ended his formal interlude and nodded at the Commissary Headmistress, who thankfully smiled back. Because the coming up point on the agenda – that was once again overloaded – was a matter of her own concern, and had to do with her position which was by now a little more defined again.

The assembly had to discuss and decide whether a double top was desirable or whether the whole institution should be kept in one hand.

Much spoke for the ‘Double Chair’ but as much spoke for the single – ‘Big Chair’ as well, the more so as you considered the ‘Hotel to the Hub of the World’ physically located between the institutions.

The most important question that had to be cleared was, if the matters of the School of Inbetween and those of the Island University were of different kind basically, as far as the administrative side was concerned, but also in other - more contextual regards.

Finally the colour-scheme and the screening of all applicants set the goal towards unification.

Marsha saw her chances fade. She wouldn’t dare to handle the whole lot, and would therefore not apply for the ‘Big Chair’ as she and her husband used to call the united top.

While Dorothea felt quite capable administrative-wise – now that Sulamith was no baby any more – and would have liked to go on with her successful management unhindered.

However, she didn't want to do it on Marsha's account, who she loved and regarded as a kind of motherly confidante. (They were some 20 years apart.)

Adrian had no decided point of view on that, except that he longed for a little more easiness for himself and his wife. Thus, the mega-job wouldn't suit his wishes – definitely not!

Insofar he did have an opinion at last. But he would have arranged himself as he always did, and would have probably extended his double life, as he knew himself with one foot amidst the mer-folk, so to speak, while the other was stuck comfortably at home in a cosy slipper.

In short, would things remain as they were, he would apply for the Vice-Headmaster again. But he wouldn't candidate if the other option succeeded.

That was a clear statement. Marsha was thankful for his openness, as it helped her with her own decision. She also announced that she would be available only for the 'Double Chair' and for no other option.

Thus, things were set, the assembly had to decide – and decided for the 'Double Chair'.

Was it a victory of reason or of weakness? In fact, nobody could imagine how to go on without Marsha, and on top of a University you needed a real Professor after all, this was universal consent. (Marsha was only 'some kind of Professor'.)

Thus, Marsha Wiggles-Humperdijk was elected Headmistress of the School of Inbetween and was appointed extra-ordinary Professor of Somnambular Affairs, while Scholasticus Slyboots was elected the first University President. Dorothea, his wife, was elected by a vast majority as the Administrative Director of the two subdivisions (including the 'Hotel of the Hub of the World'.)

And finally - Watchdog Will Wiesle was nominated Security-Manager, a job he deserved. Adrian was elected Vice-Headmaster again and Peter Adams became the

President's deputy. The assembly mounted into some kind of an election party.

The prototype of the Slow-Motion-Enlarger-Spectroscope – in short SLOMES - was the attraction of the party. Everybody wanted to have a quick look through the ocular, thus long queues built up for that. However, most stumbled away confused. They had looked into the starry sky by night with strange and other sights then the Milky Way showed, and didn't know what this meant.

Judith however confirmed to those who really wanted to know that they had indeed seen the most little matters of the world, that had been slowed down for them and made visible by enlargement.

“To be quite correct, we show some kind of film, we are able to manipulate. But we do not rape the Nano-world. Not all the world is been slowed down and enlarged inside, but only an image thereof, - thus we do hope and so it was laid down in Hans Henny Henne's script. His epochal work is going to be published soon, I do look forward to.”

Whether this explanation of Dr. Kornblum-Adams really improved understanding, could well be doubted. However, closer you didn't get to such phenomenon. That had nothing to do with Judith's ability, but with the complex matter as such.

44. Hans Henny Henne's Descent to Earth

Arundle didn't want to believe in coincidence. Oh no, they should have found such letters. That was fact. How did that work? First of all, Scholasticus realized the urgency of the matter, right away. Arundle tried to remember. Yes, Scholasticus found and regarded the letter absolutely interesting and informative.

How did he put it? By means of that letter Hans Henny Henne was not at all as harmless as he pretended. Instead, he was stuck in the same swamp as Arundle's father had been torn down.

Hans Henny Henne had been member of the Brotherhood of Infernalina, the letter clearly said, and that could easily be proved. The letter was supposed to be still somewhere up here. As far as she remembered, it had been Scholasticus who took it. She would ask him as soon as possible.

Therefore, they thought it logical then, that the Advisor and Anonymous had caught him, which only could mean that Hans Henny Henne was not as innocent as he pretended to be, while showing the mask of a tourist, interested in everything new and exciting.

All what happened to Peter Adams as a consequence – the enigma-trouble and his CIA encounter - hadn't been accidental either. Although, nobody could predict how greenhorn-like Peter stumbled into any possible trap.

Still it could well be, that they nourished a snake at their bosom, the poisonous bite of which Peter Adams caused so much pain, that he only managed to survive many months later, and was still being healed by his dear loving wife.

Not even the honeymoon was able to cover the wounds inside. Peter had come back from Guantanamo as someone else. He was not the same who had gone out in order to crack the enigma code.

What about the great invention and the construction plan of the SLOMES? Did this apparatus fit into the frame of a conspirator's assault?

However, a conspiracy might be planned for a later date. Or - perhaps Hans Henny Henne had not been ready, when he wrote that letter.

The idea, that the Brotherhood of Infernalina would have ignored such epochal piece of scientific work – was very unlikely, though. -

Slowing down the time, braking time down – that was it – that was what the Brotherhood had been

searching for so desperately and rigorously, minding no sacrifice or bloodshed.

Fact was, Hans Henny Henne had been in touch with the Brotherhood of Infernalina, there was no doubt possible.

What did the letter say? Arundle tried to remember, but it didn't help.

"So what" she thought "all I have to do is ask Scholasticus. He took the letter then – or didn't he?"

Scholasticus also remembered the letter, and like Arundle he remembered the contents of great importance, otherwise they wouldn't have been kept in the time-slope and catapulted down here to the moon. This was what Billy-Joe and Pooty confirmed anyway. The two had managed to get through the phase of silence both magicians covered up with, when they had to deal with 'the Incidence' as they called it.

There were areas none of the 'two-legged' was allowed to touch, the stone and the bow whispered at each other secretly in the shade of the night, while they put emphasis on 'two-legged', as if such were absolutely ridiculous clowns.

Only Pooty didn't see himself as 'two-legged', not in the sense of the meaning, anyhow. The fact, that he could move on two legs didn't make his front paws to arms, despite the fact that he could use his little fingers rather well.

Thus, he cocked up his ears on the other side on Billy-Joe's pontoon. He didn't understand every word, but that much he got. It had been the derivation that caused the landing prohibition, that had been sent from the highest source. While the diversion to the alternative destination, that was the moon of Laptopia, had been part of the landing instructions.

Ignorant as they had been, the Magic Stone and the Magic Bow had tried a forbidden landing all over again, until they had been threatened with severe punishment by the tower of the virtual Centre-Isle – the loss of the magical gift and license, in the end.

From that moment on things worked, just like that, and in no time the whole mishpoke met at the wrong target, that was the moon of Laptopia. Obviously being sent there by purpose.

Scholasticus had taken that letter. Billy-Joe recalled that too, and all of them had read it. But nobody remembered the exact phrasing, that had become important by now. Did the letter refer to the dismissal of Hans Henny Henne or was it an application of membership? Did he want to get in with his letter or did he try to avoid his dismissal?

Where was the letter? Scholasticus searched and rummaged around through all his many piles. He went in the institute and looked at home in his study. In Dorothea's office, and even in the Headmistress's office he had someone search. – All in vain; the letter couldn't be found, as if the earth had swallowed it. - Scholasticus blamed himself for his negligence.

As soon as it became clear that the letter couldn't be found, Scholasticus checked with Bill-Joe whether they got a second chance, and had him ask Arundle and her Magic Bow. They agreed right away and so did Pooty. If anything was wrong at all, it was the constant quarrel between the Magic Bow and the Magic Stone, who blamed each other for being responsible of the entry and landing prohibition, that however had nothing to do with them but had been charged for an entirely different reason. How else could the stubborn have been moved to search the moon-base carefully?

The most important they didn't find there yet, anyway. Therefore, the Advisor knew for sure that any future approach would be redirected towards the moon of Laptopia again.

The most stupid would eventually realize that things were strange. In order not to heat up frustration above boiling point, the Advisor sent Hans Henny Henne together with Anonymous down to the moon-base as well.

Anonymous was habitué there and was well acquainted with the whereabouts. And first of all he knew what kind of papers there still were.

Thing happened as predicted. The entry was prohibited again. This time for ‘humanitarian reasons’ so the travellers learnt, which sounded even more threadbare to the magicians than the previous diversion due to workload.

They didn’t fiddle around this time however, but follow the guiding ray to the Laptopian moon-base, where they arrived in no time well and safe. Anonymous and Hans Henny Henne were there, already waiting for them.

“You may excuse the Advisor”, Anonymous explained and Hans Henny Henne added “important state affairs”, and offered their help. First of all Hans Henny Henne, who was eager to please. He had a bad consciousness because of all the trouble he had caused – without purpose, though. Nobody had forced Peter Adams on that secret service trip, he had done on his own, and was responsible alone for what then came about. Had he not known that former co-student and mate he’d most likely avoided all the grief and trouble which came at him.

Anonymous was willing to give a detailed report on the former director of the Max-Planck-Institute, who had been Hans Henny Henne, then.

Being asked for that letter in question the space travellers had first found then lost lately on the moon base – Anonymous didn’t know either. Such a letter, he said, had never been at his disposal. As Chairman of the Brotherhood of Infernalía he had been informed about all important applicants, while the detailed recording had been in the hands of his former deputy.

Anonymous got sad and sighed, and you could see the pain in his face, the mentioning of ‘that person’ alone raised.

Hans Henny Henne couldn’t remember either. He was certain that he never had any contact with the

Brotherhood of Infernalía – the name as such was unknown to him, he said.

“However, such an institute is larger than you may think” he went on and looked so trustworthy that the alarm-bells started ringing in Billy-Joe’s mind. (Billy-Joe might have been the most sensitive one among the group of space travellers.)

Arundle and Scholasticus gazed also meaningfully at each other. Arundle was certain that someone who lacked of memory that way, had something to hide. Too many incidental circumstances seemed to be meeting here at once. This was certainly more than simple repression. It seemed almost, as if Hans Henny Henne was consciously negating this part of his past. And that would be something entirely different, if he did.

Arundle would have liked to have a word with the Advisor. But as he was not available, she stayed at her father’s side – at least she tried, because the latter stuck to his esoteric enrapture.

Besides, there was no chance of a private talk, because Hans Henny Henne was always present. Thus, you could hardly enquire about him.

They jointly searched the wide rooms of this Laptopian outpost instead – rather listless, as nothing was found except that common space junk of robots. The artifacts seemed to be taking care of the station very well, as far as the human side was concerned. While they cared little about themselves. The human guests felt lesser welcome the longer they stayed. They noticed some kind of atmospheric tension, they couldn’t explain. Thus Pooty asked Anonymous quite frankly whether he knew of the whereabouts, and he answered no less frank in a way that didn’t fit with the esoteric attitude of his.

“I have the clear advice to hand over Hans Henny Henne, who is bound earthwards again, for obvious reasons, although beyond understanding.”

While saying so, he faded and left the stunned party alone with Hans Henny Henne who looked quite surprised as well.

“That’s the way the Advisor is, he leaves the hard toil with others” Arundle commented the sudden

departure of her father, while imagining how hard such a decision had been for him.

Being confronted with the alternative of either remaining alone back up here on the space station or coming back to earth with the party, he chose the latter, the more so as late honour was waiting for him because of the career his inventions kept overcoming at the time being.

“Those Nazis like von Braun were no decent personalities either” Scholasticus was lecturing – “those allies were content with lip service. Nobody cared what it was like inside the hearts of such renegades – as long as they did a good job.”

In fact such musings were no part of his obligations, Arundle realized, but didn’t comment on that, instead she heard Scholasticus say

“So, you may join our little party, if you may...” and felt somehow disgusted. It was high time for Hans Henny Henne to prove his conscience before leaving with them. The Magic Stone would reject transport of a dubious character anyway, if things weren’t settled to his satisfaction beforehand.

“As a matter of fact, he has everything he needs up here” the Magic Stone uttered convincingly. He didn’t feel well with his rejection, either.

Hans Henny Henne was thus stuck halfway to earth and felt a little like Robinson Crusoe.

In no time the virtual spacecraft diminished in the endless width of space that was now flooding over the lonely man majestically, as soon as the talkative humans had gone. However, he was not in the mood of silent contemplation.

What should he do? What should he live on? How should he keep him busy? His papers were missing, and his laboratory anyway. In his panic he started searching the space station, but as he was an old man, his forces soon weakened, and he had himself settle on an old

strange looking couch, where he, as soon as he closed his eyes, fell asleep immediately.

At least in his dream he completed his earth-bound trip. As soon as the earth had him back, he felt sheer joy and unspeakable happiness. The fact alone that he felt life back again was of indescribable gaiety – that is to say of pulsating ease and snugness of the limbs, he had never felt before or just had forgotten how this felt.

As a scientist you didn't have time for such idle musings and introspection. This earth-trip might not be all in vain though, he felt forced to admit. And he wondered, why Robinson Crusoe didn't think about such matters – in his way.

When he awoke, he noticed a flock of servants surrounding him, who gazed very close with their x-ray eyes at him, thus he shrieked half awake. Who reckons with such surprise?

But then he recalled where he was, and he ordered a supper meal – something light, that wouldn't be irksome and heavy in the stomach as he yearned back into his dream.

Obedient a huge artifact with a large keyboard before his belly stepped forward and pointed with his scissor-hands at plate and cup on the right, as well as cutlery on the left, and invited Hans Henny Henne to help himself. And that he did.

However, the food was disappointing – some undefined stew of differentiating colours tasting dull. Listlessly the old man poked about on his dish and had a sip of the liquid that was supposed to be coffee.

He soon retired, and this time he went to a real bed, which he found next door, and slipped into an unexpected soft bed, covered by a cosy blanket, where he soon sank back into sleep.

Down on earth scruples arose in the meantime. Had it been really necessary to leave that old man alone up there on the Laptopian moon? Whose idea had that been, anyway?

However, Marsha (as soon as she learnt about the whereabouts) also agreed to have him simmer for a little

while. He might perhaps remember then what his relations had been with the Brotherhood of Infernalina.

Nobody wanted to blame him or strove for revenge. It was too late now anyway. However, he should realize that there was no ivory tower for scientists, where they could do what ever they wanted, without minding the consequences, while pending on the intentions of their investors. How else could that be?

Had they only found that blooming letter, proving such scruples. Ignoring facts didn't get the old Professor any further. That was why nobody supported Hans Henny Henne.

A careful health-check Hans Henny Henne had to undergo after his release from the claws of the artifacts. This brought clarity into the dubious twilight. The old Professor suffered from a light form of dementia. Therefore it had been no wonder that his memory failed.

As soon as this was made known, the Magic Bow and the Magic Stone felt ashamed for their lack of intuition, they had shown in the question of transport.

(A medical crew had been sent to the old Professor some days later, when the Advisor asked Arundle about the whereabouts of the returnee.)

There was then only one question left, and that was why heaven didn't accept him for good, but had sent him back to life.

On earth, things went their way, and Anonymous - who looked at things from above -, felt fits of homesickness and nostalgic awe – it had been such a nice time, though, at last after all - down there in the end.

The eager Judith Kornblum-Adams, who was sitting over the papers almost until the last labour-pains, was responsible that Hans Henny Henne's nano-experimental writings were not only published, but also received the attention they deserved.

After a delay of almost twenty years the Slow-Motion-Enlarger-Spectroscope that was built after his instructions, did work, while still pending on the energy grid of the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, which remained in secrecy, and wasn't mentioned in the papers either.

"One of my early sins" he called the secret installations inside of the Isle of Wisdom-tooth.

"Had been kind of final exam" he said. "Finished before I left for good... didn't return, though, until now, when I read this little ad, Dorothea had placed in all major papers around the globe."

45. SLOMES

Judith delivered twins – a boy and a girl. What a surprise. There were many twins surrounding, while there were no family-related equivalents, neither on her nor on Peters side, as far as he knew.

Peter was absolutely exited and Judith was absolutely exhausted. "That'd it been, then" she commented laconic as soon as she recovered a little from the complicated Caesarean-cut birth, after the medical staff of the little clinic on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth had done their best.

"Two are more than one" the men comforted the young father, who was thinking ahead already and meant to have to bury his dream of a large flock of children.

"Be thankful for everything that went alright. Imagine what could have happened..."

But Peter shut Adrian's mouth quickly. He didn't want to hear what could have happened, while the three weren't at home yet.

While Judith was busy otherwise, Grisella took over the attending of the senile young author. Five years after the sensational success of Anonymous' settling of scores with his former life as the Chairman of the secret

Brotherhood of Infernalía, it was high time for another highlight.

The world was waiting for such an advancement. Everywhere you could see cracks in the morose stag of the money-system. Exchange bourses emerged, favoured by the Internet and span about the globe, basing on trust for trust.

The crime rate was extremely low here, and fell under one percent – favourably reckoned. While realistically you didn't jump over the five percent hurdle either.

What ever occurred in the field of the big change in paradigm could be certain of a broad public interest. The discernments into the Nanoverse by Hans Henny Henne fitted well into that frame, and had reverence to the phenomenon of the present. No matter whether most had only a very faint idea of that matter.

All the better worked his instructions for the Slow-Motion-Enlarger-Spectroscope. These instructions were precise and clear. Rough estimates figured that some two million SLOMES were built in the first half year after discovery. How many of them actually were put to work and functioned accurately, couldn't be found out and was of little interest for the media and the public.

A clever small firm offered construction sets in a kombi-pack. If you ordered one set, you were offered a second or even a third set, if you agreed to build these as well on your own account. As soon as you delivered five completed functioning sets, your own one was free of charge, because you had paid with part of your life-time, right in the sense of the new times.

This procedure increased the number of SLOMES-permits dramatically, and the state was beginning to show interest as well, because it was in desperate need for liquidity.

Around the world meanwhile some three hundred thousand billions were short, therefore any additional tax was most welcome. While the fees could be granted either in labour-credits or cash.

In many countries every third citizen soon owned a Negative-Credit-Account and could be sent to labour-

camps during his annual vacation, where he had to spend his time. Being granted free meals and accommodation.

Mostly young people enjoyed this possibility and acquired all kinds of more or less useful things like the SLOMES – which was pretty useless – being looked at in the light of the day.

What ever could be purchased that way was taken into the NCA-system (Negative Credit Account system). Until someone made the most stunning discovery of the century.

Perhaps it was only a rumour, spread by the Mega-Global-Player, the SLOMES-Ltd meanwhile had become.

Two hours of meditation in front of the SLOMES gained two extra hours in life-time.

Someone who – let's say got seated in front of the SLOMES by eleven o'clock, awoke after two hours of meditation not at one o'clock, but still at eleven o'clock. As was shown on the clock installed in the Spectroscope steering device, where the two handles for slow-down or enlargements were fitted as well.

The effect had most likely to do with the slow-down lever. Because all other watches in the room or house were bothered only very little.

Still, the absolvent of such a procedure felt refreshed and restored all over. Whether this was only a Placebo-effect or real didn't really bother – because people tuned in on such procedure, and soon a vast minority of households called such an apparatus its own. In no time almost a billion people had access to such a SLOMES.

The SLOMES took over from the TV-set and Internet devices. Regular cueing in front of the home-spectroscope became common, so that multiple sets were developed with two or even three users at a time, that were later increased up to five and finally even ten users, who were allowed to take a refreshing look into the nanoverse at the same time.

Such comfort did of course cost. For a moderate device with five sets you were charged some twenty credits.

“Sounds, kind of overcharged in the first place but if broken down into five parts, such twenty credits for five or even ten persons was a relatively moderate price per head of just about two years. And this amount could be split or even transferred...” the advertising said, and was answering the most common worries of potential clients, who were interested - or already partly convinced - in the latest model of a multi-settee SLOMES.

The design had been improved meanwhile. The new SLOMES didn't look like an altered motorbike or a disguised home-trainer.

In the governmental supported SLOMES-factories there were some 500.000 creditors working meanwhile, getting rid of their debts. Depending on talent and education they produced or administered, or they pampered and educated –just as in real life.

Those creditors were dwelling in huge labour-camps. They were fed and cared for to their satisfaction. They only lacked freedom. – Many of them were later remembering that time as the best time of their lives.

Others saw it somewhat different, when they figured and reckoned that they spent more time in the labour-camp than they saved while sitting in front of the SLOMES set at home.

Still, the age of the people increased considerably, statistics figured out since the invention of the SLOMES, from 75 to 80 years. One hundred years were soon no exception any more, but became average soon. And most important, the aged didn't show. They looked fit and lively, and for those, who couldn't cope for several reasons, good care was available, thanks to the many creditors who had to pay their debts in time.

Besides, the spare-part and transplantation medicine didn't sleep either – quite the opposite, because the demand jumped up just like that, because the common precarious organs like kidneys, heart, liver, lungs and joints as well as arteries and vessels formed the neuralgic weaknesses. Despite the fact that most forms of cancer were on the decline. The slowdown of the tiniest

particles had obviously positive side-effects. Cancer-cells either degenerated or slowed down in growth.

The brain was also considered. All kinds of clone-models were bred in secrecy for ethical reasons, but didn't prove suitable for other reasons: cloned brains lacked of life-experience. Identity transfers didn't work.

Ethically acceptable were only the voluntary donations of organs – which were of course a very limited sector. While the breeding of organs on the basis of extracted cells was a more promising field of research. The biggest problem here was the time-factor. In most cases the demand was ordered far too late, thus the breeding had to be based on insufficient material or there was no time for ripening the organ before transplantation.

Say – you needed a new liver – then the organ was too damaged already. Therefore considerations of installing organ banks at an early stage were earnestly undertaken. And spare-part-plants for those who could afford it, were installed, where you could order either your own breed or closely related tissue.

Those, who cared for an own depot had to pay some hundred credits, which was for the time being practically impossible – while you had the choice for a certain period of time of substituting this by a bail of half a million either \$ or €.

The medical procedure worked well. All you had to do was to extract some cells of the specific organ and put them into a breeder and had the organ grow. For able physicists or biologists this was no big affair any more, and was done already manifold, thus, the rumour went.

The breeding of hearts and brains was still crucial when it came to the aesthetics who believed such organs to be the seat of the human soul and individuality.

While the mechanotronics amongst the specialists in matters of transplantation medicine didn't sleep either, but noticed the signs of time by coming forward with divers bionic models, especially those concerning the heart, that hadn't yet been successfully cloned so far, for the given reasons.

Their strength was the combination of inorganic and organic materials. Plaque-resistant platinum-pipes

replaced the coronary vessels and electronic stimulators took over or supported the functions of the atrium.

Hans Henny Henne – meanwhile his own regular client with the SLOMES – accepted at the age of one hundred the Nobel-prize for Medicine in Stockholm. His outstanding performance however became thus reduced to a practical side-effect. But he let things go as they went, as he had been a timid person all his life long, and didn't change now after his resurrection.

He still hadn't overcome the accusations of his new friends, but he had nothing to reproach himself with. He had never had anything to do with the criminal organisation he had been accused to be member. While the veils of forgetfulness sank down over him – in his case a very special form of dementia, he himself managed to stop, by having all his brain-contents transferred on a mini-disk, he could get access to by the sane part of his brain.

As part of the disease the cerebrum and the cerebral cortex were affected by the degeneration, thus it was advisable to refer to more basic brain-parts, which were very capable of taking over steering functions.

Arundle wondered meanwhile whether the Advisor had pulled their legs with Hans Henny Henne, and so did Billy-Joe. – Both made friends with the friendly old man instead, and soon became used to the somewhat bewildering hesitant processes of the intellectual apparatus, because of the mechanotronic peculiarities of his cabled brain.

As a matter of fact, Hans Henny Henne was wholly present and thus he seriously wondered whether he should try an engagement in his old days, and begged for Susamee's hand, who in fact denied, because she didn't want to offend Watchdog Will Wiesle. His friend she would enjoy to be, she let him know coquettishly.

“Never displace an old tree” she jovially said in good mood. Such a proposal she didn’t get any day, the less as since by a Nobel-prize winner.

The blooming crucial letter that had caused all the mistrust was found as a reading marker in one of Scholasticus’ port-folios, and was found by mere accident.

The Professor had no idea how the letter could have got there. The letter denied a request of cooperation, and was by style and contents a typical standard letter of denial, as they were sent by secretaries on their own.

Thus it hadn’t been dementia that caused Hans Henny Henne to forget about this letter. He had most likely never seen it, but had routinely signed it with the mail.

Sulamith Slyboots joined the Primary School when the Adams-twins were just about to start walking. Their mother, Judith Kornblum-Adams, had been honoured together with Hans Henny Henne in Stockholm likewise for her part. After all, she had been the first who managed to construct a functioning SLOMES.

SLOMES Ltd was then founded on her initiative and still was some kind of family affair of the Kornblums while expanding these days incredibly.

The further Arundle and Billy-Joe went with their studies, the less the Advisor was to be seen. Perhaps they now became too old for such kind of visions, they wondered, because they both couldn’t think of a better reason. Neither the Magic Bow nor the Magic Stone provided them with explanations of any kind. Had they overdone on their divine account when they asked for Hans Henny Henne’s resurrection?

While in the aftermath it looked as if Hans Henny Henne’s return to earth had been the best that could have happened to him in his life.

Billy-Joe made it a point of honour, and so did Arundle to strive for a doctor's degree. They were both brooding over their dissertation, which ate him up, as the Magic Stone noticed with frustration. So the stone talked things over with Pooty in sinister darkness of the Medicine Pouch, whether they should look for a more capable bearer.

They soon agreed on someone and had it not been necessary to change places over a larger distance, they would have done the change right away. But as it was, they shied away from this step, the more so as it would have meant the separation from the Magic Bow as well.

Arundle was perhaps only a little more disciplined. She did at least one hour of intensive exercising with her bow daily, and trained conventional bowing as a means of balancing the lengthy sessions behind the desk.

The bow enjoyed the sportive experience, and sometimes, when he was in the mood, he played her pranks by setting each arrow into the centre, or had her fail each shot, as he pleased.

Therefore, it was a real surprise for the Magic Stone when he and the Magic Bow were asked to set course on the virtual centre of all galaxies, in order to pay a visit to the Advisor and Anonymous – a very last visit, so they understood. While they both knew very well, that such silent thinking didn't mean a thing over here.

The ancient Emeritus Hans Henny Henne was available, but Arundle and Billy-Joe had more and better ideas. They intended to ask the Advisor and Anonymous whether they would counter-read their dissertations as co-examiners – a very disgraceful role, in fact, nobody was delighted of. Both of their themes were closely related to the subjects of interest they shared.

While Arundle wouldn't have been able to say where the interests on the side of the Advisor was located. It had been just a feeling of hers, that shouldn't cheat her, she hoped. She meant to have heard a clear 'yes' from the Advisor already.

She was now only after a definite agreement from his side, and didn't consider a negative reply, which might turn out to be a big mistake. You just couldn't

force the Advisor, no matter how clear-cut logic seemed. She might be overestimating her intentions immeasurably. While first of all, they had to achieve a meeting as such.

Besides, she was looking forward to meet her father again, whom she had to give regards from earth. Mrs. Waldschmitt had escaped her tax-consultant-office once more. And this time mother and daughter intended to visit the picturesque New Zealand. Right now, Mrs. Waldschmitt spent her last days before the return flight on Billy-Joes pontoon down there in the hotel resort of the 'Hub of the World'.

Billy-Joe had changed subjects after leaving the School of Inbetween and turned to the social consequences of the physically inclined change of paradigms.

Since the fundamental discourse between the so-called Isolationists and the so-called World-Citizens his ideas were circling around the social consequences of the change of paradigms – and how this change could be influenced. He as well was convinced of the upcoming of that change.

Anonymous was the authentic prophet since he published his epochal work on the failures and mishaps coming along with the change. Therefore Billy-Joe not only wanted to get support from him, but also confirmation for his isolationist approach.

Was it because of the good intentions, that the mood as a whole was positive on the imperial isle out there in the far no-where? The visitors swayed in nevertheless, and right away without any trouble. They landed right at the bottom of the imperial swing-chairs, which started swaying right away, and were put into ever more hefty swinging, as Arundle had never experienced for years – not in her presence, she recalled, that is, she didn't recall.

The Advisor was usually hiding behind one of these pillars, to appear unexpectedly. So he did this time as well. Billy-Joe faced a strong fits of disappointment,

because he couldn't see Anonymous accompanying the Advisor, when the latter jumped in with an elegant hop down from one of the swinging chairs. Just when the chair almost met the ground. He stepped aside like an exerciser after a performance on the bars, put his arms to the sides and bowed courteously.

Billy-Joe and Arundle bowed no less respectful and Billy-Joe even bowed and scraped and waved a non-existent hat, as he had seen from South-Michel.

Anonymous smiled imperially and much Rolandus-like already, his daughter realized not without a first trace of timid admiration. If she would tell mother, she wouldn't believe it or bust of pride, she thought, and Anonymous smiled some degrees more favourable.

For a family chat the matter was too official, they all noticed, and kept in line and stuck to their roles. The more so as the Advisor asked Arundle formally for their demand.

She told him right away, as far as her own request was concerned, and received all the answers she had longed for, and stenographed them down on her scratch-pad she had taken with her.

The Emperor grabbed Billy-Joe's arm and stepped aside down along the colonnade with a philosopher's gesture. Billy-Joe respectfully listened and stenographed eagerly as well what ever came from the celebrate mouth, and soon felt forced and confirmed.

More personal questions the protocol didn't allow. Two strong guys grabbed for the swinging chairs and a third heaved the Emperor in the seat, and up he went to the top, where a green faced princess, who was fed up with the pomp, had been swinging all alone, despite the fact that she suffered from sea-sickness.

Was the Princess a natural daughter, Arundle wanted to know. Up to now she had felt certain to be her father's only child. – How you can err! The Advisor broke into a Homeric laughter, and the whole court tuned in, and even Billy-Joe was affected. Was there something all other dug but she didn't?

The audience was over. The swinging chairs disappeared in the background, and cold fog came up out

there, which mortals better avoided. So they covered with their protective gear and had the Magic Bow and the Magic Stone do their job.

46. The Natural Daughter

“Has Daddy a second child?” – Arundle busted forth as soon as the line was set and her mother was heard finally. Mrs. Waldschmitt had actually only called in order to confirm that she had arrived sound and safe back in old Germany. Arundle couldn’t care less, and told her mother what she just had found out about her father, and what he had become meanwhile.

“Imagine his new occupation is Emperor, and he is called Rolandus. Well, and the green-faced person next to him in these swinging chairs, claims to be his natural daughter.”

Arundle was stressing on the term natural as unnatural as possible, in order to focus on its importance.

Mrs. Waldschmitt looked bewildered at her phone than hung in for the time being. It was high time for the little one to become acquainted with the economical sides of life, as could be shown right now.

She went to her office and had an Internet connection installed, which didn’t cost a penny, but was covered by the flat rate anyway. It took a while until Arundle was found. So Mrs. Waldschmitt took the chance to glance over the incoming mail – a big pile had been gathered during her absence, which hadn’t been worked through because it was private mail.

A nice side effect of such cam-corder-connections was that you needn’t press the lever to your ear but could talk freely in the range of the microphone.

A pompous envelope with a picturesque huge stamp raised her curiosity. It contained a letter announcing the following:

<His Imperial Majesty’s Entourage has the Honour of inviting Mistress Elvira Fedora Waldschmitt to take

part in the Enthronisation of His Regal Highness Emperor Rolandus in Galactica on Doomsday of the Year One of the Renewed Kingdom of Heaven.>

Mrs. Waldschmitt examined the letter and the envelope from all sides, and even turned the inside out for any further advice, but in vain. So she dropped the thing in the waste, thinking it to be a new advertising strategy for some sort of perfume, as the stench still stood in the room, that evaporated from the card.

Arundle had arrived finally and waved her arms to raise attention. So Mrs. Waldschmitt forgot about that funny advertisement and tried to satisfy her daughter's curiosity.

However, it wasn't very much she could say about that so-called natural daughter. So Arundle explained what she had found out and what had happened on that virtual intergalactic centre. Her mother was all astounded how far her daughter came about.

"Emperor Rolandus, you say?" – she asked and fished the smelly card out of the bin again.

"I think, I do have something for you" she said, noticing that the letter had been from her former husband - that is to say – about him, to be precise.

"Seems to be a rather set character. After all, a notification. An invitation might have been more appropriate, though. On the other hand, if you consider the location... Might have been somewhat troublesome to get there, anyway..."

Arundle eased her down by pointing out that she hadn't even got such a notification, but became aware right now only of that enthronisation that must have been taken place just recently.

"And I thought I could tell you something real thrilling about Dad.

Well, that's quite something, isn't it? He and Emperor – and you should have seen this entourage, that is marching in every time. It seems, as if they all are named Rolandus, because the Emperor we met years ago was also an Emperor Rolandus, am I right, Billy-Joe?" she said and turned to the background where Billy-Joe uttered an almost silent 'Yes'.

“As a matter of fact, we are looking for a second evaluator for our dissertations, you ought to know. And Billy-Joe was thinking that Anonymous would be just right, because he is on the same wave... – at least, that is, what Billy-Joe has on his mind. But that doesn’t work any more, of course, as Anonymous has now become Emperor, and most likely won’t be able to do the job, - or is he still, Billy-Joe?”

Billy-Joe nodded fiercely still in the background. “Has given me some helpful hints” he said somewhat self content.

Mother and daughter looked at each other meaningfully, as far as this could be done via camcorder, because they remembered the communication between the two rather different persons, but that was way back and years ago, and a long time before Mr Waldschmitt’s Great conversional Awakening, so to speak.

While her half-sister became more familiar, Arundle felt a certain shyness, when thinking of her. She even infested her mother, who seemed to feel something even through the web, at least she thought so.

“That’s the way, a mother feels” Mrs. Waldschmitt thought and thus empathically took part in the confusion her daughter was in.

In a way Arundle was glad that she hadn’t to sit on such shaky seat for the time of the ceremony. On the other hand she felt a stitch of jealousy for being put back.

But Arundle didn’t want to analyse her confusion. Still she checked in Dorothea’s big lexicon in the office, where she had been called. (Billy-Joe took over meanwhile and exchanged some small talk with her mother.) First of all, Arundle wanted to find out, what a natural daughter was, after all.

In the lexicon she found out that this referred to children of unmarried women whose fathers were married otherwise or not married at all, as were the women in most cases. In former times begot by the feudal lords, who behaved like madmen. Worst in times of absolutism and later on in the pseudo-feudal

slaveholder system of the Southern States of the later United States of America.

After Arundle had read that, Billy-Joe tried to bring her down. He did this with the gentle smile of his, you couldn't resist. "The Advisor", he said, "had called the Princess a natural daughter of the Emperor only to confuse Arundle. His intention had been to get her out of her camouflage, and that trick had been successful, as could be seen", he went on. – "The Princess as such didn't show much natural appeal. While this was of course a matter of interpretation."

Mrs. Waldschmitt understood and didn't understand likewise.

"Didn't work, after all. Arundle couldn't be tempted" Billy-Joe added. "Arundle didn't tune in on the bail. Perhaps, because we all had to laugh" – and confused the poor mother with that completely, who still stayed in front of the cam-corder.

"Quite an amazing thing" she mentioned again and again, whenever quietness broke out, nodding towards the screen with her raised chin - waiting for the things to come.

Arundle had gone to the washroom, so Billy-Joe was all free to explain to Mrs. Waldschmitt the complex emotional situation, resulting from the appearance of that Princess. "Arundle couldn't help it, - has been having feared such facts for a long time before" he thoughtfully went on.

Mrs. Waldschmitt thought to know somewhat better what was going on in her daughter. She therefore wanted to find out when the princess showed up for the first time, in the mentioned manner, and made Billy-Joe wonder how she could know intimate facts like that at all.

But than Arundle was back and Billy-Joe swallowed half of the sentence that lay on his tongue, so to speak.

"We are, who we are" he intended to say. But then he thought of the Shaman of the Churingas, who was getting nearer to him likewise. He was less than a hundred years away meanwhile, and got closer any day,

he figured, while he was soon celebrating his twenty-fifth birthday.

“You do have to keep in mind, what time is doing with you” he said to Mrs. Waldschmitt just like that, now, while Arundle was listening. “See, and reckon how much time a hundred years are. If you look at that, you surely get rid of the fear you alter ego is pressing on you, as it appears to be rather unreal. Perhaps we do overestimate our abilities of dreaming and wandering places, now with the web, where all people are interconnected worldwide, and can speak and see each other any time. All we have to do is go online, that’s all. Everything is much more definite by now. Only along the time-scale we can’t go on that way. But that will come as well.”

Billy-Joe’s thoughts took him away into the wide lands of philosophy. He forgot about Mrs. Waldschmitt, who was still sitting in front of her cam-corder, and didn’t dare to leave the room. She was rather astonished and listened as well as she could, while Arundle showed signs of impatience, and finally broke out, when Billy-Joe had to take a deep breath.

She pushed him aside, looked intensely at her mother through the ocular and wanted to find out now. So, Mrs. Waldschmitt confessed at last, what Arundle had suspected already, and that was a meaningful liaison of her father.

“A kind of early wrong-doing in his youth, as he confessed to me. - he had lost out of sight for good many years... - and then you came, and everything was all different from then on, you know, you were our real and only child...”

Arundle learnt only little more than she had known before, despite the fact that she knew now for sure, and needn’t rely on assumptions.

“You are becoming twenty three years of age, without knowing such basics. What did you think of that? Did you think an only child is not interested in such facts? How much did I long for a sister. How much did I envy Florinna and Corinia.”

Now, it was a little late for such accusations, Mrs. Waldschmitt thought. She was the wrong addressee, after all. It was Roland who had failed.

It was high time to say good bye. Mrs. Waldschmitt had been underway for twenty four hours, and the fact that she slept some hours on the plane changed little. She longed for a real bed. Even more so as Arundle seemed to give in and accept the facts as such. Things couldn't be changed anyway. Definitely not from her side.

"We'll stay in touch, I promise, have a nice time, dear."

At least Arundle knew about the facts - or what she thought the facts were. Because things weren't as simple as she put them. Reality still was more complex than that, and was by far less simple.

With her musings on the parallel worlds she had been closer to the truth than ever since, but she didn't focus on that right now - and in this context, for whatever reason.

For the time being she felt rather content of not having to sit green-faced on a rocking chair in one hundred years, and work through that silly protocol of a court, beside all other negative outlooks on the future.

This was the one side, but when she thought of the Advisor, things looked much different. She did enjoy the conversations with him. And if she had to renounce such talks for some time, because the Advisor didn't care for her, or for what ever reason, she missed something precious and important in her life.

Being her co-examiner for the time being, he couldn't slip away during the coming up months, because he had firmly agreed on the job. Well, he did, or didn't he? She wasn't all that certain now.

In her ideas she was living in her own worlds anyway. Therefore, her dissertation also dealt with the phenomena of time in the poly-verse. She was absorbed by that and could dive into this poly-verse like into the dream-world, she never questioned, but raised stability from there by defining the reality basically new and

founded it on conceivability and imaginable probability.

Arundle thus raised the thoughts into reality and put it on the same level as the so-called solid facts of the material world.

Because the deeper you explored the so-called facts, the more vague they became. As to her definition not only the concrete was real, but also everything else that could be imagined and thought.

By that she extended the limits of understanding, which had become obsolete anyway, but still limited the thinking and the research in physics and sciences in general.

Still, Arundle noticed new and other limitations, as they arose from the verbal conditions of human being. Because imagination and thinking were following the inherited tracks of tradition. No matter how free an individual felt. The horizon remained thus tight.

All what could be imagined was still just a faint veil of the possible and unimaginable. Confronted with the opening up of such realities, the human imagination proved itself as a meagre little daisy amidst the splendour of orchids of Amazonia, or perhaps a little closer – in the wide sea of Dutch tulip-breeding, while daisy won't grow in Amazonia.

The unimaginable possibilities form a powerful factor, which cannot be dealt with in language alone, in order to think it or transform into language. The researcher will experience similar discernments as the biologist in the secret depths of the oceans, where he discovers beings of an indescribable singularity. Beings so strange, that no-one could ever dream of them. The human imagination just lacks and fails.

Arundle didn't want to go deeper into detail down here at the bottom of the sea, when it came to the merfolk. There were surely hundreds, or even thousands of strange forms of life, not the most excessive imagination could dream of. Same as we are being left alone with the unspeakable.

With her mentor Arundle discussed regularly and in detail every week the progress her dissertation made, and

was generally well accepted. Grisella was proud of her disciple, even more so as she knew her from the early days of childhood, and had guided her progress in life.

That much time had passed, and so much had happened. Arundle was like a daughter to her, she well felt when they sat together in grounding exchange of ideas and thoughts.

Arundle would make her way and would stick to her mission. That was very clear to the Professor, no matter how vague the outlook still was. Having her as assistant would be quite something the Professor mused and felt happy about the facilities available now. She could do her best to grant Arundle's career.

One step on her ladder of emancipation was to get rid of the Advisor's ties, whom she didn't find qualified as co-editor. But how could she make that clear to Arundle? And how could she do it in a way she accepted it?

Arundle was still living in her worlds like she had been doing ever since and often enough the layers of reality mingled and couldn't be clearly separated.

As a student she should have known that you could only nominate a real Professor holding a *venia legendi* (life-long permission for lecturing) as examiner or co-examiner.

This is what Grisella was thinking when she felt a slight fits of nuisance. There might be hiding a rather exulted little Princess in her darling.

She laughed partly angry, but also passionate. She did know Arundle's difficulties with that so-called 'natural daughter' of her father, who had altered so dramatically, and had even become Emperor at last – what a career.

However, such title didn't replace a proper nomination over here. While she didn't doubt that Anonymous with his epochal best-seller would have made it at almost any university.

While she thought that, Grisella noticed her mistake. She had mixed Arundle up with her friend Billy-

Joe, funny enough, while the so-called Advisor was even worse, who was Arundle's first choice.

So she secretly arranged with Scholasticus to countercheck the dissertations of their disciples in reverse, thus avoiding any probable congestion or distraction, from what ever side in the future.

Despite such worries she was also very keen on Billy-Joe's writings, which had to do with the late quarrels between the so-called Isolationists and the so-called World Citizens, right here, on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth.

Scholasticus also saw the point in the argument. He knew that the consciousness of the average Physician ended at the gate to the ivory tower, where he sat in, researching. "Not only the consciousness of you physicians is ending right there" Grisella said while she was talking with her brother-in-law about their two disciples, who were now mutually accepted on both sides.

They were convinced of the quality and originality of both dissertations, despite the fact that they were still in the process of becoming established.

47. Here-Site and Now-Time

"What about a sample? I'm really curious. I'm sure you have something for me" Grisella wanted to know and pushed her encouragingly in the side. She knew, she was right. "Just load me something down on my laptop, will you? I'm really curious meanwhile. Besides, I do have a little spare time right now."

Arundle didn't think twice, but did as she was told.

"In the beginning you find a refection on the essence of time – as a beginning..." she said as casually as possible – "titled:

<Here-Site and Now-Time>

Time used to be a kind of convention. Right from the beginning, people used the heart-beat at ease as the

basic metre. While the sequence of days and seasons were deriving naturally, you could more or less precise divide, being a local agreement, that could be altered by necessity, and calendars were set by the movements of stars and planets. Conditioned by season and the eclipse of the sun, days were regionally of rather different length, while the female cycle of the moon added the months and supplemented the years and seasons.”

Thus it went on – that the adjacent tribal culture didn’t have a linear understanding of time, but understood life in cycles, following and taking over from each other in the same cyclic manner.

Grisella stopped. She couldn’t yet see clearly where this long-winded reflection aimed. You could see the effort, and the resentments of the so-called Isolationists, you could also discover. However, Arundle didn’t glorify anything, as others did. She didn’t idealize this first form of social organisation to the lost paradise. She didn’t reflect on the mystic advantages of such a way of life in close relation with nature.

However, that might follow soon. Only that much the young author wanted to make clear. Mankind didn’t need an idea of time on that level of culture, and therefore didn’t develop one.

Grisella stopped again. She looked on her watch. She still had some minutes.

Instead of looking closer at the advantages of the tribal culture, Arundle turned to Monotheism – the early fruit of the Israelite tribes. The Israelites failed to overcome the shortcomings of magic transcendence, but lost instead the advantages of such nature-bound dwelling.

Reference to the German romantic period intended to prove such, however didn’t meet the point – Grisella realized. This might be worth while discussing. She would surly be able to stimulate more and more precise arguments.

She stopped reading and went for lunch. In the afternoon she would meet Arundle anyway during the office hour, as was agreed.

In the meeting she confronted Arundle with harsh critique: “Where the mystic correlation with the forces of nature is lost, God becomes jailed in the triangle of rite, sacrifice and punishment. The own spirit becomes obsolete, because the own needs overwhelm all inspiration. The voices from the transcendence hardly pass through the screams of agony.”

Arundle nodded and took notes eagerly, then she added agreeing: “Yes, even Billy-Joe’s Churingas did better than that – well that is – are going to do better in the far future. – The fact, that tribal cultures cannot become extinct, indicate, how vital they are, and that they bring along something of great importance that is essential for all other forms of culture” Arundle agreed to what her Professor had said. She would certainly take up the criticism.

They might even be on the train of discovering the beginning of the Cardinal Mistake, that might be found at the verge of change from tribal cultures to antique city-states related with monotheism, that was developing antithetic.

“The question is, whether loss and gain are in balance and if human life became fuller”, Arundle added to what she had said before.

Since she was able to look into Billy-Joe’s self (whom she took as a representative of the tribal culture – which might not be wholly true.) And since she understood his way of organizing his life to a certain extend, - this way of life appeared to her like an unreachable ideal of human culture, rather than an accidental step aside on Man’s way to fulfilment and extensive development and unfolding of all sources and potentials.

“The phase of pantheistic presence, when Man was able to realize the divine reality, is indeed fascinating”, Grisella put in. “ In fact, if you only look at the demons of the black magicians you may feel creepy. But people like the Shamaness Susamee or Billy-Joe, Pooty and Walter show a tremendous lot of knowledge and a kind of wisdom, that is not only sympathetic but cannot be reach on otherwise”, Grisella was speeding up.

“We’re only short of South-Michel now”, Arundle thought and asked herself if the dwarves would also be subsumed under the category of tribal culture, or even the mer-folk...

“You mustn’t have too tight a look, I’d say” Grisella nodded agreeing, as if she had read the thoughts. An ability, that was trained over here in the School of Inbetween.

“Things like that were lost in the so-called process of civilisation. Very few do believe in the art of thought-reading or train it systematically, like we do” Arundle wondered, and Grisella nodded again, as if she had understood.

Arundle glanced over her script. Grisella looked on the watch. The hour had passed just like that and outside somebody else was surely waiting, indicating how fast the time had passed.

So they parted. At the latest in a week’s time they would meet again. Grisella intended to read on, as well as she could. And that she did.

She learned of the epochal deed of a Jewish prophet of Nazareth, who turned thing upside down by sacrificing the flesh-derived God for Mankind in order to get Man out of the creational generality of all beings. By way of this means, they received indeed the necessary value to become worth the sacrifice, which had long-term and lasting consequences, Arundle was able to show and describe in congenial phrasing, Grisella liked best, because it reflected her subject and fitted well in.

While to the end Arundle’s turning towards Christianity seemed Grisella kind of patch pocketed. Perhaps she overdid a bit, by pretending to know God’s thoughts. Or had that really been laid down in the scriptures?

Vaguely she recalled the famous sermon on the mountain. Perhaps Arundle’s impudence was based on that sermon, and was no impudence after all?

The contradiction that tore the medieval society apart was well extracted and outlined. Arundle was in command of a light attitude, touching the subjects and

have them show up for short periods of time then disappear again, without really getting lost. Grisella was delighted.

The further she read on, the more she was attracted by the historical frame that was outlined. Arundle connected in great wide lines the millenniums and centennials interrelating them with modern guidelines of scientific and philosophical provenience.

Of help might have been without doubt by now to focus on the being as such. Otherwise the script could be mistaken as idealistic and would lead the reader astray on a very wrong track. It was high time to have the reader enter the world of quark and quantum, Grisella felt. However, that would certainly come soon.

First of all, Arundle was on a good track, Grisella concluded and grabbed for the script, she had put aside in reflection to read on.

Her expectations were not disappointed. Arundle referred to Marx' praise of the classless society and the empire of freedom Marx had in mind that was so closely related to the Empire of God as the Nazarene had exemplified in several allegories which were nurtured by the same teleological mode, as most clearly demonstrated in the following allegory:

Another parable he put before them, saying: '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, 31-32)

The German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel procured the same parable by replacing the grain of mustard seed by an acorn, Arundle found out.

The reason, why the German philosopher preferred the acorn to the grain of mustard seed, was perhaps that he didn't know or didn't expect his readers to know the mustard shrub or tree, but was familiar with the generating of oak-trees – as Arundle somewhat mockingly concluded.

The history of Mankind would be then reflected by the parable of the acorn, just the same as by the grain of mustard seed, because the acorn also becomes the biggest of all trees in the German forests.

The social growth as seen by the Nazarene or the German philosopher – was likewise regarded as a natural affair, as if things grew just like that. A view that was severely opposed by Karl Marx, who explained and described such growth as the most dramatic and fundamental class struggles, generating by dialectical method the growth of Man.

Marx on the other hand neglected the sheer biomass of Man, that is approaching the tenth billion in the 21st century and is exceeding all boundaries of human imagination, just by number and incalculable potencies of productivity and inventive spirit.

Mankind's growing – as Grisella's disciple put it – not in biological terms alone, but also 'humanise' covering all dimensions of humanness.

If you only looked at the nightmare of the amorphous chaotic mass, you reflected a strange picture of Man. Such a human neglects his own potentials, and has no trust in the collective corrective, which always comes too late, but still does its job most stunningly, and seeks its track, coming from a wholly unexpected side.

Arundle was on the right track. Grisella found herself confirmed the most stimulating way, and felt reminded of her own dreams of her youth, she had nurtured deep in her heart, buried there, but never forgotten.

Now she could see them growing up, and blossoming in the nicest possible way, being enriched in humanised terms.

48. The Feast

The job was done. Arundle and Billy-Joe received their doctors' hats in a ceremony that turned out to be more sophisticated than expected, and received their diplomas – the first ones of the newly appointed Island-University. The whole staffs were very proud and proudest of all was the President, Professor Scholasticus Slyboots.

Meanwhile the corridors didn't echo the rare steps of passer-bys. The institution was humming of life everywhere on all 24 levels of the subsoil building.

And still were craftsmen of all kinds busy in the hidden corridors and caves in the back of the soele. South-Michel's dwarves couldn't be stopped. However, orderly experts from the architect's office also mingled to give the bustle a formal touch.

The investigation of the assault on the pater noster tunnel had come to a surprising conclusion. There had been no assault. The whole affair had been a chain of unlucky incidents, an accident, no-one was to be blamed for, while the debris of the rocket couldn't be explained finally.

Some people might try and discriminate the dwarves and have them show up in a gloomy light, because their attitude and eagerness led to envy and questions about their character and shyness. They were different. They never got rid of the touch of the unreal. Their deeds and constructions were mistrusted likewise.

“What ever they come along with, is a risk and will collapse sooner or later...” was the prejudicial opinion. They worked just too fast and fulfilled gigantic tasks with the most primitive means in no time – managed to drill through the hardest rocks without any technical device – at least you couldn't find any in their vicinity, whenever you tried. And where should modern technical knowledge derive for them?

For the dwarves the worst thing was already that someone knew of them, and therefore they didn't try to correct any false opinion spread about them, after having had an extensive discussion with South-Michel.

Scholasticus, the new President, confronted South-Michel with the alternative of either leaving for good with his dwarves, or keep quiet for the sake of peace and secrecy. There were already loads of inquiries in Dorothea's office, which could hardly be satisfied, no matter how she tried.

South-Michel promised improvement. He and his shy but eager dwarves kept grimly on the depth of the earth, searching for all kinds of treasures which weren't honoured by ignorant humans.

Just a few tunnels they would dig and have them clad with a little gold and diamonds as they pleased.

The boundaries were set, and solid steel pillars granted the stability of the islands from top to tow, so to speak, while the socles could meanwhile be well compared with loaves of Swiss cheese, because of the busy dwarves.

Dorothea had to try hard in order to raise funds for that additional safety measure. What she saved on the one hand, because of the dwarves, she had to spend on the other – at least she thought, she had to.

Nobody would ever find similarly strange shapes of rooms and corridors, with artificial light from hidden wells and secret domes – certainly no university or campus. Therefore, such locations were reserved for graduates only. Not to seduce anyone fiddling about on the glittering walls by night.

Somewhat beautifully scaring most of the students found the site, when entering for the first time, and couldn't imagine to work and stay there day by day. – Still some managed. And the Sublimations, who were so much possessed by wind and width, enjoyed the hidden glamour most and thought it a great honour dwelling there-in.

Had Tibor not been merrily engaged to his bride Tika, he might have come over here from Susamee's Island in order to take possession of such locations.

"This can be helped" South-Michel uttered somewhat loudmouthed, when he learnt of such demand. He asked a squadron of dwarves over to Susamee's Island by helicopter and had them go to work right away.

And in less than one week they were completely disappeared in the ground.

Materials which they couldn't find, they had brought here – well packed and hidden under severe control – strange machinery and tools, never seen by a human eye before.

Watchdog Will Wiesle was in his element and didn't rest day and night until the whole splendour was expedited in the earth.

All that South-Michel did for Tibor, because he liked him and adored him, as a friend of the winds. He liked him the more so as he embodied the most obvious contradiction to a dwarf's self. But still enjoyed and appreciated what the dwarves did, like all other Sublimations on the island.

But first of all South-Michel did that for Tibor, because he had heard him play the horse-headed violin once with his heart-of-stone melting tunes. Since then he couldn't get the Godly and heartbreaking sound out of his ears again – almost as inconvenient as the Tinnitus, he felt reminded of. And he began to understand the Advisor in the after math.

Perhaps, if he was allowed to participate each month in the concert of the self-induced horse-headed violin, so he thought, he might get rid of this inconvenient side-effect and only the Godly pleasure would remain.

In any case he would have a dependence and a good reason of coming over here and had his timetable altered respectively, he had to justify as well. That was the way it was, though. Master in his own house was he not, but who is that?

Yes, there were several festival-occasions. Arundle and Billy-Joe feasted until they became sick. They drowned their new titles in champagne, they weren't at all used.

The party was great before and the self-induced horse-headed violin did its best in the moonlight of the full moon, while the choir of the enchanted topped the mystery of the night. The stones started sobbing and even

the moon couldn't keep countenance but had tears rolling over her cheeks and dropping heavy on the moist ground with loud splashes.

The sea went foamy and the naiads and nixes covered their eyes in the water, not to show too much of their emotions – thus they were.

From under the ground dwarves' eyes spied through mole-hills, and South-Michel placed himself virtually under the moon, holding the Advisor in his arm. Both sobbed and excused one another the Tinnitus and the bloody nose.

Only the ancient Emeritus Hans Henny Henne couldn't manage with his brain-cables. Either it was the bionic gearing or the fact that music didn't ever bother him all his life. (Such people there are.)

Susamee had him join the circle of dancers, and he let go, because he felt passion for her as well, just like Watchdog Will Wiesle, who was watching the two carefully, and caused Susamee to try a 'ménage a trois'. Only in theory of course and wholly esoterically – almost virtual, because they weren't youngsters any more, except the Watchdog, to a certain extend, who was meanwhile leading a sound and regulated life again, thus presenting himself of advanced age as well.

"Wine, Wife and Chants" the old drunken Hans Henny Henne stammered, whose bionic gear just chuckled in, as soon as he sat back on his tear-wet rock. Because the self-induced horse-headed violin had stopped. The false animals went also silent and crept - because of the silver-stripe on the horizon - back into the underbrush, where the self-induced horse-headed violin followed on hurried thin little legs, having also to avoid the light of the day.

This exactly was the time, when Billy-Joe vomited because he was sick of too much champagne. Arundle did likewise, partly of love, and while she could imagine something for the first time in her life, - as soon as she would be clear in her head.