

U.G. Doehn
ARUNDLE & KIN
6. Repetitors of the Future

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Prelude:

The Shaman's Song

Of little help was what he found beneath.

He cared for preparation, not release.

Some spooky fits of nothing real:

A lot of the unseen was here presented,

Unspeakables were heard and represented:

At last, those tiny ones he sought to win.

Their Shaman was he, and their kin.

He could not stand the evil foe,

Without the help of Billy-Joe.

You know now who we are?

I am but you, and stand not far:

We are but one – do fight for me,

Mine is the other outer world - united shall we be.

I lead your arm, I guide your ear, with eyes of yours I see.

1. See and Be Seen

Mr. and Mrs. Henne couldn't share the enthusiasm of the many hundred fans, who assembled each month when the full moon was rising over Susamee's Island. Especially in the light summer nights, when suspense rushed in the under-brush, and the wonder lowered like a warm seducing fragrance. They noticed something was going on, but didn't feel it, and were completely out of their trace. They didn't even know what they were expected to feel, or what really was going on and what they witnessed. Because the fever didn't catch them. It touched them only by passing by, and didn't even catch them, when even the stones began to sob. They couldn't comply at all. They meant the tears to be the evening dew, wetting the rocks, to have a reasonable explanation for the stunning phenomenon, while there was no better explanation in sight.

Good-natured and generous they overlooked the exaggeration. They smiled at each other in quiet agreement and strengthened their necks while resisting against the sweet mists of imagination, they felt somehow surrounded. A lot of fuss was going on, they certainly noticed that. Long enough they were on the island. They had many dwarves seen, coming and going, while those hushed by as mere shades, and pushed each other while passing them, as if they felt endangered.

Not only the dwarves showed signs of worry, Tika and Emasus also didn't warm up in their presence. Watchman Will Wiesle was the only one, who exchanged a word or two with them, once in a while, to keep their mood up and find out about the matrimonial state between them. A new competitor he just couldn't stand, but was afraid, that the old chum was on the verge of turning back to Susamee, who surely would appreciate his courting.

Watchman Will Wiesle was tinkered of a raw and simple fabric. His combinations were the like: As long as all went well between the couple, he reckoned, Susamee would remain his.

There was no-one else around, anyway, except Tibor and the dwarves in the underground, but they didn't really count. While Tibor was the dwarves' idol and therefore lectured quite often over there at the university, in addition to his teaching profession as Dean of the Sublimations at the School of Inbetween on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth.

Watchman Will Wiesle felt quite similar to the Hennes, he also lacked

of empathy and didn't believe in the sobbing stones either, but thought them to be wetted by the evening dew. However, he didn't dare to confess, because he might then be regarded as a stubborn yokel.

Secretly he therefore checked, if the rocks also became wet, in the nights without full moon, and they sometimes did in fact, but not often. The explanation, that the self-induced horse-headed violin caused such an emotional uproar in the stones, could neither be confirmed nor denied by his investigation.

In fact, he gave a damn shit about those blooming stones. The important thing was the incredible effect resulting thereof. The tunes of the violin flattered the ears, no question about that, Wiesle admitted freely, but wouldn't get further. As far as he was concerned, the fiddling never moved him to tears, but stressed his nerves. While you couldn't say that aloud over here.

What really moved him, was the sight of Susamee, dancing uncovered in the pale moonlight, because she had inflamed and bewitched him, nothing else.

He also never saw the red fire bird, just like Hilde and Hansiman. Besides, all three didn't believe in the fairy of the so-called Convertors, and those so-called totem-animals hiding in the underbrush.

If you faced something at all, it was a bushy mob of hair lurking out of a cleft somewhere. When you took the time and strolled over the island by day, however you shouldn't do in the days of the full moon, as was laid down in the regulations. And Susamee severely watched, even when she was away. Will Wiesle, in his function as a watchman also did his best to stick to the rules, and any offender would surely be sorry soon.

He didn't want to admit, like many of his colleagues, that he never saw with own eyes such a converted animal. And he never witnessed the conversion as such, despite of strange noises to be heard at night, but they weren't much different from the noises in other nights – perhaps somewhat stronger and louder, he would admit; and indeed livelier under the full moon, but that was it then.

Such an island was alive, after all. And among the animals, there were also nocturnal ones, and that was quite natural. While you better didn't mention. Such a profane explanation didn't fit into the magic view of the Convertors and their followers. The slightest remarks or – even worse – doubts – caused hefty reactions. You soon would be stamped a dull brute and drunkard, addicted to king alcohol, and unable to provide a clear thought. And with that the critics weren't all that wrong. Watchman Will Wiesle also looked back on a drunkard's carrier. Therefore he was so thankful for his job.

Who would have taken him? Neither him, nor some other colleagues, who weren't better off.

Therefore they all remained silent, when things like the horrible accident happened some years ago, back on the twin island. While it had in fact been no great wonder that someone sneaked on the island, and almost killed poor Tika. Yes, so it happened on the so called Conversiors' island, next to Wisdom-tooth Isle, now housing the University.

Wiesle himself had been among the rescue-team, when they tore off the poor being of that rock. Why the misguided little creature ran astray that far, nobody would ever know. Taking her back to the little port had in fact been a hell of a job by night, in storm and rain. You wouldn't believe how heavy such a little one can become.

More death than alive has she been. And a long bloody dark track was drawn through the island. –

Well, after all, everything turned out to the better. But had he and his colleagues not been so drunk, the attack mightn't have happened - Will Wiesle was convinced, but didn't dare to admit. His fantasy did not suffice to imagine, how he would have been punished, if anyone would have known. And so his consciousness hammered even worse and much longer, than the punishment would have lasted – the more so – here on this special site. Many times he had been on the verge of confession, but the seldom opportunities passed unused.

Instead of watching, the watchmen had been seated in their booths, had closed the doors and windows against the cold, and had slept, drunk as they were.

A bomb might have woken them up. It was Arundle who rushed through the wood with her wonder-bow and the pointed arrows. Had she not been, nobody had realized what happened to the little creature up there on the lonesome rock.

Was it mere instinct, or did he hear anything? Will Wiesle awoke when he heard Arundle's cry, and soon after also became aware of what happened. He was sober at once. He and some others joined the group of rescuers. Those who pretended to have a command of 'the other way of seeing' didn't see, what was all too obvious: The watchmen hadn't done their job, even now some hardly moved or kept up with the searchers' group.

Being confronted with death, the one or other finally became sober like Will. And together they did a fairly good job after all.

It had been the time, when he earnestly thought about giving up the drinking, he regularly ran into trouble for. King Alcohol had ruined his

family. He himself was a wreckage inside, and kept on fading in body and soul.

So it had been. However his healing and recovery didn't alter his view. He still couldn't see Conversors when converting. He only saw strange little beings, acting funny, before they disappeared in the dark of the underbrush. He saw shades, and heard noises like of ponies or dogs, but that was it.

He didn't witness such an arrival very often, the ado about the first landing was not his cup of tea, so he usually took the second boat, one way or the other.

Meanwhile things were less strenuous, while a lot happened inside the big belly of the Last Bounty moored on the new pier. The flood of dwarves also disguised the landing troopers. They spilled off the vessel and hushed flash-like by, hardly visible – indeed almost invisible for the human eye.

Had there not been the competition about Susamee, Hans Henny Henne would have been a dear comrade right from the start. While Will realized that the latter felt like himself, although he was an educated man and a famous inventor too. While he himself was only a watchman.

Hans Henny Henne didn't withhold his opinion and point of view, and that was a great advantage. You couldn't throw dust in his eyes. He could only be convinced by eye-witnessing, and when there was nothing to be seen for him, then there was nothing, while the so-called seers could say, what ever they wanted.

For a long time he didn't tune in on the tricky interpretation, his wife's daughter brought forward to his attention. As to her, he lacked the ability of seeing colours, as they appeared, like the colour-blind, who are unable to differentiate red and green and have to live in a world of gray shades, and only realize, because they don't notice when to go over a street and when to stop.

“Well, they will manage to distinguish between the upper and the lower little man”, Hans Henny Henne commented, not really convinced, while he basically knew about such deficits of the human senses. However, he didn't like to be stamped as edificatory, all the more, when Hilde confirmed the same lack of ability for herself and for her former husband. An ability, that was said to be experienced by those gay folks on the islands deep down under.

Hilde's affirmative comment made him doubt, because the Anonymous he had happened to meet, had been rather sophisticated, and had given him the impression of being very familiar with such hocus-pocus.

So Hilde had to confess that she and her former husband had done their

very best to ignore the world, their daughter had experienced and lived in.

Their daughter frightened them with all that introvert behaviour and mystic ado.

“I couldn’t reach her anymore. A wall had been built up between us. It started early enough, and became worse as time went by.”

Hilde Henne sighed deeply, when she remembered, how she had suffered.

“And the worst was, we couldn’t help her, we didn’t know what was wrong. – and there was the school after all ... It was disgusting. I do not wonder why Roland couldn’t stand it any more...”

Hilde sneezed and rubbed her nose. She shook her head, and then gave herself a push. “It’s all over now, thank God”, she said then and tried a little smile. Hansiman gave her a tender push and grinned.

“We don’t miss anything, Hilde, do we?” he then said. And Hilde blushed. Hansiman turned out to be of the same kind as Roland had been. She didn’t know what to think of that. ‘Man is man’ she thought, and shrugged inside. You could do little to change general basics, after all.

It was not at all over with Arundle’s dream-world. In fact Hilde had found access into it at last. While she still didn’t see those colours by ‘the other way of seeing’. Perhaps she didn’t try hard enough. Her daughter frightened her a little for that. And she couldn’t stop worrying. Arundle wasn’t with both feet on solid grounds, even now when she became mother herself and should by now have learnt what it meant to be responsible for another being, and how useful it was, to be just normal, while any deviation as far as the growing life inside was concerned, cause the greatest worries.

Rather obvious facts become suddenly important. Almost each mother cannot withstand to count the fingers and toes of the new born. How she worries about the slightest deviation like sickle-shaped feet or birthmark... And beware the head would exceed the norm. The soothing advice: “This will surely diminish by the years” - would surely be not very helpful.

As long as Hansiman hadn’t altered his male attitudes he’d better stay over here, because he couldn’t use them in heaven, his old friend Anonymous had explained years ago while on the moon and before he left back to earth. “Not for Hilde, after all” he mysteriously added, while Hansiman had no idea yet, what was to come in this respect.

While Rolandus was of course very pleased by Hansiman’s presence, he admitted unquestioned. Hansiman was a good sport, he knew from their

time on the moon together. While Hilde had been a faint image on the dim horizon of the twitters, and Hansiman hadn't yet been the roaring deer, Hilde awoke in him, and did of course affect Roland to a certain extent, who had to think about long forgotten emotions, and his passed male-chauvinistic attitude. That was why he postponed the plans for a quick return to heaven for Hansiman. First there had some irregularities to be regulated, not only in favour of the disciple but also of himself, and certainly on Hilde's behalf.

Perhaps such an ascension should become connected with a local training. Hansiman might have also to learn 'the other way of seeing', before he could be raised into the inner circle of the chosen few. Otherwise he would not be allowed to ascend back up to heaven again. Because it was quite different whether someone was called, or decided to go on his own, and carry the cross of the world on his shoulders for a certain period of time, in order to lighten the huge pile of mankind's guilt a bit. Such ascensions were of course the exemption, and by no means the rule. Looked at the case that way, everything had to do with 'the other way of seeing' in any case. It was in fact 'the other way of seeing' that became the crucial angle and cross-over for all who longed for a glimpse of a chance to approach the Unspeakable.

Rolandus decided to have a serious word with the Advisor on that. Why did he have advisers, after all? To have a word with Hans Henny Henne in person might turn out to be contra-productive. Perhaps such an aspirant might turn out to be a shallow nut, and that would be awfully sad. So the oppressed Emperor sighed, and pushed the heavy thoughts aside, in order to concentrate on the obvious. There was enough work to do, God knows. Heavenly interventions into earthly affairs weren't easy at all, but most tricky and kinky.

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Hilde noticed it, perhaps more distinct than Hansiman or even Watchman Will Wiesle, not to talk about all those nameless, who tried hard, without getting a chance. Under Arundle's influence, a lot had happened to Hilde. Right here, deep down under – if you want to see it that way, so close to and under the influence of the good savage, her daughter had chosen for husband, who stimulated the wildest dreams in Hilde likewise.

There might be the major difference of the genders, she reckoned. Would she be able to overcome her fear, then 'the other way of seeing' would follow, just like that, she was almost certain by now. But that secret horror wouldn't be shaken off easily. It settled too deep. And while she never dared to touch, she lacked of the ability to handle it somehow. On the other hand did she not push aside such empty mode, as she had done beforehand with Roland, and now again with Hansiman. With all their power men closed

the outlet, and piled the garbage of their souls up into an insurmountable wall. Of course they never really succeeded. Instead they produced horrible eruptions, like a volcano in action, and quite likely to a real volcano, hardly to be calculated, to the surprise and fear of the vicinity.

Watchman Will Wiesle didn't become a drunkard and brawler just like that, and Roland Waldschmitt the monster, he used to be.

'If individuals like the two manage to escape from their bondage, why should I not also succeed' Hilde thought, almost a little obstinate. But did she possess an aura too? Was there any sense in learning the other way of seeing?

The tests she failed regularly, and with her dreaming she didn't get far. In fact she enjoyed dreaming, and did dream a lot, but she never managed to influence the direction of her dreams. She dreamed incidentally and mixed, and only once in a while was she able to remember a dream.

Seeing wasn't a matter of the eyes alone, but was completed in the brain. And if the brain was blocked, you didn't get far. Certain things revoked recognition. This was the way recognition was made. Altering such, would be rather difficult. While the image of the wall was already a rough metaphor. Because such hindrances were in fact misled synapses and extensive straits of information, which couldn't be opened sideways, but only obeyed their destiny. And that wasn't the worst. The vital sensual functions were guaranteed that way, without which a human is no human.

Hansiman had explained that once, and she meant to have understood all that rightly. But then she forgot all this again very fast, and now she felt as if there had been nothing. While Hansiman tried so hard. She dared not to ask him again, not yet. Perhaps later, -- ... or right now, while the question of to be or not to be was raised. Would she prove her incapability, then her entrance to heaven was in danger, or at least very limited. The only advantage then would be, that Hansiman couldn't be taken away from her. This was what she understood so far. Or had she mixed up everything?

The other option prevailed of course. And if Hilde was honest with herself, she felt the tickling. And when she then thought, what she was going to accept on such a voyage without return, she felt very strange.

She would never hold Edmond in her arms again. And her own body would also be gone in part or as a whole, and so would be the sensations. Would they?

While her body annoyed and troubled her once in a while, it also offered quite some happiness, that could hardly be achieved otherwise. Seen that way a bird in hand is worth two in the bush. – For the eating alone' – she thought and notice how the water gathered in her mouth. Hansiman was

kind of a real gourmet, who had an idea of the 'Haute Cuisine'.

Or all that travelling – with Hansiman it was always like a new start into the unknown behind the horizon.

If she was honest to herself, she tightly clung to her life, but had to give up in order to follow Hansiman to her former husband. Would that be really as easy as Hansiman promised? Fact was that he was in regular exchange with Anonymous ever since, while she hadn't heard or seen anything personal so far, except the birthday party of little Edmond, when he presented himself as a little cloud on the ceiling, but there he hadn't been really present – not for her anyway.

Quite similar mechanisms seemed to exist from the other side which limited you rather than freed you, although no one way streets existed. An outlook that threatened her meanwhile.

It was layed on the table by now. They could not leave, before she hadn't learnt the other way of seeing. Anonymous even spoke of a basic precondition, that is, he had the information transmitted by the Advisor, instead of having an open argument. That was why Hans Henny Henne reckoned him kind of faint-hearted. While there was no use or need to hurry.

The truth was quite different: Anonymous believed in Hansiman, despite of his bionic gear, which now was useless and surplus and hindered the easy transfer, while he wouldn't be alive anymore with out. That was also clear to all those who made up their minds on his behalf.

Her mother wouldn't be the real problem, Arundle figured. Hilde was kind of closed up in a way, and had been this way all her life, but the second spring, she experienced right now, changed the matter to the better, and might be of transitory help right now. Billy-Joe felt the like, who had a personal wire to her mother, somewhat almost upsetting, Arundle mused with a mild grin.

Hans Henny Henne was the problem, no doubt about that. With magic and psychology you wouldn't manage in his case, because he was by far too artificial. A typical border-liner, as they appeared increasingly during the latest years, while you couldn't pack them all in one suitcase. There was at least a clear split into two kinds. Depending on what side you chose, you got an entirely different picture, no matter that there were almost no differences to be seen from the outside.

It was all a matter of the right identity. But the problem of that identity couldn't be made visible. In fact there were no means at all to measure or define identity. Someone could point out as aloud as he could, that he was a real human, but couldn't prove. Because the bionic medicine was so tricky embodied and combined with the given fabric, that only experts were able to

confirm or deny such a statement.

Hans Henny Henne was a being that suited the biography of Hans Henny Henne. It shared his memories, and was in full competence of the spiritual forces of him, only marginally limited, because the hefty dementia-attacks had not passed by without effect, which happened to occur lately and over the years. But all in all he didn't doubt himself and was enforced by Hilde. Since he met her, he enfolded and blossomed like a tulip in the mild sun of a springtime day. Her assistance made it all too obvious that he was still a real human man, no doubt about that. All the more, he hadn't experience such, as up to now. All his dried nature, the lack of sensibility and the lack of musicality, as well as the total lack of 'the other way of seeing' were all part of the same source. While this didn't mean that he lacked of any aura. That was a paradox, and from there came the doubts, whether he still was a real human being.

The ascension and the later performed 'de-ascension' back to earth was another hint of doubt. Seen from outside you could certainly end up with the conclusion that he was no real human being any more, you could prove that by sound evidence. He might be a clever cheat, working in two ways – inside and outside.

On the other hand was there the contact to the heavenly scene. And they wouldn't let a mole pass or a cuckoo's egg been laid into the heavenly nest unnoticed. But who knows – one should never say never, Billy-Joe mused, who stuck to his mother-in-law. She at least should know.

“You mean, no matter what he thinks of himself, he could be an artifact anyway?” – this sounded like the perversion in potency and was surely a misinterpretation, as was spread about by millions these days. Or it was no misinterpretation, but that was what it all was actually about.

Were those all hidden artifacts or bionic-wise prepared human beings?

Billy-Joe knew the answer. Or he thought he knew the correct answer. Because he had fought such a monster – way back in the upcoming future, on the field of honour, where the existence of the world was on the verge, while artifacts showed their unmasked image for the first time and made the humans gather in fear, who weren't needed in the world of the artifacts any more. Nothing, what humans required was also needed by artifacts, except a few prepositions. But the whole wide range of organic chemistry was basically without concern to artifacts, and could disappear together with the humans for good, while a few exceptions were still required.

Seen from that point of view, Hans Henny Henne was therefore a true human being. He required the organic world and at best in tact, while he otherwise would ran short of lust of life. Hans Henny Henne loved meat and

the warmth of the human body, its tenderness and power, the aura and fragrance. Hans Henny Henne was wholly fixed on Hilde, and of all she stood for.

Why should he ask for reason or for sense or deeper cause, such a way of thinking might tend. Sure enough would it be easier without human beings and without those animal relatives. But the marvellous blue planet, the home of those beings would feel tossed into agony, while realizing, that plants and air and sea wouldn't be needed any more either.

Only temperature-wise you would preferably remain in organic ranges, or future constructors (who wouldn't be human any more) - might run into trouble. But surely handle it, if they were left alone.

Billy-Joe stroke his hair thoughtfully. First silvery strains were to be seen, his youth was definitely gone. He could feel it – time was hurrying in gigantic steps and pushed him, and he pushed back, knowing quite well, that there was a lot to hinder and to guide. That was the paradox, while time ran off.

2.Pandemia

The time of the late twenty-first century would later be regarded as the Golden Age of the good Artifacts. While awful times were approaching mankind. A development was in due course, worse the worst nightmares of the poor creatures. While it all began with an almost harmless sort of flue spreading around the globe. It was the kind of flue as passed by every year, demanding its victims, until a suitable vaccine was found. While the first symptoms didn't differ from a regular flue, the long term effects did all the more, and affected first thousands, then millions and at last billions, while no vaccine could be found this time, other then the previous cases of a similar kind. They were somehow under control, and passed by, leaving no noticeable effect behind.

Not so the new great nightmare. The pandemia took off somewhere in the Northern parts of Asia, most likely near Archangelsk or the more Westerly located Murmansk. And spread slowly first, until it reached the metropolises of Helsinki, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Oslo, Moscow and St.Petersburg. From there it speeded up. But that was already known from former courses of that kind.

Modern traffic technology didn't allow the effective limitation, while fingers pointed hesitantly out of the Northern regions of Asia into several directions. The number of victims kept rising, but not yet unlimited. There were almost no casualties so far.

The pandemic differed in that to the epidemic flues of former times. That was the good news. The bad news was, that no virus could be found and no vaccine consequently either.

The miraculous disease spread and soon covered the whole globe. There was no help in sight. At least it looked so, for a long time. People tried with common hygienic measures, and were successful. First of all the hospital staff, who managed to stay free of contamination by consequent hygiene.

Unfortunately people weren't so consequent. Only a few were. Thus the disease was spreading further and further, and reached Central Europe. From there it swamped over to Northern America.

Other than former pandemic diseases this time the Northern regions were hit. The disease seemed to avoid the tropics. Neither Africa, nor South America or the Indian Subcontinent and the Malaysian Archipels were effected. It seemed to be a kind of a civilisation-disease. However it differed in so far as it didn't show interdependence with the way of life, but seemed to be spreading by infection.

This was how experts saw it, who stuck to the least straw, and would have loved to present a virus as culprit. But this Pandemia didn't intend to please them. Instead, the Pandemia went on spreading, and found victims on all levels of society, who weren't careful enough with hygienic ventures.

As the clinical picture was unspecific, many affected individuals didn't notice in the first place that they were sick, and saw the doctor far too late, sometimes only after several weeks or even months. They were sitting then wholly des-orientated in the surgery, and could hardly remember their own names, but argued about the sloppy personnel, without whom they would surely not have found to the surgery at all, while the disease led into a progressive inability of physical functions. The victims weren't able anymore to care for themselves. They had forgotten how to handle the simplest things, and were helpless like babies in the end.

The best implantations didn't help anymore. As soon as a new brain was installed, it was swamped by bad blood, and before the restoration of the personal data was finished, the identity had passed away again.

The common service personnel was surely overcharged. The servants ran off, afraid of contamination, and proper artifacts were not in sight as yet, but were in due course of construction.

More or less suitable artifacts were desperately needed, while the round o'clock service for the victims of the disease went up to astronomical heights. So what ever seemed somehow suitable was ordered and prescribed, at best to whole families, where one artifact could care for a number of

patients. – Well, that was the idea, but what was the outcome?

The servant-artifacts soon were strangled by the workload. The result was catastrophic, as they gave up serving at all, and fled, just like the human predecessors the awful site.

Other relatives came up with other horror stories. A certain type of the latest model of artifacts mixed up the body-openings of their patients. This was noticed by the smell, neighbors reported to the authorities. But weeks passed by before the mal-functional sets were replaced.

The good news was: nobody died of starvation. Still the shit-smearred faces impressed the public, and didn't help keeping the ball flat, so to speak.

All in all technology picked up soon. The artificial servants became better and better. Their greatest advantage was that they were immune, and the disease couldn't do them any harm, so the officials reckoned. Until some models went crazy. They might even have been those who smeared their patients with shit. But they soon were spotted. They were bionic hybrids, without human identity. A new strand of development, that had been given up, after the fuss with such mix-ups became known.

Identity was a tricky matter. You couldn't just fiddle around, and hope that everything would turn out to the good and right. Artifact and humans should remain strictly separated. That was the message people learnt of the fiasco.

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The Pandemia came to a halt, finally. As it sprang up, so it broke down. The number of disabled people however remained on a very high level. Before the Pandemia, the centres of the civilized world had housed roughly a quarter of a billion cases, that were about two percent of the world-population. Now the statistics spoke of four billion cases, that were about thirty percent of the population. Every second inhabitant of the Northern metropolises was affected. And those who were still able to care for themselves, soon didn't like to do anymore, but also wanted to be pampered by an artifact of the most advanced type. While a generation further, the whole affair started all over again, and this time even worse.

The damaged individuals, who increased in great numbers as a consequence of the Pandemia, suffered of mental malfunctions, but physically they were still able in certain field of action. Their fertility exploded, which had gone remarkably down under the influence of the SLOMES.

But that was now over and out. While Abortion-clinics could hardly handle the flood of abortionists, where those unhappy and mentally disturbed

or even insane subjects were sent to, mostly without knowing what was going to happen with them. As soon as they found out, they rejected the operation. No objections would help, while it became known what effects the Pandemia had on the offspring. Therefore the authorities thought they had the right or even the plight to intervene and force abortion.

As a consequence of the Pandemia children with crippled extremities were born. They were helpless right from the first day of their lives and remained that way all their life. Without the help of an artificial servant they couldn't be.

Nobody as yet understood at that early stage, how this could be. The time had to pass by. But some decades later, the whole extend of the catastrophe came out.

As if the misery wasn't big enough by this first plague, such Pandemias occurred regularly in cycles, with ever the same consequences. And while it had been possible to keep up the sanity of the majority of the population, the following generations were definitely trapped. The mutations of the genes were never overcome. In fact the human genotype seemed permanently damaged.

Be it that the disease didn't break out in many cases or in so mild a form that it wasn't recognized as such. Fact was however, that seemingly healthy families came about with disabled offspring, while somehow cheating the screenings, or vice versa: wholly healthy children were born of diseased parents, or their predecessors.

Serious doubts arose among the scientists, as far as the research of the cause was concerned. Could it be, that the Pandemia was a kind of catalytic outlet of a phenomenon of an entirely other kind?

Was there a connection between the way of life, and the inherited disease? Had the increase of bad genes to do with technological progress? Could they be side-effects of ecological damage, unknown as yet so far? And if so, which?

Questions over questions, and no answers in sight.

Without the free tribes in the free zones, where the Pandemia couldn't step in, and never had, the fate of civilisation would be sealed at the latest. While the rejected and neglected outcasts – so it seemed - became the last hope for a future, worth to be called future.

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The Isle of Wisdom-tooth and the close by University Island, as well as Susamee's Island of the Conversiors and the dwarves, weren't affected by the Pandemia. Not one single case became known. This was the advantage of

the isolation, you subjugated somehow, no matter whether any of the World-Citizens agreed. Their picture of the world would have been badly offended.

While all noticed the challenge. The malfunction of the servant-artifacts caused Tibor to search for an entirely new approach. His musings started off with the self-induced horse-headed violin. Because he understood the instrument at best, as you can certainly imagine. He spoke about his musings with the other Deans, mainly with Arundle, who suggested to have Judith Kornblum and Hans Henny Henne come aboard the boat as well. So it happened.

First Tibor explained (what he never had done before), how he handled the violin, (i.e. how the violin handled him), and what it was all about the instrument. "It's without doubt a divine inspiration" he started off. "While it's based on the harmonies, which deserve as the necessary mode of reference wherein the tunes move. Their sequencing is destined by the Uncertainty Principle. The starting off point or the starting off harmony reflects the plentitude of the following tunes, while the suggested sequences are being selected in order to please the ear utmost. This would be one criteria, the likeliness is calculated. The task of the hands is going to be regulated by the likeliness. Each sequence of tunes, each harmony, and each tremolo, and each syncope or cadence is calculated by a fan of likeliness, chosen from the following events. The latter to be transformed is a matter of the perfect performance and a program in itself, that's regulating the settings of the fingers and the movements of the bow.

The head of the horse-headed violin you can compare with a HiFi-electronic tablet. Armed with an almost unlimited storage-modul and a thought-fast calculation-mode."

Those around him, didn't dare to interrupt, while surely many questions were pending. But Tibor went on without hesitating one itch.

"What ever has to become decided, is decided the same instant, no matter how fast the decision is, and is available right away. The result is an unreachable perfection, nobody and no sense can withstand, so even the stones sob, as soon as the violin begins to play. And you have to be blind deaf or badly disturbed mentally, if you can withstand. How this works in detail, hasn't yet been found out, but an investigation is in due course."

Tibor grinned meaningfully and gazed over to Hans Henny Henne, who looked up somewhat alerted, while he hadn't experienced himself as disabled to such an extend. But that needn't mean too much, he wondered.

"The sequence of tunes is kind of a programmer's language. The language corresponds with any likely event inside the frame of reference. And this language is the basis, we have to start off. The violin may be put

aside for the moment” Tibor went on with a quick gaze over to Hans Henny Henne again, who accepted the offer thankfully, and relaxed a little, because such a fundamental critique of his person, he hadn’t expected in such a context.

Judith and Arundle also positively signalled agreement, while some ingredients seemed them to lie right at hand. They were elaborating in the SLOMES laboratories with supra-electronic hyper add-ons for some time already, and checked for implementations and brain-analogous connections of certain abilities, like the storage of data and information of all kinds, on a nano-versal scale.

“The idea is the following” Tibor went on, obviously not deeply impressed by the meaningful (or was it -- meaningless) silence?

“What’s good for tunes, also works with other information. If you succeed in entering the wave cosmos around us, the same way as we enter the musical cosmos. - Yes, the cosmos can be entered in any possible mode. And we only need a language, in order to transcribe information. That means however, that the devices got to be programmed instantly, while the surrounding constantly changes in an incidental and chaotic manner, you cannot pre-calculate in advance, not in the sense of the proper meaning. While all depends on the adequate behaviour in any likely situation. Only then a behaviour like the smeared patients can be avoided.”

(The tale really went around the world again and again and made it clear to all specialists and engineers what a heck of a lot of workload they were facing, and shouldering – sooner or later.)

“Only with the self-inducing program artifacts become able to handle all eventualities of being adequately and correctly. Overlooking and anticipating the demands of the instant, embedded into the likely frame of the upcoming future. And this will be done better, more correct and more farsighted than human individuals can afford. All you need is a keyboard, and hands to handle it. Equipped that way, we can expose the artifact where ever we want. It will find its way, or does, what ever it is asked to do. Only when the likeliness exceeds a critical mark, it will strike and ask for alternatives, or would do the needful things in order to get in contact with its master of mistress.

Yes, the artifact will have to learn the language of the world, while this cannot be done by any being, not even the most powerful machinery. No man has a complete command of his mother-tongue. In average, people utilize only about ten percent of the available vocabulary. This is the dimension, we should think of, while realistic.”

“We all know that in everyday life not all circumstances can be

verbalized. A lot of what we do or leave, depend on non-verbal communication”, Hans Henny Henne interjected, who still gnawed on the cosmic harmonies he was lacking, as to Tibor, and therefore intended to search for crumbs.

Tibor saw through Hansiman’s intention and smiled friendly, and not at all aggressive.

“A lot would be won, if our artifacts wouldn’t mix up the openings of the bodies of their masters. We want orderly personnel for our patients, who cannot do without aides, because they need assistance in everyday life. That would be a good start. And for this kind of duty you wouldn’t even need language competence of more than one percent of the global language. Well, such a language had first of all to be written, before you could start to implement into the artifacts.”

“...such language should enlarge on its own then” Arundle interjected, who was all in favour of Tibor’s musings.

Judith nodded eagerly as well, and prepared in mind for the appropriate action.

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Hans Henny Henne postponed his ascension once more, and asked the Advisor to inform his friend Anonymous accordingly, and why he felt forced to do. The latter understood at once, and wished him on the Emperor’s behalf the very best, sound endurance, and good luck.

“The heavenly blessings are certainly yours” the Advisor added on his own, rather sophisticated, and disappeared before Hans Henny Henne had a chance to place one of his replica, he was famous for.

Hilde was pleased. It would have become quite a confusion with her two men together. No matter how elaborated they were meanwhile. For Hansiman she wouldn’t go through fire and water, though.

Together with Peter Adams the old aged hoary Inventor faced the task of inventing a corpus, which suited all demands of a self-induced horse-headed violin, without being one. Instead of the strings, so he wondered, a keyboard would better do. While the hands seemed him appropriate, because there was always something to be done, like writing new orders, to adapt to the changing environment, in order to come to the adequate conclusions for projecting the next steps.

A cam-corder served for the visual-sensual recognition, and two sensible microphones did the same for the audio-sensual dimension, while olfactory receptors, lent from the bionic surgery, enlarged the sensual

apparatus of the artifact by another important dimension. Last but not least was the tender handling of the patients of great importance, and was a challenge to be overcome too.

For three of the five senses was cared. For the others suitable solutions would soon be found. While there was in fact but only one sense left. ‘what the hell does an artifact need a sense to smell?’ they were asked, and had no answer. While the last word hadn’t been spoken yet.

At first the team started off with what was obvious. The first results then stunned Arundle in a strange manner. She felt set back into her youth, when the first prototype of the new artifacts stood in front of her, and gazed at her with their huge goggle-eyes.

Those eyes erected from a square dull face, slightly bent forward, as if standing in an obedient fashion, ready and prepared to receive orders. The square scull ended in a keyboard-corpous, with two thin arms on each side with extremely long and busy fingers, which hushed flashlight-like over the keyboard. Underneath, the little fellow stood on two thin legs with huge plate-like feet, on which he hushed rather soft and very quickly about, while the hands never stood still, giving new orders.

“That’s for once the two-armed standard prototype”, Tibor explained. “...who can adjust to his environment and can react on each change, almost like a human being. When someone rings at the door, he rushes to the door and let the visitor in, or takes the mail, if it is the postman. His ability to talk is rather limited. Except “Go”, “Stand still” and the like, there isn’t much he can transform and take over. That is, he listens or sees a challenge or an order, then he types it, and follows it right away. There is not the slightest delay. Orders will be transmuted, as soon as the sensual recognition demands.”

“Yes, we’ve given him a name. Suitable for his future tasks, we called him Severin (the servant). That’s kind of nicer than QX2 or VJQ” – Hans Henny Henne explained, who was very proud of the result of their labouring.

An good dozen people in the room waited to be served by Severin, who needn’t being asked, but hushed about with a tray full of finger-food. As he had only one hand free, his typing looked somewhat clumsy, so Hans Henny Henne wondered, whether they should equip him with an additional pair of substitutional arms on a stand-by basis for certain advanced and enlarged tasking. He would have a word with Judith on that. He looked through the room, but couldn’t find her.

Serving the champagne was no sweat for our new comrade. He neither broke the neck of a bottle, nor spilled the guests with the sparkling liquid. Self-assured with scarce gestures he handled the situation like a perfect

butler, while his free hand went over the keyboard, and his fingers never stood still.

‘There you can see, what’s going on around you all the time, when you mean nothing’s happening’ Billy-Joe thought full of admiration. He put his glass down to have the hands free for the well earned applause, the first speaker was welcomed with, and that was Hans Henny Henne, as soon as Judith Kornblum entered the room on the arm of her husband.

As ‘Emeritus’ this privilege was his. So Hans Henny Henne brought out a toast on Severin, who seemed to understand, because he stopped and bowed and his face showed a kind of grin, - well, at least Billy-Joe meant to realize.

Severin then surprised the assembly with some kind of musical performance, which didn’t have the level of the self-induced horse-headed violin, while managing wholly without magic, remarkable as it was.

Again the finger hushed over the keyboard as fast as the eye could hardly follow. But this time he produced miraculous tunes, reminding of a harmonium with a very special charm.

That was a well arranged surprise, Hans Henny Henne agreed, although he wasn’t really fond of music. He might alter his attitude, and become music-wise upgraded. There was a simple and easy to install a program now available. Hilde had found out for him. While he would hang on over here for quite a while, his life on earth might become upgraded that way, by such a dimension.

“See it also through the pink glasses of the divine life, you are going to have once – so that you don’t be blamed as the Bavarian in heaven was, when he was asked to perform on the harp the heavenly way. He tried hard, but neither enjoyed, nor was able to perform at all.”

Good old Hilde considered everything. Moved by such care, Hansiman embraced her, and begged her pardon for the more or less careless remarks she had to endure from him, while she overlooked and ignored his little weaknesses. “Oh yes, it’s not easy to be a man”, he softly sighed.

The mood might already be pointing in the adequate direction. The tender tunes of the harmonium, embraced Hans Henny Henne, and perhaps for the first time in his life, the music made him shudder, in a way he used to shudder only, when an epochal result of research succeeded. While here it was some kind of such a success. However he couldn’t say what the reason for the shudder really was here, and what made him feel the strange way he felt.

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There was much work to do. From the prototype to the serial production was still a long way. Thus the scientists elaborated on for quite some while, as well with the multi-armed-ness of the artifact, but soon came to the conclusion that it didn't lead somewhere. Most likely it had to do with the fact that we humans hardly manage to do two different things with our hands at the same time. Doing so was already part of an artificial world, and not open for the ordinary contemporary fellow. Such being was content or even happy when succeeding with just one task at the time.

While the two-armed-ness didn't really limit or hinder the speed of obedience. The Severin was quicker in any case, and a quick thinker as well, and stood in bright contrast to the masters, who were mentally disturbed or even wholly disabled.

Still Hans Henny Henne implemented the one or other mental ability like chess or poker -- the more so, as there was no limitation space-wise. The basic set had been enlarged anyway, while the outer form still persisted in general, while it became enforced as required by the back or the legs or with an extra integral helmet for the head for protection. Thus the precious and vulnerable parts like eyes or ears were hidden behind crash-tested glass.

The weak parts remained the sensible fingers and the keyboard as such. So the team experimented with all kinds of protective measures, like a cover that could be fixed in no time over the keyboard, while the fingers were protected with stainless steel gloves, still enabling Severin to type. But didn't look as elegant and wasn't as fast anymore.

Thanks to the self-induced modifications such limitations were overcome, the common robots were exposed. Only by the new programmer's world-language, with which you could verbalize everything, what could be verbalized, Severin was the first artifact who could join the human reality.

Instead of following the once set patterns, Severin was able to react and fit himself into the requirements of the circumstances. This was the basic preposition for an artificial creation. All that to the best and service of the human masters, as the highest and unbreakable directive.

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When developing a world-language the scientists could refer to the experiences they made in Atlantis. They even were able to adopt some parts. While the vocabulary had to be modernized – after all some thousands of years had passed meanwhile – the expressiveness and marvel of the language persisted and fascinated the scientists still. They felt like wandering on forbidden paths and secret traces of long parted ancestors. And they often felt, as if they had known something of their future, before the final downfall.

Was this a sign for the contemporaries, pointing forward to their own future?

However, thinking that far, forbade the need of the hour, while the next steps had to be considered, and that was the agony of the disabled millions who needed help, while growing by number day by day, starving and even dying without proper help. The Severin program had to be pushed therefore by all means, while detailed improvements might follow subsequently in due time.

From the centres of the world you could hear the outcry of the devastated creature like a dark cloud of agony and desperation. Thus the Kornblums doubled or even tripled their efforts by postponing any other production efforts in order to bring forward the Severin line. The market felt like a dry sponge.

Additional utensils were added. All kinds of chaises and sedan-chairs came up and donkey-like twitters or laptopobils of all kinds, while Severin and Severine remained the basic feature, meanwhile enlarged by a female version, with slightly different appeal. Co-productions of all kind all around the world multiplied the output, and step by step the most desperate needs were satisfied. Thus the hour of the worst desperation became the birth of a new way of cooperation. To the absolute paradox – mankind seemed to be on the verge of overcoming the plague of greed. Perhaps for the first time in history stood Man with one foot in a new time, or was it an insurmountable wall of ignorance?

3.The g-Propulsion

The wind of change was blowing them right into their faces – not necessarily pleasing. While feelings often depend on circumstances of life. Thus, incredible things were under way, especially when seen in a general world-view. Where did those new technologies come in, that were blossoming all over the world? Who would ever have dreamed that the sorcery of the magic bow didn't lack a rational basis? But was powered by a mode that didn't only govern the whole SLOMES technology, but revolutionized also - as a most welcome by-product -, the air-traffic as a whole?

How else could thousands of space shuttles be sent to the space stations in the orbit, some 240 kilometres above the surface, and revolving there with the globe?

The classical modes of power by rocket-propulsion or combustion-

engine couldn't do any more in the long run. Far too much energy was used up that way, and the speed that was accumulated didn't suffice either. Not to mention heat and pollution. But how did the new type of shuttle get up to the space stations?

The beginning of the new type of power started in a way with Arundle's magic bow. That is – there were two starting points as a matter of fact. These two ways however never collided, because they were too far away from each other, and nobody really cared, as far as the bow was concerned.

The other and most likely more splendid mode based on common traditions, and was, how else could it be – developed by the genius of Hans Henny Henne. In his case it was a kind of accidental by-product of his research while developing the SLOMES technology, or to be even more precise – the encoding of the locations of the Isle of Wisdom-tooth at the first place.

Now the similarity was striking. Hans Henny Henne had had not the slightest intention to find a new mode of power source, or an alternative fuel for the air traffic. Rather the opposite was intended.

Arundle and her magic bow learnt of that dilemma, without much emphasis. The bow listened to the explanation of the Uncertainty Principle and what he heard was not only most welcome, but startling. He fiercely nodded and blinked with his magic eye and shouted "Heureka, that's it. That's what happens when you think strongly of a place you want to be, and start programming your target, while I contact the ultimate observer to cut the circuit short, until the latter risks an eye and decides.

As by the Uncertainty Principle any bit can not remain and be seen, but emerges elsewhere. In our case the site we long for. So simple is it. No magic but solid Quantum Physics."

The magic bow ceased exhausted for a good while and Arundle was stunned. "Now you say nothing" Pootsy exclaimed and the magic stone giggled. He seemed to agree with what the bow just said. This fact was remarkable in a way, as their willingness to cope was limited from his side in general, while the bow didn't stay apart but went in whenever there was a chance.

Hans Henny Henne was also delighted. What he heard from the bow was just the way he liked it. While the principle came close to what he experimented and found out while constructing the camouflage mac on the islands. Visibility had to be disguised then, and no object could be either located or noticed at the same time. Henne overcame the challenge by a

tricky diversity-module designed for sea-ships of all kinds. While certain weaknesses, especially in the beginning did happen.

Inbetween lay the development of the SLOMES, a kind of nano-dimensional cosmos with astonishing effects on the observer.

The problems of invisibility had then at length been overcome and the SLOMES Technology was a great success, although hard to explain.

The new power source on the other hand came just in time, as the ecological problems made the globe suffer, and would soon be spotted as a major initiator for the frequent Pandemia thread.

“Far too energetic, far too consumptive. That kind of forward motion must come to an end, the globe can’t stand it anymore. The warming of the earth is continually rising. We must get away from the combustion-engine and the propulsion drive, which is even worse.”

While he said that, an idea came to Hans Henny Henne’s mind referring to his research on invisibility. This had been the first and only utilisation of the Uncertainty Principle, by means of which he solved the problem. And of course by assistance of Judith Kornblum, supported by Peter Adams and in the end by the whole big Kornblum-family.

The result is well known. The SLOMES Technology and the SLOMES Cooperation spreaded all over the world. That was why they began to invest into space – and airtraffic research. Their specialists of the Nano-verse tackled the gap between the contradicting spheres.

The big and all important question was, how the transfer from the nano-dimension into the macro-dimension worked out, or was at all possible in the first place, economically as well as ecologically and last but not least scientifically.

In short, Hans Henny Henne claimed for once more the honour and fame, having supported in principle by inventing the g-principle, while the energetic overall-situation merged at best with the nano-dimension.

Hans Henny Henne invented the g-power source, which was no accelerating power but in a way the opposite. As a trigger had to be switched, that is, the trigger g, and resulted in the reduction or even the annihilation of gravity.

Where ever this occurs, wonders are the consequence. Walking on the surface of water, waving a foot high above the ground, or like in case of the magic bow, moving a person from one spot to another – well, at least most of the time.

While the order has got to be precise and definite. but such were

detailed questions of minor importance. The switch as such was already a kind of metaphor. And was of course no ordinary switch, but a very special one, functioning in a very special way and principally according to Schrödingers Uncertainty Principle that had to be worked out in detail and required a hell of a lot of additional workload for the scientists involved.

Hans Henny Henne felt the pressure in his ivory tower. His friends rushed by to help from far and near, when he stepped into one of those imaginary (nano-)holes without earthly dimensions.

Shuttle-ramps connected each major city with the space stations. Those shuttles were no longer slender rockets which crawled off their stands under fire and thunder, but kind of saucers, quick as a thought which was here now, and an instant later just gone. The saucers overcame distances seemingly effortless, while in the beginning misguided trips happened. Shuttle-discs disappeared and were never seen again. Some even crashed into asteroids.

All that could only happen because human negligence was still a factor. The problems ceased as soon as the whole operation was taken out of the hands of human beings and handed over to well-trained artifacts.

How did that g -power work, which was in a way the opposite of the common understanding of power? In principle you had to shut off gravity. For that an alternative counter-power was required, for example the gravity of the sun in reference to the distance, as well as the weight and size of the object, in our case it was the shuttle capsule.

Because the gravity (g) is the weakest of the four powers in the universe and therefore the most difficult one to calculate.

And thus you needed no lever, but some kind of push-and turn-device in order to reduce the g -power as far as necessary to move the object, that is to transport, as is possible, because the sun's g -power comes in here, while the power of the earth is reduced.

Such a transport reminds of an elevator or a cableway: above someone pulls and below someone let go.

Arundle's description and the explanations of the magic bow, were in a way nicer to look at, but also far less prosaic, while it had once more to do with the disenchantment of the world, as was regretted unjustified by many, who didn't know better.

4. Back in Future

Arundle remembered back to the time when she had been young. Her first visits to Laptopia hadn't been very challenging after all. Were they on the verge of entering the former future in reality now?

Were they approaching the time, when the final battle was due, - Man on one side and Artifact on the other? It didn't look the like on the surface. As long as the first directive was valid, such an upheaval seemed out of the question. Severins and Severines were the blessing of the disabled mankind, surely not the curse, that formed somewhere else in hidden darkness.

But Arundle had experienced and knew the upcoming. She knew everything, and so did Billy-Joe and the other friends, who had discernments and or participated in person, years ago in the future, which was now on the verge to come.

In order to find out, Arundle and her family travelled to the sites they once had been way back in the future, that had come now.

Yes, time had almost come, the distance was almost none, while it didn't show in plain figures yet. That had to do with the calender and the leak on the time-scale. Nobody, so it seemed, was in command of the exact facts. A couple of years more or less had to be considered. If things had been the way they showed on the day when they were misled and stranded in that valley near the gas station where they got thick swollen fingers, because they put them into a booking device, when they didn't have the appropriate currency. What they didn't know was that they were in the wrong century and that was why their fingers almost fell off, before they managed to return and have the device exchanged.

It had been Severin who helped them out, and Tibor became his inventor, without realizing what he did, as he had no memory back to the state when Arundle first met the Laptopians. Had Tibor known, he might have chosen a different outfit for the Severin.

The situation was kind of archaic, like in a Greek tragedy, when nobody escapes his or her predestined fate. Those, who manage to peep into the future, should be aware of the fact, that the future will one day get at him, or her, and pick up with him, or her, and realize what once had been seen. And that the real future was rather similar or quite likely of what had once been seen. Logic demanded that.

Arundle had badly struggled against the might of fate, and mobilized all her efforts and powers. She had employed and fought heaven and hell to avoid the upcoming. Now, when facing the Severin for the first time,

Arundle realized that her efforts had been in vain. That fate was stronger.

Was she the only one who saw the evil upcoming? The picture of the past had become pale. She had been a child. Now she was an elderly woman, even an old woman, as to former standards, while the loss in time had to be deducted – If this was done, she wasn't all that old – any way.

Thanks to the SLOMES her age was no age any more. Her appearance was that of a woman in the best years, without much thinking of operations and things the like. She was now on that level for quite some time, and there was no reason in sight, why this should change.

Arundle had seen generations of students come and go. Together with Billy-Joe, with Tibor and Tika had she guided the School of Inbetween through heights and depths, always aware of Malicious Marduk, and perhaps a little too blue-eyed, as far as the rest of the world was concerned. Thus you feel as the 'Hub of the World', she sighed somewhat critical with herself.

This was the first real trip to Frankfurt since then, when she had been a child. She wanted to see with own eyes what it looked like these days. What did she expect? Would it look like Laptopia? Was she travelling towards future? The future, that was on the verge of becoming real and true, and was no longer a mere vision, but an iron fact, nobody could escape, no matter how hard he tried.

There was still some time left. But the Severin woke her up. All he was missing was the additional extra limb with the sharp scissor-hand of a Laptocop and the helmet on top of his head. For the General it might in fact be a bit too early yet. He might have been just born these days, she figured, while she easily could fail by a couple of years, with all that fuss with the time, that was supposed to rule these days.

Would the houses be round and the clouds heavy as lead to sit on top? Would Edmond govern one day? He was in the same age now, as she had been then. Would he wonder the way she had wondered in her time?

Well, this time no-one had an antique laptop in the luggage, or glided in by means of a magic bow, as she used to then. While she had almost fallen through the clouds, because she didn't pay enough attention, and didn't notice when she began to glide.

In a sense she made the voyage for Edmond. Not knowing however where this was going to lead. The past could certainly not be repeated, or could it? Well, she didn't intend to do so.

Had they been able to stamp the time with some sort of connotations? Did they manage to alter the course of reality – only a little bit? She would be as happy as could be for that. Not all was bad in the world, they were

living in. Without those pandemics mankind would do much better, of course. She was convinced of that. The great Enlightener Anonymous had come and set a broad trace.

Some people knew at last what was on the verge, and what was likely to come up soon. Nobody had an idea as yet what was coming, while first indicators pointed towards the thread. Those disabled beings smeared with yag were just indices. Since the bionic revolution things weren't any more as they used to be. Science had lost control. They were already there - the fully atomised laboratories where no human being had access, where the artifacts reproduced themselves without human support. The name of Malicious Marduk was heard in this context as well, and made Arundle fear for the worst.

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A brave Severine brought her back from her reveries and musings. The Severine asked for her demands in a soft air, what her choice from the menu was, and served a steaming tray right away, as soon as Arundle made up her mind.

Billy-Joe's grey head bowed over in order to check the result of the procedure. Then he nodded somewhat hesitantly and soon the tray was steaming in front of him as well. Edmond smelled the roast and denied. There was no reason to wait then. The food tasted the same as it looked. And after two bites Arundle had the cutlery rest. She gazed over to Billy-Joe and Edmond, whether they could help her out of such calamity by freeing her of the tray. But both shook their heads with indignation and Billy-Joe asked for a strong liquor to get rid of the stale aftertaste, that was filling his mouth after a few bites.

"Food-wise its going to go backwards ahead, no doubt about that" she reckoned to feel Billy-Joe think, who was tracing the past no other than she did in order to find the former future now.

He also told himself that there were still some years to come ahead, no matter what else was going to happen. While indices the like, didn't help to ease him down. Edmond knew the tragedy only by the scarce intimations of his parents.

All civilised ate the synthetic junk their servants produced for them. As to the label it consisted of everything an individual required day by day. From a medical point of view this might even be correct, that the critics didn't doubt. But where were those days now with tamarind sauce and flying dogs or coconut-risotto on palmtree-leaves in lemongrass-cover - they used to date in former days?

In order to have a swim afterwards over to the pontoon out there in the

lagoon? Had that been the sweet youth, or were those pleasures of life incompatible?

While Edmond quite well understood, what his parents were communicating without words. Things weren't lost at all, no the least for the inhabitants on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, where the youth still met for lunch under the roof of the Southsea-cuisine overshadowed by romantic palm tree leaves. The magic bow confirmed accordingly by having his red eye blink, being hidden behind Arundle's chair unnoticed. While Pooty – as was his nature – embraced the magic stone in Billy-Joe's pouch, sighing once in a while, dreaming of Walter and the almost forgotten days - he couldn't forget, nevertheless.

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The Karoras were sitting in one of the latest huge supersonic stratospheric liners as they travelled from one space station to the next. From there you went by shuttle down to your destination, thus a trip around the globe was a matter of only a few hours. The shuttles commuted like busses in former days every ten minutes, and were of great advantage.

Down on earth you were rid of the noise of the planes and the pollution, while the lack of air resistance reduced the fuel consumption to a minimum. Scientists were busy in finding an even more effective means of transport on an advanced basis.

All major metropolises had their own Space Station, which served not only the city but also the surrounding area. For that reason hybrid-helicopters were available, being able to climb in no time the 20.000 height-metres. Those copters plied likewise every ten minutes and served a fixed set of routes. This way longer waiting time was avoided. On ground you travelled on with fast gliders, that followed the tracks of the streets, and replaced the car traffic almost completely.

All public transport was equipped with an automatic steering system. Crashes, like in former times, had become almost impossible. The artifacts replaced the human beings. The latter were spotted as the greatest risks, and were therefore banned from steering wheels. The fascination for speed could still be satisfied. Inside the gliders you had a cockpit for the pilot like in reality, but wasn't wholly real, when it came to the transformation, as far as speed and turnings were concerned. Other means of transport weren't allowed and not even available any more.

So you had to travel a long way, if you wanted to experience the good old days full of dangers and perils, in order to risk your own head and life. But this was still possible, however illegally, in fact.

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Arundle was disappointed, while she had good reasons for being glad. Inside she had expected the picture of the former days, while this didn't mean any good for the earth. They had arrived in Frankfurt finally, and the houses around the Hauptwache raised high up into the sky, while gliders rushed some five metres above the ground over the heads of the multitude of all colours. No laptops that were busy writing on their keyboards were among them. But a sedan-chair was to be seen here and there, carried indeed by artifacts, that could clearly be seen.

Arundle would have liked to show her son how the future started in those days. She could have failed as far as the location was concerned. That she would land in the future Frankfurt had only been wishful thinking on her side at that time, and had been only a conclusion, drawn together with adults. None the least as Dorothea had been all in favour of General Armyless, because he had looked like her husband Scholasticus.

Arundle felt the itch of upsetting her little lappy in order to find out whether the Laptocops would come as soon as they heard it screaming, in order to arrest the tormentor, while she had fallen off the clouds then, because she didn't pay attention.

Would that cloud banks still suit for sitting like in those days? Heavy enough they hung over the city and embraced the heads of the buildings. But from the Prince's palace or from General Armyless there was nothing to be seen. Well, they might be on the wrong spot time-wise as far as the General was concerned. The calendar had gone crazy in former future Laptopia, so you couldn't rely on that.

Billy-Joe padded Arundle's back in order to calm her down. "What did you expect? As a matter of fact you should be glad. Your nightmares didn't come true. While Mankind is overloaded with sorrows and needs, we now can be almost sure that the time-loss didn't come up – well, at least not the way we then learned. We don't know yet about the warfare, but it doesn't look all that bad..."

"We could be wrong here" Edmond suggested. He was somewhat upset. So much had he heard about Laptopia and now he didn't even meet a real Laptop, as they did exist these days as well. While they just got off a number of vehicles, which were all in the hands of artifacts. But they didn't goof around the silly way, as they were supposed to do in Laptopia. The cabin crew differed as well to a great extent and had little to do with wandering laptops, while they still fiddled about with their hands in the midst of their bodies all the time.

That's why Arundle was relieved in a way, and so was Billy-Joe. The worst case scenario hadn't shown up so far. Billy-Joe would have had only

some more years to live on, if you believed in the old predictions. After that he would have been sacrificed as the Shaman of the Churingas for the victory over the Prince-regent and his army of artifact-clone warriors. For the time being he was glad to see that goblet pass by him most likely – in case they were right here. You couldn't be sure of that. Still there was a chance that the reality didn't cope with the former vision.

Edmond insisted that they were wrong here. “We could have saved the trip. Besides, where should the Churingas live? Hadn't they been rather close...?”

Billy-Joe was puzzled. What Edmond mentioned had something in it. Any settlement around Australia's coast would be more suitable and likely, but the far away Frankfurt on the other side of the world. In former times, back in the future, it had been just a stone's throw, - or did he mix up everything, while they then travelled by means of the bow's magic, and therefore travelling took no time at all?

Pooty made himself known. The magic stone would agree with Edmond, he let Billy-Joe mysteriously know, as if nobody was allowed to notice, which was of course not likely.

“Couldn't he let us know before?” Billy-Joe asked briskly back, while the magic stone ignored him. Perhaps it was better that way. What would an argument be good for? While they had reasons to be glad, because the world would escape a horrible fate.

There was good hope in any case, while they certainly couldn't be sure. What, if they found a place where Laptops ran about through streets full of round houses left and right?

General Armyless they would all have liked to see. Arundle would have liked to know if he remembered. But was that possible? Could she meet him as an old woman?

Time-wise there was little difference left, For him no time had passed, since they met last, while there had elapsed a whole lifespan or two. And for the Laptops three times that much. Her youth was gone, she had a grown up son, at least a hundred years or twice as much Laptopsian time had passed, since the first contact, the traces of which they were due of following right now.

Arundle did it for Edmond, because he was in the right age. The same age as she had then been. Going on searching in Frankfurt was of no use, and while they were here, it might be a good idea to do a little sight-seeing. They might by chance discover a familiar site. You never know.

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Since Mynona was suspected somehow because of the giant moth, she felt uneasy in a way over here in the School of Inbetween. Or was it the wanderlust, they both couldn't get rid of – not on such a tiny little island? Well, the open sea was around, no doubt about that, and you could see as far as the horizon was. But that had been the same, way back in old Idaho, where the blue waves were replaced by the yellow waves of the cornfields in summer.

She had learnt a lot, Mynona reckoned, and Sam Smiley felt better educated as well. Without the School of Inbetween, they would most likely never had found out about the green whirl. But now they handled the dance with the winds just like that. Tibor had shown them the best tricks ever. They managed to carry on two passengers. And while they meanwhile noticed, that those, not gifted with the other way of seeing, little could see, they managed to inflame their passengers, nevertheless. When the latter realized what was going on among them, and how they managed to gain height, they were done. Indescribable it was. And there was still a lot to be told to friends and acquaintance forever and evermore.

While you were in the whirl, you noticed little. On the ground the whirl was almost nothing, but as soon as the lift-off happened, you saw things with other eyes. The further it went the less could be seen below, and the ordinary contemporary fellow was soon left alone and behind on the ground.

Instead of inscribing at the Island University the two packed their backpacks, fixed the sleeping-bags and a little tent, and took the copter to the mainland. First they wanted to explore the continent, and then they might carry on through the South Sea up to India. If it didn't work other – by their own power, which wouldn't be easy with all that luggage. But they had all the time in the world. Nobody was forcing them. The grand wide world stood open for them. They had nothing to lose, and little lost from where they came.

But it came all different. Mynona became pregnant, even before they had passed the South Sea. So they returned to Australia. Because they had felt well down under. The people were open-minded and Mynona could imagine to bring up her child there – for the time being, first of all. Back to Idaho – no way.

Then Sam had the idea with that resort. While they raised curiosity with the green whirls, where ever they showed up. As a wandering troop their chances were little, and a big party like a real circus was not theirs either.

So they settle on a fairly attractive ground, they had to purchase from the Aborigines. They didn't mind becoming cheated for the worthless piece

of land, where little grass grew. They paid far too much.

But the highway wasn't too far, and that was important. What should a holiday-resort do without the public? They contacted their former Dean, and thus the idea of the Laptopia-Resort was born. Tibor mailed them, what he knew about it. He didn't forget the funny round houses, and the self-induced Laptops he described in detail, who ran about there. They were his very own invention, he just lately introduced to the public. He would certainly claim an appropriate amount for the resort.

“For the start one hundred should suffice” he let them know, while offering his visit. However, here in the outback clocks tick different, that was so nice about Australia, Mynona and Sam reckoned, that was why they liked it. The Laptops were scarcely covered as well as possible against rain and heat, while they weren't made of stainless steel, as a matter of fact, the two managers soon found out. With stiff joints they were as helpless as the clientele they were made for.

Once run stuck, it was a hell of a job to get them started again. With all that high-tec electronic interior inside, there were still a lot of old-fashioned stuff, that needed lubrication, as the vehicles in former days.

But things got started nevertheless, thanks to Tibor's initiative. He stayed on after his step-visit, when he noticed how slow the processes developed. He could have easily waited for another two or three months, and hadn't caused trouble with the production-line manager of the new Serverin-type, when asking for a hundred extras beforehand.

Tibor also had the clearest vision of the houses and the setup alongside the narrow streets. After his blueprints the orders were placed – complete, with interior, family-minded and with guaranteed horrible junk-food being distributed daily from a central kitchen, as soon as the first disabled real clients moved in.

While the Severins and Severines didn't do anything useful, before their arrival, but were parading to and fro and up and down the narrow streets and passages, giving themselves orders by hammering on the keyboards with their long sensible fingers on the two thin arms, left and right. That wasn't too much, the young going-to-be parents reckoned.

You could see Mynona sitting about with an inside directed gaze, caressing her belly, and Sam Smiley standing by, nodding eagerly and somewhat helpless. Somehow they weren't the former ones any more. Did the victims of the Pandemia look the like, when the disease broke out? Sam seemed to shrink. Something was wrong with his legs, and the arms also caused him trouble, he didn't want to realize.

“We can certainly dance with the winds, that worked out fine all over the time, we were away” Sam said, and Mynona looked up, shaking her head softly, whispering gently “That’s no good for the little one” – “I can do alone” Sam insisted. But he knew how important a partner was.

“What would happen if we had that General march with his troops up, and arrest those people for mishandling their artifacts?” Mynona asked. She had heard something of that kind. In fact the one or other rumour you picked up, when you lived in such a school for years. Although they had kept to their own, and never had become warm with the others. Perhaps they had been just too old, when they started, and were spoilt by their wanderlust for a life on an island. Tibor had pleased them in any way, and had understood them better than they did themselves, so it had seemed to them.

Slowly a kind of a programme was taking up contour, promising gags and fun, so the name they gave it ‘No-Future-Factory’, sounded somewhat appropriate.

In the long run Tibor projected visits to the castle’s interior, and a visit in those dark horror cabinets of the subsoil dungeons, which of course had first to be built. So the dwarves were needed once more, who were the only ones who could achieve such a task. An audience with the Prince-regent and his wife would certainly round the picture, while the castle had as well to be built and furnished first.

Such a project grew rather shapeless. Still the outlook wasn’t frightening. Perhaps you would earn a livid lecture of how the future shouldn’t be like.

The more he wondered, the mightier grew the imagination, until he had the ultimate idea. But then he knew already that he couldn’t shoulder the whole affair on his own. What had started small, had to grow and had to become reality. A reality that didn’t exist as yet.

All were demanded. How thankful he was, while Mynona felt the strong longing for stability for her becoming child. How glad was he, that the two had changed, and had come to him with their idea. An idea that sounded crazy at first, while becoming the greatest idea of the century.

At last the School of Inbetween was faced with a challenge they deserved. At last they could prove what was in them. A challenge they required all their resources for. Because without those such a huge matter couldn’t be handled, Tibor all too well knew. For one alone it was too much, and couldn’t be handled.

Where did that idea come from? Who wired the wheels and shifted the switches? What would Arundle say? He never had been as curious as these days. That overdid everything he ever experienced. And not him

alone. Nobody, he was sure of that, had ever experienced something the like, or would ever experience. What was going to build up here, was so singular, so unimaginable and at the same time so incredibly simple, that it just took your breath, whenever you realized before the inner eye.

True results were the most simple ones, and stunned exactly thereof.

People asked afterwards why nobody had anticipated such a solution, while it was the most obvious and the most simple solution, you could think of.

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Arundle didn't give up. She consulted her magic bow for once about the coordinates that were once in former times employed. "Can it be that something was mixed up, perhaps with the parallels of latitude?"

The magic bow bursted out laughing, he was giggling somewhat strange all the time already, as he hadn't done for a long time, and assessed her no answer. He felt like being asked for the riddle of the world, and was expected to pass on a formula. Visiting all Frankfurts around the world he refused however. "I won't do. Where there are those wonderful connections now available the common way. You travel with your people like all the others do. Will suit you just fine."

To Frankfurt on Oder the stratospheric cruiser wouldn't fit, the distance was too short. It would have taken them as long as the whole flight took all the way up from Australia. Besides, that Frankfurt was another disappointment, or a positive surprise. Because there was nothing to be seen. A boring dirty little town, as far as they took notice via online map. While the Frankenfurters swore on their city and praised it as open minded and urban as the gateway to the East. But they didn't mingle and left after a few hours.

Next stop was Kentucky. The Frankfort there had a different spelling, an o for a u, but that was it. Otherwise the place was quite normal, while the Pandemia had raged badly, and the number of Severins and Severines was considerably higher than in old Europe. There were in fact some wandering Laptops, strolling about, seemingly senseless, or chasing their trace, while some guided their disabled masters or mistresses, either on their hands or by an necklace around the neck or breast, with neatly sounding bells.

That was a new variation, and had no equivalent in the former future, as Arundle remembered. Not to her consciousness anyway. So she departed to the next Frankfurt on the list (also with an o instead of a

u) and so forth. The towns became smaller, but nowhere began a bell to ring, for sure not on the plain countryside. Because Laptops hadn't come that far. People did without artifacts. They kept their disabled and diseased in the families or the mentally disturbed under control in old people's homes. Those didn't mind, because they were absent minded, so to speak. Compared to the metropolises very little victims of the pandemia could be found.

Disappointed and frustrated the little family finally returned. While there was good reasons for pleasure, because the nightmarish future was nowhere in sight. The assumptions of former days, that they had done glimpses into the future seemed to be wrong. They might have had discernments into another world, other than the world they were living in.

On the other hand were there facts, which couldn't be ignored either. Tibor had invented those self-induced artifacts on his own, without any knowledge, what so ever of the artifacts of Laptopia. Without the self-induced horse headed violin he wouldn't have succeeded. And it was him alone, who had the idea.

So Arundle should be happy. All her life she had fought to have this goblet pass by and save the world from such a nightmarish catastrophe. And now everything was different. Without artifacts mankind was doomed to death. With their crippled extremities as victims of the Pandemia they couldn't live on alone. While the latest model of the Severine proved very able and farsighted, and it looked as if the symbiosis between man and artifact was a true solution for the future.

But then Arundle realized how different the demands of man and artifact were, and she saw the danger for the future, they once wanted to ban. Man required an oecological environment. They depended on intact conditions, and the biological clock inside formed a kind of metre of existence. Who ever turned that wheel would close the tap of life for mankind. Not at once, but little by little.

In the former future the artifacts were doing this involontarily. While they took over from their masters. They became more and more independent, until their masters were obsolete. That was shortly before the year of decision, who owned this planet, and whose demands it had to follow.

It had been the time, when Arundle and the explorers of the future started to hunt down Malicious Marduk, they suspected to be the true force behind the negative development.

Had they been wrong? Had they fought the wrong battle? Should they better have built a joint future together with those artifacts, including all the bionic genders inbetween who didn't know what they were. The positive aspects would probably have overrode the negative ones. And a joint future might have been the result. Artifacts didn't suffer from time-pressure. They didn't require air for breathing, and no water either. While water was the element of life for humans. Both sides might have come to agreements, as far as the basic material was concerned. There were a lot of waterproof metals, which didn't suffer from water.

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The little family returned home for once, and recovered from the strain of the senseless voyage, which brought frustration and doubts instead of enlightenment or discernments into reality.

But after a few days Arundle couldn't hang on. She had a new idea. What, if all their calculations had been wrong, and the time had not been the correct one? Perhaps the true time lay afar and couldn't be spotted precisely? Had she seen herself as a child? 'No, she hadn't. Had she seen anything that determined her acting then? No, she hadn't. No Prince, no General, no Prince-Regent, not even herself or Billy-Joe or the old Shaman of the Churingas. Not the hall of fame and glory or anything of the secret underworld, where she had experienced a big part of her adventures. Not to mention the big war and the mighty armies. They didn't come out of nothing.

Had she only known how close she was to the truth with her musings!

5. Future's Arrival

First the new founded working group who called themselves "Repetitors of the Future" started off, reckoning the timescale up and down in order to find out where they actually stood. That wasn't easy at all. Convictions had to be questioned and doubts considered, magic bow and magic stone had mighty words to say, and last but not least was there Arundle with the most intimate knowledge and with the most serious doubts. You could easily fail the target one way or the other. It was not only a matter of days, but also of hours or even minutes and seconds. And the time-loss had also to be concidered, they had already argued about, and had of course be taken under account. How else could you expect a fairly reasonable result?

That was but one problem and the comparably harmless one they thought and considered all the sites of action they had to deal with. While there were real construction sites as well. First of all the dwarves had to be contacted. Because without dwarves, they soon realized, they could forget the whole affair right from the start. Lucky Tibor had good connections and a fantastic reputation, other than the former Headmistress, who was by then replaced. But such a bad image sticks like mud.

The old generation, so the “Repetitors of the Future” decided, should however be involved, while otherwise secrecy was obvious, for several reasons.

The dwarves – being fond of the idea – started off right away. Two ship-loads of material were brought to a hidden bay at the coast of New-South-Wales. A flock of eager labourers set foot on holy grounds so to speak and disappeared in no time subsoil, while the goods were stowed on the surface, but disappeared piece by piece in less than a month.

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At that time, the old Last Bounty had been given up finally for good. One day her heart stood still. Chief-mechanic Stan lived on for only a week after, then also died of a broken heart. He was buried in the open sea, close to Susamee’s Island. Captain Zinfandor Leblanc also retired and followed his darling down to South Africa – back to the roots -- his as well, as he was the son of a white Boer settler, who became expropriated, which might be the initial cause for Zinfandor’s troublesome life.

What was left behind of the Last Bounty was scrapped. The crewmembers did it like the Captain and resigned. Susamee enclosed them in her wide heart and had a Seamen’s Home built right at the pier, where the blokes enjoyed life.

There they stood, while the New Last Bounty set sails or returned, waved and cheered, and once in a while you saw a teardrop dropping heavy with a splash on the concrete. Such a modern vessel was not their cup of tea, and those tin-comrades, who ran the show these days, weren’t at all – for sure not. They wouldn’t have liked to go with them – not even as passengers – for the food alone they’d stayed off, as it was still the artificial stuff you could hardly swallow.

Only the dwarves carried on with their home-cooking when they were on board. And no regulation could hinder them. The new steerage looked almost the same as before the old. Only above things had

changed. The New Last Bounty had been built for the same purpose as the previous one, while time passed by and couldn't resist or stand still.

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From the bay where the New Last Bounty anchored busses took the passengers to Mynona Wilder's Resort. She kept things going, while Sam Smiley's disease prevailed.

The equipment followed by truck as soon as unloaded, which wasn't easy. A few miles away from the resort, where the ground seemed suitable, the digging began. In no time a system of tunnels was built, and what else there was to be prepared. Tibor offered the eager little ones who were carving for recognition a leading role in the final drama of the world, and strove that way to the honour they deserved, but never gained.

It was high time now to involve Billy-Joe. because the craftsmen from Sidney erected already the castle amidst the city centre, while technicians laboured on the cloud banks above. Which turned out to be less difficult than expected, because the clouds grew thicker over larger settlements anyway. Especially over smog-tormented Metropolises.

As per calculation it was high time now. By the worst-case-analysis the visitors had already arrived, but contradicted in reality. At least had nobody seen anyone yet.

Scholasticus Slyboots would have learnt first, because he stood ready for action and tried his new gear, which made him look somewhat strange, and didn't comply with his peace-loving nature.

Dorothea warned him not to overdo with the Viennese slang, and not to forget who the visitors were.

The SLOMES-factories produced day and night: Laptocops with scissor-hands, and all kinds of warriors with little brain and a tiny keyboard. Huge tin-can comrades with frightening exterior and outfit. For them a lost valley was found, where they - protected against rain and sand - awaited their mission.

Messengers were sent to the Maroon camps nearer or further in the desert or hidden coastlands. When they learnt, what it was about, they promised to participate and started getting ready inside and outside at once. They still had some years to come, before their hour came.

While there was some work to be done right away, especially for the dwarves, who felt mightily upgraded. They soon realized, that they belonged to the saviours of the world. While they had been treated as some kind of degenerated outcasts, in a way. Certainly not as equal

human beings. No matter what the surfacers said, who would of course never admit.

Everything had been considered. The big towers on the one side and the catapults on the other – more or less reasonable constructions, that looked more than there was behind, but never proved in action the actual potential. While a lot of stuff was still just blueprint, because there was still time – so the actors hoped.

The field of honour became marked out, and the site was settled where the showdown would run its trace. The tiny furry Churingas became instructed and briefed for their Grand Entrance. Their Shaman had himself surrounded by the fancy fellows and declared them as his tribe, while he exceeded them by two heads. No matter how crooked and hunchedback he appeared, according to his role.

For the Churingas another hidden valley was found, with a thin brooklet floating right through and green banks alongside.

One of the scarce rivulets down here deep under, carrying water almost through the whole year. It was the same brook that was made to pass the No-Future-Resort some miles further on. The ground didn't resist digging, so that the inhabitants could retire in dwarves fashion, when ever they wished.

Subsoil things also gained contour, and were set up on Billy-Joe's demands. He would have liked to talk things over with Arundle right now, but had to wait. She would become involved soon enough.

Had she only known what was coming up behind her back, things might have turned out to the better, while misfortune took its pace.

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The palace was ready. Now they had to find the proper inhabitants. That wasn't easy. Prince Watchalot and the pregnant Princess Watchmetoo hadn't been the brightest. And physically the Prince had been very limited, before he became bionically upgraded.

The Repetitors discussed the matter and came to the solution that a pandemically disabled persons would do best, presenting themselves as mentally disabled and physically helpless. Such cases weren't rare unfortunately. There were millions all over the world, who could only live on with the help of their artifacts. But you had to take care of the secret matter as well. Not everybody suited therefore.

They found the right persons near-by. Mynona signalled agreeance. Taking over the role was all the more fit, as the Princess had been in good hope then. And so was Mynona who outed herself as an

offspring of an old feudal family.

Together with Sam Smiley, who earnestly suffered from the consequences of the Pandemia, they changed residence. Sam became Prince Watchalot and was also impeded with the virus of hypocrisy, and declared himself as the legitimate offspring of the feudal 'House of Hohenzollhausen'. Thanks to the marriage with Her Majesty Princess Watchmetoo. Their strange names were in fact titles of honour, so they were ascertained by their advisers.

Their child was born then right on time, but that came later.

First the visitors from the past came, and the tragedy became real and took up speed. As often on stage, the farce turned, and the tragedy came out. It accelerated and the chain of misfortune built up on its own, forming an avalanche that buried everything.

**

At first the Repetitors had been so glad, that the visitors from the past did in fact arrive right at the spot and also roughly at the time, where and when they had been expected.

They planned to have Hans Henny Henne acting the despotic Prince-Regent on the field of honour, in case he was available at that time. After all his ascension was decided and was fixed once more. Until the final battle, the young prince, who was just born, had to be grown up as the leader of the human army. And he therefore needed a couple of years, while the growing up of the little Prince was somehow enforced miraculously.

Hans Henny Henne was busy over here, and more important affairs were still waiting. So his ascension was postponed again, while he certainly would have liked to return to his dear friend Anonymous. As tired of life as he was, and even succeeded meanwhile in picking up the divine tunes of the flute.

Dancing was still not his favourite cup of tea, so to speak. The bionic takeover was on the march, and hard to control in a way. Dancing could not be taken over in the flesh, while there was too little left.

Involving the American couple from Idaho might have been the worst mistake already, while they had been in anyway as the founders of the Resort.

All other roles were taken over by trustworthy individuals, or likely to fit in the long run. Not so the Prince-regent, who would soon appear rather incalculable. Unfortunately no-one else had been found.

Later Tika and Tibor wondered if not even Susamee and Watchman Will Wiesle would have been a more suitable couple. But where should their child have come from?

Anyway – with another decision the loophole wouldn't have gapped. A gap had opened, no-one had under control, and perilous strange beings slipped through, deranging the trim.

In the long run Edmond became a suitable prince. But on the battleground of the earth the final show-down had not to wait for twenty years. (That was Edmond's age.) While his actual age was hardly noticed with all that higgledy-piggledy going on, and all that travelling to and fro.

First little Arundle travelled alone, with her Lappy and her bow. General Armyless had his Grand Entrance who had disciplinary trouble with his troopers right from the start. But that was all too well known.

The future had been built true to scale, and was on the verge of arriving in the presence, fitted and prepared to have things happen as they were. Whatever Arundle and her kin happened to meet and overcome in the future, that was present now.

The time-scale was kind of shaky. Where were all those years, the actors and actresses asked, when they met so young, while they couldn't see each other. Because the travellers into the future never managed to see themselves. That was arranged by the director.

Endangered were in this respect mainly Scholasticus and Billy-Joe. When they had met their alter ego, which could happen any time, they might have recognized and would have spoilt everything. With Billy-Joe this almost happened to meet a couple of times. And little Arundle was not freed from strange *deja-vu* events, she couldn't explain, and no-one else could.

How cute the three star-children of the Advisor cared for the little prince! General Armyless faked surprise, when he realized how well the little prince was built. (His surprise was not wholly simulated because it was not at all certain, that Mynona would deliver a healthy child.)

Scholasticus was the only person who understood what really went on, and had trouble in hiding, when he had to undertake a lot of nonsense, from which he knew beforehand, that it wouldn't work.

Being asked why the prince absolved three very remarkable age-jumps while growing up, he couldn't explain or wasn't willing to do. The jumps occurred whenever the prince was replaced, until he became

Edmond's turn, but that was only in the end shortly before the final battle. This was how the director kept things in his or her hands, or believed to do so, while in fact it was already too late. The door was used meanwhile regularly, that had opened involuntarily. Their calculation did not work out. A bad mistake would soon show consequences of the worst kind.

They could have noticed, when they planned the journey in the ton, because Grisella was so afraid of flying and Walter had agreed to do what they wanted him to do. Malicious Marduk then stood up rather undisguised, and unmasked. He sneaked into Grisella's team of scientists. Well, in fact he hadn't to sneak, he was pleaded aboard very officially, and impressed Grisella, Lady of Griselgreif to Griffinclaw-Slyboots, the Professor in charge, so she had been pleased to have him in the team.

At that time she didn't know much about the School of Inbetween, and hadn't made up her mind whether she would teach there.

Still she should have noticed that the future show had been arranged for them, like Potemkin's Villages. What they saw, was surely not the reality of the world, they were visiting. Did those students never ask themselves why they never got out of the narrow town of Laptopia? Whenever they asked questions concerning the outer world, the answers became vague. First of all from General Armyless, whose mouth was sealed and who was not allowed to help his sister-in-law.

So he didn't stimulate her and the research came to a soon halt, thanks to God. For Grisella everything was over as soon as she realized how she had been cheated by Malicious Marduk.

Grisella only shook her head when she recalled her naivety. She had been led astray by a little girl who couldn't know better, other than herself the sound Professor, who knew how things worked .

But so it had been while blind eagerness was pushing. Who wanted to miss the chance of seeing with own eyes what the future would bring? This view had then obscured the outlook. Grisella knew that now - a hundred years later.

Where had all the years gone? Where was the time of the great rise and the unlimited chances? Faster and faster the years passed, when watched from outside. She was unable to differentiate one year from the other, so equal had they passed.

No alarm was heard as yet, while an invisible finger pointed at the vulnerable mark, where the 'dolchstoß' (stab in the back) would aim.

She still didn't get any further now, then to her little anger, where it presented itself so close.

Now she stumbled over the little mistakes of former times, while she couldn't see the big one creeping up right now.

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Arundle felt alright. Had there be proof, here it was, visible in the light of the day. There was no discernment into the future. Future was unpredictable in detail, while very general views might show by vague trends prolonged further. There was not more. More didn't show.

The circle they made however, had not been considered by her either. That was why she had been shocked, when she was told by Billy-Joe, that the promised land had been found. "Not far from here – just a stone's throw."

"Why roving far distances" Edmond added. He was delighted, because he was already familiar with his role at that time, he would take over in the 'Project Future', and familiarized himself with the secrets of governing under the aggravated conditions of Laptopia.

"The Roi du Soleil' had also been just fourteen when he started off, and became the greatest king of France."

There is someone who paid attention in history lessons, Arundle noticed with a smile. With her motherly emotions she hadn't been wrong all these years, because she had been the little Prince's first nurse, and showed him the right way. Things became clear, just like that.

"In fact, we wanted to please you" Billy-Joe declared, when he showed her around in Laptopia. "Mynona had the idea, when Tibor created those self-induced Laptops. I think that was when everything started. Soon everybody remembered, and the search for traces began. And then we had the idea, to widen and follow the enlarged traces. First somewhat funny, but then we became serious, and still went on, while we lost control. Some identified with their role, since the time seemed to keep up with the presence. 'Who am I' became a serious question. Involuntarily we all identified with our role, the more so, as time went by.

"Who am I? – being Shaman of the Churingas seemed to be my true destiny..."

"And Tibor, who hardly ever wished more, became the director of a gigantic historical drama..."

“This is how things keep going...”

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Grisella also enjoyed when being shown around. She didn't know the Resort as yet either. She couldn't say any more why she had asked Malicious Marduk into the team then. Because she didn't understand herself anymore now. “Why didn't I become suspicious?”

Besides, she mixed up the past future with the present future, while there were a hundred years in between. That was a strategic problem of thinking.

“Sure enough, we certainly had the real Malicious Marduk on board. By now surely under a different mask, I presume, so nobody would recognize.”

“How could we?” Arundle added.

Grisella nodded eagerly. “For us it had been the first Grand Entrance then. And that was how he entered the play. We opened a door ourselves. while the future had been off limits, since that spectacular scenes on the moon, when we managed to freeze him and redirect his poles. That was when Anonymous was born and a Saulus became a Paulus once more.”

“Was that no later?” Arundle mused.

“Could well be” Billy-Joe vaguely remembered, time might confuse the before and the after, as had happened to Grisella right now. But seen in the wider outlines it must have been so or similar.

Arundle still felt shame for her solitary decisions those days on the moon. Things happened to straighten out to the better, with that prisoner in the igloo, but that didn't mean, that she hadn't run an irresponsible risk.

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Here he was again the great opponent and grinned his slimy grin. The dungeons and strong rooms filled without anyones effort, which the busy dwarves had built. They should have stayed empty, as was foreseen by the director.

Later, when visitors were guided through the facilities, light effects should replace the cruel reality, while it now did by itself – more frightening and crueller perhaps than imagination could produce.

And that was their own creation, and wouldn't exist without them. In their set-up they initiated a fake reality on the verge. They in fact

produced the former future. – Arundle was deeply shocked. She hadn't been consecrated.

Would she have noticed earlier? It was by now too late. The child lay in the well, so to speak, and Arundle didn't want to imagine, who pushed it. That would be an all too horrible remonstrance. How could you be so stupid, and so blue-eyed to think that the evil was sleeping, while it kept knocking against the door all the time, by image of the leather-man or his moth..?

Blind-folded they trusted Mynona and Sam Smiley as well. Tibor took the latter in the boat and asked him for the role of the Prince-regent. What a choice! He couldn't have been more mistaken. How could he? Could anyone be as silly as they had been? And nobody objected, while Malicious Marduk placed his agent in the most prominent position and made him Master of the dungeons and all the castle's keys and codes.

Billy-Joe would at best hit himself, while poor Walter was tormented all over again, who didn't deserve.

Things had to look real. The magic stone didn't object. Pooty stood nearby. The magic stone knew quite well that they didn't have to do with a seduced and misguided Walter, but he then didn't mind, because of Pooty. And all that strange Walter hadn't been to him either, whose deep engraftments subdued.

The carriage to space he shouldn't have done. But pretending to have it done already, was no option either. And so the magic stone made fun of the students, and bothered them with all kinds of pranks. They listened gratefully to the far spherical future-music, being actually outlets of the imagination of the stone, who felt bored, while a hundred years passed by.

The presence imaged the future of the past. Arranged or true, it remained the future, and hammered itself with iron beats into the moods and spirits, and defined from now on their strivings and selves. Escape was no option.

6.Suicide Mission

Would it be different, if the 'Repetitors hadn't arranged and made the set-up of the former future in the presence? 'Repetitors' they tended to name themselves; all of those who were involved and inaugurated into the somewhat high and mighty project 'Future's Arrival'. They talked big and assured each other that they knew what they were doing. But such hypocrisy would soon turn into a boomerang, as one of their prominent members was

going to realize soon in the most terrible way.

Arundle would have been disappointed by another course of history, but in a way positive, because all her life had been overshadowed by the shade of a threatening evil to come. She had done at best she could, to beware of such upcoming fate.

Instead of assisting her in that, the friends construed a tricky set-up for real, not noticing how the tragedy was fulfilled behind their backs and over their heads, while they did, what had to come, as it was likewise predicted.

Their set-up as artificial as it was, was nothing but the truth. What they meant artificial, the artificial town, with the artificial problems, and the artificial war faring opponents, were nevertheless real and had to be real because it was not only predicted in the past but also experienced by the time-travellers. No escape was possible.

The play became bloody earnest, and the arrangement couldn't be separated from reality. The world was drawn into the whirls of the drama, so it seemed. The beseeched tragedy of fate took up speed.

The world was in bad shape, and the Repetitors just took part, instead of smoothing the course. The pandemic troubles couldn't be overlooked. The Time-Value-System was eating up its children, who were not robbed of their limbs and brain by the disease. More and more people ran into dependence and couldn't survive without serving artifacts. Their loyalty and service had become a vital question on life and death.

The more brain the artifacts developed, the better they did their job. While a new danger arose. The artifacts became independent with each step by which they extended their spiritual existence. And they enlarged their horizon in many ways. Their language, with which they programmed themselves became clearer and more differentiated. They demonstrated their coming of age in the open. And you could meet the one or other, who outed his or her personal ‚Eureka‘(Greek call of stunning surprise) - and rejoiced with a jubilant “I think and therefore I am.”

The Repetitors knew by now, that the so-called time-loss had not been all that real – in all those years, while only now such an discernment became relevant. In reality the critical marks were often reached, and the time-travellers were affected when they returned. The loss in time was however caused by the little weaknesses of the calculations, and to a larger extent to the incalculable time-slopes, as they were produced by black holes, where the time stood still.

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Such a risky enterprise like the fake world of the resort, should have

been discussed sorrowfully beforehand. Unfortunately the Advisor had not been involved. So Arundle had not been the only one, who was ignored. Now, while it was too late, she was asked to check and reconfirm. But the Advisor didn't show up. Still she tried, but in vain. That was why they were now all alone down here, without advice.

In order to get a clearer view, Arundle wanted to know, when the big show-down would occur, as to the Repetitors' calculations. But even Billy-Joe who would be involved for sure, had only a vague idea of what was coming up on his behalf. And a frightening view came up to her inner eye.

Hans Henny Henne trained already how to move in the mighty armament. But the gear exceeded his powers. He was after all an old man. A lighter model had to be produced, a model that only looked like solid steel, but was of light fabric. The Repetitors didn't mind, - the whole affair was intended as a big show, that nobody harmed. A terrible mistake, as they soon found out.

They didn't reckon with the young hot-head, Billy-Joe had been at that time. For him it was a fight of life and death, and there was no legitimate possibility to let him know the truth.

What ever the Alter ego – the old Shaman of the Churingas – would mention, would be misunderstood by the youngster. The old man tried hard but finally gave up, and decided to accept his fate. But that he didn't publish, so he believed. But Arundle couldn't be cheated any longer. She understood her husband without words.

The pain met her in the breast like the blow of a giant's fist. The bitter recognition overwhelmed her instantly. She lost control and broke down, weeping bitterly.

Billy-Joe would die. Her beloved Billy-Joe would not survive the day of decision. No power in the world could avoid. The clock of life of the old Shaman of the Churingas had come to a final halt. This time he had been the Yokel's sacrifice. Only by his death the young Billy-Joe would regain his life back in the world of the humans and their future.

Those Repetitors had arranged for a terrible mess, they hadn't anticipated. They didn't think further but to the tip of their noses, and didn't anticipate the long term consequences. And the worst was, that Billy-Joe never had the slightest chance of a choice, but had been steering towards doom irresistably.

Had those Repetitors asked him early enough, he might have found out for himself, because he knew about the connection between the youngster on the surface and the old man in the cave. Without the magic assistance from the underground the valiant bloke wouldn't have had the slightest

chance of surviving the combat, no matter how poor the opponent's armament had been.

Young Edmond would have given his right arm for the chance of taking over from his father. But it was too late. The wheel of fortune wouldn't turn back. The old Shaman of the Churingas had changed into his father, and vice versa, and was sticking unreachable in the inside of the earth, in compliance with the role of his life.

Saturated with a long and merry life, death couldn't frighten him. He was only sorry for Arundle and for Edmond, who would miss him badly, despite the fact that they had their difficulties with the awkward old Shaman, who he had become more of, than was good for the family, while time passed by.

Only Pooty in the pouch and Walter deep inside hung on with him. The magic bow he left with Arundle, he would still keep the magic stone, while its magic would surely suffice for what he intended.

"Could I only hinder the hot-head to behead poor Hans Henny Henne" he moaned aloud, while no-one would hear him down under. He knew himself, no matter what faded with the years.

'How quick the youth was at hand, although final decisions couldn't be reversed', he mused. Had that youngster by then only known what he knew a hundred years later. Should he try a shortcut?

No, no the boy might stumble and Hans Henny Henne shot him really down, knowing that he couldn't do harm while on the verge of ascension. The Prince-Regent was his final role on earth. After that he would be free from all earthly lots, free for the plenty-ness in order to plunge right into plentitude. Well, a chat once in a while with friend Anonymous should be still likely.

As per plan Sam Smiley took over after the battle. His cut-off head would become exchanged immediately so Hansiman could carry on ascending complete. As far as he was informed, he would be picked up by a fire-chariot. "That's a special honour, only a few deserve" the Advisor explained meaningfully, who had appeared to overlook the suicide mission.

Thus it happened that Hilde didn't even have a corpse she could mourn adequately. Together with Arundle, who wasn't better off, she wept barrels. while the corpse of the old Shaman was never seen again, and Pooty and the magic stone from Uluru were never seen either.

Perhaps they are caved in and sleep the sleep of death deep down under the shallow hill, which erects on the battle field, and reminds mankind of the fate of a saviour. They might be waiting, until someone in the far

future comes to wake them up or – why not? – eventually also comes from the past.

7.Looking Back

“I want to know all about him.” The grief made Edmond’s voice darker. ‘The voice he has also from him’, Arundle noticed - ‘as so much else...’

She couldn’t keep the tears back and didn’t know where to begin. This and that came to her mind, all mixed and upside down like flickering flashlights in a vast scarcely lit room of the past, or in the boundless open of a clear summer night with hundreds of falling stars popping up here and there.

In order to make things easier for him, the Repetitors decided to have the Prince-Regent also die, while he recovered at first according to the director’s plan. Thus Sam Smiley got away with his unthankful task, which made him almost thankful, had there not been his queer mission.

As a consequence Edmond had to take over. While the role of the sad Prince went well together with his personal feelings in his state of being. As the young Prince he had the chance of looking his youthful dad into the eyes again, but was of course not allowed to mention any such relation. Sometimes he felt like looking into a mirror, and he could never be certain, whether he was seen likewise, while those visitors from the past were in a way not really real, but only some kind of images. Even worse it was, that he couldn’t mention to his mother, what he felt, and experienced. While young Arundle was active all the more.

The grown-up appearance of hers – in contrary – was rather mild and thoughtful. Edmond helped himself by distinguishing her as Arundle-Maman, the Phiosopher, who she had been all her adult life.

She knew of course that the Repetitors asked far too much of him, while Edmond was no Superman, but couldn’t be changed. The planned future didn’t give way to any loophole. The visitors from the past had gone too far already. Directing was by then a matter of consequences, stemming from what was given and had happened so far. While (the young visiting) Arundle remained the spearhead. The way she handled the little prince by teaching and supporting him together with Florinna and Corinia, was just fantastic. While the Prince had to be saved from the claws of the artifacts, to have him educated in a humane fashion, with a lot of fresh air and light, and even more love and caressing, but without exposing him permanently to the TV-screen.

In order not to become so surprised by the entering visitors, the Repetitors searched for a plan. Therefore they collected all kinds of data, and

stressed their memories, whether they couldn't remind a little better, how it had been and what was going on in which sequence, as soon as they got on the way. For that the magic bow was of course the most wanted partner, who should have known best, as he did all those transfers back and forth in no time. But his memory was limited, and the facts lay back some hundred years.

Thus the plan – as soon as it became real – showed white empty spots the lot. Those were the times when nothing had happened (that is in fact – nothing was going to happen, as everything that happened, did happen in the presence – that is – these days and weeks or right now!)

So, not much was won by the chart.

“Perhaps it would help if we installed a kind of alarm system. Whenever a visitor is approaching, we get a call, which gives us a couple of minutes to set up, what is required” Corinia suggested. She and her sister were very able with such matter, while they practised excessive sleep-walking when still young, as a consequence of her mother's heritage, but also trained.

It didn't mean much that the two sisters never had any special functions inside of the School of Inbetween. They stood their women as scientists. The one exploring the seas, and the other the lands as an archaeologist of reputation.

There was a chance, while mainly for sleeping and dreaming: “Trained Somniors are able to wake themselves up, whenever they like. That can either be initiated temporarily or locally”, Corinia explained to the stunned Repetitors, who listened eagerly, while she presented the ultimate idea for their growing problem.

Imagining that this was going on now for some twenty years or so, was kind of a nightmare. The more so, as they would be surprised by those visitors from the past with their growing expectations, which they better not ignored or disappointed.

With some kind of warning system, referring to the upcoming scene of action, they had some minutes for activation.

“It works like that” Corinia continued. “As soon as the magic bow inserts his coordinates, over here some kind of relais is logging in...”

“Yes, the bow is logging in” Florinna added. “And this logging in, you can make audible” Corinia went on. “With a smart sound perhaps. We are free in that. But someone has to be on watch, of course. When all are apart or sound asleep, then the poor bow could ring as much as he liked...” “Right, nobody would notice...”

Corinia's explanation was immediately understood by the Repetitors. Such an easy system hadn't come to their mind. So they were very pleased.

"And were are we going to install the alarm-system?" Scholasticus wanted to know, who was especially keen on getting relief, while he had two jobs at hand, and was one of the few, who knew everything. He not only played the General Armyless, and himself as a youngster of advanced age. Neither part could be taken over by any other actor, so far. He had to be very careful and should never be mistaken, which was in his case almost impossible. And that was why the General Armyless was boosting all the time in platitudes, instead of referring to the plain facts of actuality. He did that in order to avoid the worst mistakes, and turned out to be rather effective, in a way.

Being an Emeritus meanwhile Scholasticus Slyboots was free without commitment. But he liked his comfort, and therefore wasn't really keen on such an extra workload, of so limited a reputation. The more so, while sudden off breaks were often connected with a scene, and the magic bow couldn't avoid awkward disturbances on his behalf. Time was the least they used up. And there was all that re-dressing during the flight, and that bulky cap of the Generalissimo...

All that was sometimes a little too much for an old man, he found, while he had to act a comparatively young man of just over fifty.

"You surely have to do other things as well" he uttered once in a while, obviously somewhat annoyed.

So the fact, that he could stay at home in his common surrounding, made him favour the new system.

Had only Intellectus been more of the Slyboots side, but he was the slender appearance of the Griselgreifs, and could under no circumstances slip into the role of the General. He was two heads too tall and surely not half as broad, and of no familiar appeal or likeliness.

"What are you going to do, when I'm once gone?" Scholasticus asked with a breaking voice. Dorothea embraced him gently and whispered: "That may God prevent. You are going to outlive all of us." ('Besides, Amadeus is still here') she thought, but didn't dare to say aloud.

The most reasonable solution would be to have the alarm system installed right here, where the watchmen were guarding anyway. They would convey the alarm to the actors who were needed. The watchmen were necessary at the entrance because of the tourists, who might show up and cause a mess. That was why the area had been declared as an off-limits zone, as soon as the visitors from the past persistently happened to show up. The off-limit zone included the valley of the fake Churingas as well, because it

was located near-by, and was connected with a tunnel-system and the palace of Laptopia-city, while eager Maroons kept the exits open.

“Think of Billy-Joe” Scholasticus mentioned with tears in his eyes. He opened his arms as if embracing the whole world and looked around where all Repetitors were assembled. Most of them played a role on the stage of the future.

Scholasticus was the Senior and approached the one-hundred-and-fifty years’ mark, that was why the tears were always near-by. And he wondered whether he could carry on with the role of the General.

“That was something else” Grisella wanted to ease him. “Billy-Joe’s sacrifice had been necessary. But your Waterloo lies way behind, don’t you remember?”

Grisella was referring to the perilous situation when Scholasticus had been tied down at the stake.

But was that true? Arundle didn’t agree with what she had just heard. Such cruel way of thinking hurt and made her feel sad.

Those Repetitors knew how the future went out finally, because it was also their own, they were preparing. But with the death of the old Shaman they felt caught on the wrong foot. They now tried to keep everything in mind and focus, and have an eye on the many aspects, which all built the course of history. On that Shaman they had just forgotten, when he couldn’t be seen anymore. The majority hadn’t even known of him at all. Although it had been so important. Without him the young warrior would have never survived the fight of David against Goliath. Because it had been the Shaman, who concentrated his fading powers in a last desperate upheaval and implemented into his valiant alter ego on the surface, while being subsoil just underneath. By that way the young Billy-Joe managed to grab for his boomerang and came with a last and desperate blow to the final and all deciding cut.

No one had considered what was going to happen to their genuine Billy-Joe in the underground. As a matter of fact, and to the excuse of all of them, no-one knew, no-one was informed, no-one had the faintest idea of what Billy-Joe was prepared to do. But did that make him alive again? Would Edmond get his father back or Arundle her husband?

– Never had it been of minor importance what was coming next, and what they should have been prepared for. In detail things looked rather different than in general.

As for the moon – they still had no handy solution. Should they rebuild a moon landscape down her on earth? Was that possible at all? Or

would it be better to install a base on the moon, that could be reached any time, when needed? That would be a rather complex arrangement. As a matter of fact Anonymous had written major parts of his epochal work on the moon, by which he introduced a future based on humane features.

There had been certainly a pretty mess when even Anonymous mixed up the time-scales, and the ups and downs of characters. Sorting that out was a hell of a job, and all means were required for regulation, while the poor contemporaries suffered from the consequences of the amateurish jugglings and misinterpretations.

“A real estate on the moon?” Dorothea asked back as she wasn’t addressed in the first place. “That comes fairly late to your minds. When would it then please?”

“At best right now.”

“That’s what I thought. It won’t be a big of a problem, though. Many overdid and are at the present desperately looking for relief. While the big run’s over by now, and people find out how limited the ranges are. We can surely take over a patch somewhere abroad. Give me a couple of days...”, she said and disappeared into her sacred area, nobody would enter without invitation.

First she discussed the matter with Judith Kornblum from the SLOMES-Corporation. Judith was all in favour of the idea. The company was planning on extraterrestrial dimension anyway. One reason was to better the prestige. With such a back-up Dorothea felt much better. Having a global player in the backhand gave you a much safer feeling.

The idea of placing the patch right next to the Sea of Tranquillity, as the Repetitors demanded, remained doubtful. It was also a question of the adequate equivalent of the true value.

“We are looking for a little research lab” Dorothea made clear, but the potential sellers wouldn’t mind. All they wanted was to escape from the depth-trap, while holding a bundle of unpaid invoices at hand, they wanted to get settled. Some were even still stuck on the moon and couldn’t find anybody who took them back to earth without pre-payment.

Dorothea proved once more how clever she was. She managed to take over a working station, including sun-collectors and oxygen-, as well as water- production, biogas and vegetable garden and what else you need in space for survival.

While the maintenance of the set-up was rather complex. But why had she the SLOMES Corporation at hand? If it wouldn’t work otherwise, they would develop an own artifact-type designed for the moon-mission.

However one of the working models – as were available these days - would surely suffice, and was found in almost every second household, because the victims of the Pandemia hardly became less.

If there were no relatives, who cared for the prolonging of life, by offering access to a SLOMES, the Pandemia-victims died rather early, some with less than fifty years of age.

While they enjoyed life and enjoyed watching TV – those were the harmless ones, but others were kind of sex-maniacs, despite their physical handicaps.

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The set-up on the moon was ready just in time, in order to land that coup against Malicious Marduk. This was the site where it started, nevertheless. And in order not to harm the scarce settlements, the whole affair took place further away. For that the SLOMES-Corporation provided one of their space satellites, that was overdue anyway, but wasn't worth while getting it down to the ground, neither on the moon nor on earth. It was manned by a band of eager artifacts, who were still on duty. They would certainly die one day with their home, in case it was hit by a meteor or approached the gravitational grip of another and bigger companion.

Close and next to this satellite the igloo was built with frozen holy water on a platform, with all that fuss they thought necessary to trick out the antagonist, who was caught by a trap, which worked in a way, nobody would ever understand, but would remain a celestial secret. The main thing was that it worked, and that was what it did.

Malicious Marduk became located in the Sea of Tranquillity (to be precise, in the belly of the moon-man) and was then delivered to the igloo from there, as planned.

On such a victory over the opponent of mankind, the whole calculation of the Repetitors based. By this victory Malicious Marduk had been extracted once and for all from this world, without a chance of return. And therefore, so the Repetitors reckoned, the whole affair had been worth while. (They could think so, Arundel mused, while they weren't bothered by the side-effects, as was poor Billy-Joe, who had the weight of the world on his shoulders risking everything.)

Hard enough such sacrifice hit mankind, and so the Repetitors would certainly care that no side-door was opened somewhere in order to let in the enemy, by someone who didn't care, or didn't know better.

This was how the Repetitors felt in a rather pre-conscious manner, while they had to accept the outcome, and their part in it. They felt guilty for

not having anticipated, what was surely to be coming soon enough.

Anonymous hadn't been possible without such deed. Arundle hadn't been able to turn around the Trojan all by herself. However she succeeded at last, at a time when the victory meant nothing, but had been an option on the freed future.

How dearly did the Repetitors now wish to break through the armament of time. Instead they were sitting close behind with all their good will and best wishes for the actors who came from the past, in order to straighten things out for them.

Did they feel anything of that? Did they feel how extreme the longing was, and how each of their steps was closely and fearfully watched? Did they hear the multiple cry from over there out of a reality, they were just freeing?

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There was a lot of work to do. Otherwise there would certainly be no chance to get rid of the pandemia, and to improve the relations with the Maroons and the free tribes. Their joint victory had saved the world, but not the human beings, who were stuck in the grip of their artifacts often without knowing.

The incapacitation was by no means lifted by those rioters who smashed the machinery they could get hold of.

It was the metropolitan way of life in question these days. The pandemia research required new impulses and new ways out of the crisis, while common track had reached a dead end.

Not only the relation with the artifacts required reforms, the human identity wasn't any more what it used to be. A lot was damaged and nothing substantial had come instead.

People between one hundred and two hundred years – fit as they were, and scarcely aged, were set aside idle, and were regarded as useless. They were nevertheless well educated, they behaved well, and had a tendency towards altruism. Their main purpose in life was no longer the income, as they were pretty settled, but something useful, an occupation being worth while.

Such people often resided in lonely cottages, where they formerly used to spend their weekends. The city-life they wouldn't have liked to miss, and was the main reason for commuting.

Thanks to the stratospheric connection of many metropolises even trips to other continents weren't out of the question. From one space-station to the other it seldom took more than 4 hours, while the trend was sinking.

A new traffic system was due to come. And soon you would travel twice as fast some 30 kilometres higher.

Soon the changing of transport-means would be the only unsolved time-problem. While the g-propulsion technology offered a promising alternative. It was said however that not everybody was fit for such a transportation. Courage was required.

But courage you needed for any kind of travelling, while this was something special, so people who did it, were telling. Almost like in a freshly blossoming love-affair you felt, when a wholly different way of flying caught the open minded individual.

That was what all was about, methodology-wise. People with plenty of artificial spareparts reported of terrible aches in the natural limbs. So the amount of unorganic spareparts was the crucial factor. While such Trans-Substantiation occurred in almost no time – quick like a thought it was, only the pain prevailed.

On the Isle of Wisdom-tooth such mode of travelling was well known and also well liked, while overcoming the time was here in most cases the desired target. Moving up or down the time-scale was what the scholars and students exercised.

For some the time showed up as a kind of sausage or a tube of toothpaste, you had to press on in order to get what you wanted. Others saw in it a streaming water-flow or a steam-fountain, like of a Geysir or a volcano eruption.

The mode of transportation had been taken for granted. No-one ever really minded or cared what was really going on.

Some still tried to remember, and looked back a couple of years, or tried to bring notes they once took, but there was not much. 'Strange enough' Arundle wondered. Her own memory wasn't much better. Asked for a map of his voyages to Laptopia, the magic bow had to refuse.

The Repetitors also might be pampered by the SLOMES and the self-induced artifacts. They couldn't forget. As soon as a storage tube was filled, it was supported by an empty one. So simple it was to solve the problem of memory. What once was in the store, could never be lost again, but remained available, if it wasn't deleted. And that was what the magic bow said: "Unnecessary information will be deleted after fifty years."

"Who decides what's useless?"

“I decide myself, most of the time, when I need space or because my head is steaming...”

With his head the magic bow meant the slight thickening around the eye, where the archer usually places the arrow when aiming. There was not much space. Definitely not more than in the horse-head of the self induced horse-headed violin. But what were such comparisons good for? With a horse-headed violin no-one ever tried to travel – so Arundle reckoned and decided to ask Tibor, who should know.

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It was like this: Those who came from the past travelled with all their luggage, no matter what it was. Without magic bow nothing worked – well except the magic stone of course, so what...

Arundle (the grown-up, the old, the Mother-Arundle) held her magic bow still in her hand, but both were hidden behind some kind of transparent wall. A wall with a semi-permeable membrane. So she could look through into the scene behind. She felt like an observer from over there. But the ‘over-there’ was not the divine site where the Advisor or Anonymous were at home. Her divinity was only behind the wall of glass-like fabric. - you could get through only from one side.

All who came in that way, couldn’t take over a part. Only those actors were allowed, who didn’t come in at the same time. In case some-one had his or her Alter Ego appear, he or she disappeared behind the semi-permeable glass-wall. All others became actors on stage in the pre-set drama of the past future, while the Repetitors kept on writing the script by the joint memory.

From the past you had to come either by curriculum, as did Arundle or the unlucky Billy-Joe. Theirs was the conventional way. But there was still another one, and that was the way of the time-travelling. In such case it was prohibited that an early form met a late form. The above mentioned semi-permeable glass-wall took care of that. The glass of that wall was of course not just simple glass. It was a kind of pasture of condensed time. Hard to imagine, but somehow also logical, you could compare with frozen water.

Both emanations never met or showed up at the same time or the same place.

Only Scholasticus was an exception. As Scholasticus he travelled quite normal – like all the other time-travellers – by means of the magic bow or the magic stone into the future.

By doing so, he could see his early form behind the semi-permeable wall, but he couldn't contact. That wasn't possible for him, same as for Arundle, who had to obey the same limitations. She wasn't able to speak with her other image or even meet it, or get in contact somehow.

On the other hand the old Scholasticus of the presence was also an actor. He had the part of General Armyless in the present future. As General he was then indeed present. He played his role in the Now-Time. Just like all the other hosts – that is - the Prince-Regent, Prince Watchalot, or his wife, the Princess Watchmetoo alias Soshedoes.

Then Scholasticus was all by himself and knew everything, he knew anyway, and played his part and that was the General Armyless' part. He did so, and Edmond did his part as ther young Prince Watchanot, or Billy-Joe, who took the part of the old Shaman of the Churingas.

Those actors were all on permanent stand-by. They waited all the years patiently that the visitors from the past showed up once more. While the latter often had the impression, that Laptopia was devastated by humans, when only Laptops patrolled the streets, who had nothing better to do, as this was the purpose they were made for.

The director had often to check the script, who was due and what scene was next. That was why the time-travellers sometimes had to wait a couple of minutes or had to come here all in vain and had to leave without purpose, and might end up with the Advisor instead, up in the sky at that virtual centre of the joint galaxies, somehow and somewhere between all chairs, so to speak.

That were the little failures of the cheat. All too willing they were of getting out, but couldn't. The time-travellers were caught. Their former future was now present and showed no way out. If only that silly waiting hadn't been and the permanent occupation.

The Repetitors hoped more then they were convinced of, that they had managed to present a representative view of the present society, and not to disappoint the expectations too much. They had to follow the director's script of the far memory, which destined the timetravellers' musings and doings as actors on stage. So they felt trapped twice.

The Time-Travellers expected Laptopia to be just like the recreation centre. While they learnt little about pandemias and Maroons or mass-imbecility, and if they did, it was limited and didn't fit. They were chasing those Miseriors and their chief, Malicious Marduk. And they did that, because they had to get rid of him and his demons in their own time likewise.

The megalomaniac foe threatened to overwhelm the world. Therefore

the final battle was all, the dark side was longing. On the other hand was the salvation of the world the only acceptable option, and the victory over the darkies, in what ever appearance was due.

This was the view on things with which the Repetitors had grown up. All their musings and longings were built after that premise, which was in no way wrong, but still a little short-sighted, as there was a certain limitation connected with it. It was as if you looked on the kernel, they very precisely reckognized, but overlooked the fruit-flesh about – just to stay inside the metaphor.

The kernel of the evil they had recognized rightly, and you can hardly imagine how great their pleasure must have been, when they managed to errase such kernel and throw it out of the world once and for all.

A long life they had sacrificed for that target. And now their dream had come true: the world was freed from Malicious Marduk. In future he could no longer wander about in time and space in order to put into action his evil chaos.

What a view. The gateway to happiness stood wide open. Like a broad shiny stream the closer or further future showed up before the inner eyes of the on-looking Repetitors. They had reached the aim of their strivings. They sank back with a happy smile in their faces, old and saturated with life as they were. While there still was work to do.

Their own lives had picked up with the Time-Travellers. Their job was done, they had done their part – above all – Arundle. They felt a longing inside for everlasting peace and rest, wher all efforts come to an end for ever. While she was alone now in this world without her Billy-Joe, so why hang on?

The others felt similar, but not the same. They didn't suffer or didn't suffer yet under the heavy blows of fate. The most dear in their lives hadn't been taken away from them. They didn't experience the pain of death and the insurmountability of passing away.

“It is destined by God's advice

The dearest love you long and strive

Is taken, is taken.

The Repetitors could notice and they noticed, first of all Arundle – that the grief hadn't gone with the evil. The world had become poorer, not richer, while it lacked the evil pleasure, the originators of pain and sorrow felt. (As painful as it was.) Having the agents of death cut off, didn't mean the end of

all sorrow. – Death didn't need the devil – what a bitter discernment it was – and for that, Billy-Joe had to die!

Arundle wrung her hands in desperation, when such truth got at her and the memory overwhelmed her. Her body was shaking and didn't want to stop shaking.

Yes, here she sat alone and forsaken, not even an evil spirit cared for her misery. Such negative interest, was still some kind of pervert interest. The beloved, the friends and relatives, as close as they were, used up their sympathy all too soon. While impatience got hold of them, when Arundle didn't come to an end with her moaning, instead of accepting the unavoidable.

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Edmond fell in love with his role as the Prince and wished to marry his Princess as soon as possible, as was expected from him. Hints from the Repetitors' side that it was only an arrangement, unsuitable for reality, but producing a kind of a Meta-Reality, couldn't get hold of him, but were ignored. While the experiment endured and the years passed by. He didn't accept any longer that he was called so seldom and only when he fitted into the staging of the visitors. Even more so, when followed by long interim-periods.

“I can't work that way” he said. “For governing you need continuity.” And there was indeed a lot of work in Laptopia. Even the Repetitors could see. They had produced a mini-cosmos of exemplary validity with a blue-print character for the rest of the world. So they told themselves. Playing God was of challenging glamour. While Malicious Marduk was finally banned! Nothing could happen any more, despite the self-induced mishaps, as were unavoidable.

The devil might hide once more in the detail. Were those pandemias really unavoidable? Had mankind to become imbecile and stumbled first, before they could renew and return to an earlier stage and healthy being?

Was the independence of those artifacts also unavoidable, who were spreading all over, occupying everything and govern the public?

Only because no maroding bands of Miseriors were chasing about, and hunting for lost souls, it didn't mean that the world had become a paradise.

Still people fell into torrents or off the mountain-tops and smashed, or the gliders cut them to pieces, when they didn't take care, and what other

dangers there still were, and would carry on to be.

While sadists didn't enjoy the pain and horror of their victims any more, it didn't mean the end of all suffering. Nobody enjoyed anymore the shrieking horror of their victims. Nobody enjoyed the fear of death. Nobody sucked voluptuously the screaming souls out of their tiny hiding bags on their way to heaven, as the judge demanded and as they used to live on earth.

That was it. There wasn't any more. Seen that way no-one would really mind which way the fate caught him or her. And a soul's enduring in the underground was no fun either. Their lot might be slightly better without the Misericors. But those differences were but gradual.

The whole system had to be checked, as was promised, because the evil was overcome, and no lost souls would remain in the underground, while clearing procedures might be valid. Some attention should be paid on that.

After all there was always a suitable lane and a solution, you could live with. But that was up to the almighty powers, whether they wanted to deal with death and soul-trouble indefinite or better found peace.

Well, would it become boring? Would those creating angels lack of stuff? The easiness might suffer and the fun of creativity, when trying out what could be combined, before it went wrong or developed into something great.

Negotiations for a general amnesty had started meanwhile anyway, and the Advisor let the Repetitors know that there were good chances of drying the swamp of the underworld. And if such quagmire was overcome once, there was no more reason given for moaning. Was there not?

Arundle couldn't see the point here because her pain was insurmountable. Her grief proved that people couldn't stand the way fate handled them, no matter what the motives were. Arundle's grief remained the same, whether or not someone gained lust from it - wouldn't have changed.

8.Foreward And Don't Forget

“ It is still a long way to the final peace in creation, that must be clear”, Arundle said, and the old fire burnt in her eyes. She had understood the new challenge before the others, and passed her knowledge on. Billy-Joe would be proud of her. Life had her back. Life went on!

What had Arundle understood? Where did she see suddenly room for action and sense of life? Seen in the proper light, there was no single death case, no single catastrophe, no fatal accident which couldn't have been avoided. The reason why the world was so insecure was that people hadn't learnt to cope with nature and to protect themselves against the dangers of existence. While the ability was available basically. What ever happened, was by no means unavoidable, if seen under the proper angel and with a farsighted (or short-sighted) eye. In most cases it was just sloppiness or negligence, or the lack of hygiene, as in the case of the latest Pandemia, that was still roaming on somewhere, and demanding a terrible tribute.

Solutions had been found for so many problems. In earlier times people died of tuberculosis like the flies, or of yellow fever, or the plague or pocks. For all such diseases solutions were meanwhile found, for others, like cancer, still had to be found. That was the point.

Pandemias were after all a kind of criticism on the way of life. Had those medieval people not dwelled in dirt and closeness, the rats wouldn't have spread and with them the dangerous fleas. being responsible for the passing on of the disease.

The latest Pandemia showed it all too clear: the way of life in the metropolises was basically wrong. The Repetitors could be convinced right away and Arundle needn't persuade them.

The question was how to spread such message, in order to be heard as well. That was another story. How could they reach the attention, what was there to be done in order to convince the public? None of them had the slightest idea on that, yet.

Should all people follow the way of the Maroons? Was that likely, after all? Was there space enough? What would happen if all of them really did so? The edges of the civilized world would have to close down because of congestion.

Boredom was another challenge. Because boredom threatened the civilized world. People had nothing sensible to do. All workload was taken off their hands.

It was Intellectus who had an idea. "What's the use of the best plan when the suicide rate goes up into enormous heights?" he asked. "After one hundred and fifty years of life-time the individuals start longing for the final rest, aren't they?" he went on.

"One after the other" Arundle tried to calm down the round of Repetitors. "Let's not hand out what's not yet ours" she referred to Scholasticus, who was in that critical age, and had indeed such defiant thoughts once in a while.

So he was thankful for the new spirit, at best from Arundle who was carrying such a heavy lot these days for that yokel's sacrifice, nobody had thought of, while they all should have seen it when coming up.

The strategy was clear enough. After malice and evil had been expelled from the world, it was high time now to care for the next hurdles, erecting between mankind and their happiness. After the devil was banned, the next step was the victory over death. On the way to that target many dangers had to be banned, which were still lurking in the world, where once robbers and wild animals had been on the look-out in dark forests and solitary plains.

The medicine was one field of action, an important one, but only one among many. Still a great number of individuals became killed by diseases. While most of them were curable meanwhile. Dying was therefore initiated by carelessness and lack of hygiene and ignorance – and meanwhile also by the inadequate programming of the staff.

Since the so-called Severin-programme things changed remarkably to the better, in this respect. Thanks to the self-inducing Laptopians, who patrolled about in the Laptopia of the Repetitors, they recognized a positive trend. Under the influence of their Severines the helpless dependent felt as safe as in Abraham's lap, yes – even safer!

What ever unforeseen happened, the Severine had an answer in no time. One or two whirls with the slender fingers over the keyboard and the most astonishing solutions became true. There was no hesitation and no fear. Even for the risk of their lives the Severins and Severines did, what had to be done for the Master's advantage. But in most cases the challenges weren't as drastically, the demands of everyday life were far more prosaic.

Elsewhere things didn't work all that ideal as in the pre-designed patch of future-land the Repetitors had premeditated. Hardly the worst demands could be settled. Severines were in no way obvious and regular. Many metropolises were surrounded by a belt of slums, where things were worse than in the worst sites of those Maroons and other untamed tribes abroad in the prohibited areas, so the tale went. While no evidence was available, as far as the so-called wilderness was concerned.

Still, the Repetitors asked themselves if the solution would be to increase the amount of Severins and have one in every second household, so one Severine could serve two families or what was left over.

But would that be the solution? Arundle doubted. There might be other points of main effort. While the provision with artifacts went on. The more so, as Judith Kornblum was in the boat and the production couldn't be altered just like that, anyway.

Overcoming poverty and misery was the major aim of all their striving,

and their highest motive. That was why they began to think about models where one Severine served several patients and was responsible for such a commune.

For that multitasking little alterations had to be installed in order to get rather challenging results. The idea was that such a procedure would be much better than the conditions which were found in well-situated housing areas where the immediate neighbour wasn't known by name any more. There it happened that people died of starvation because nobody took care, while the artifact struck or was out of order, or for other reasons.

Some authorities, being aware of such malaise, favoured the concentration of disabled people in restricted areas and adjacent camps. But when the press started to blame such camps as inhumane and compared the situation in such areas with the conditions the concentration camps of the Nazis once produced, the programmes collided, just like that. Old wounds opened anew. The Kornblums reacted severely when such reports became public. That was why the ideas of the Repetitors were most welcome. Their model looked moderate and had no what so ever interrelation with the Nazi horror the Kornblums pointed out. While nobody of good will would blame the Kornblums for over-reacting. The limits of the human psyche had to be taken for granted.

Another problem was the raw material shortage. The big swing had come too late. Too much scrap material was lying about poisoning the environment - forgotten and inaccessible, somewhere in closed mines or under hills without any map or access.

The exploitation of the moon presented a century of surplus, and the old carelessness came back again. While mankind should have known. But perhaps people were already thinking further and regarded the moon as but one step to wider prosperity. Which wasn't all that ignorant, but quite likely. First flight to Mars were underway already, similar to those to the moon in the beginning of the century.

The fifth orbit around the globe would soon start its operation from the huge space stations some 250 kilometres above ground. From there the latest transcontinental g-driven strato-cruizers would operate as well as the moon-transporters and also the mars bound crafts. It was only a question of time. By now the first trial-runs were underway. The most enthusiastic plans of colonizing space had begun.

But the dream of quick bargain in space was over. Fishing meteors and falling stars proved to be an unsolvable task for the means that were available. Steering through such a belt of quick-moving squadrons was the

utmost you could do, while the dangers were incalculable. And after a severe crash, when a starship and the whole crew were lost, such zones were declared – ‘off limits’ for further trials of that kind.

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Modern times put the emphasis on persistence. The age of senseless waste was over. Mankind became aware of the basic laws of the environment and how endangered nature was. While many upheaval had fallen back. Still the credo was persistence.

The expulsion of the Miseriors went hand in hand with the efforts of persistence. Because the pleasure of power was not only connected with the enslavement and sub junction of the beings and the sufferings deriving thereof, but also with pomposity and a life in unlimited surplus and waste. The true enjoyment of the super riches derived from the contrast to their poverty-stricken surrounding.

Where the pleasure of the senseless sufferings disappeared, the senseless waste also disappeared to be an ideal of life. While before modesty had been meticulous, now pomposity became embarrassing. A complete change of values was coming up. And that was the point. Such a change might be more important than some spectacular victories over the evil, no matter how important such victories were regarded. Because without such a change of values the evil would raise its head again and again, by sneaking in from the swamps of darkness.

With the loss of credibility Malicious Marduk also lost substance and contour. The hardliner became a weakling. Much alike Anonymous’ purification. The latter had been smuggled in as a Trojan horse, but became turned around by the love and the efforts of his daughter.

Malicious Marduk had to stand an even heftier attack from the past, because the adventure of the true knight Hagen on earth lay back a short while, when compared to eternity, then it was only a wink of the eye, while it had been the point of turn, since when he lost balance and didn’t get hold of himself ever since, because the end had come.

Malicious Marduk saw it coming. And his fight with that so-called daughter, who dared to enter the bottomless depth of time had been all the more challenging, while he knew deep inside all the time, that he would lose this battle, and that he would become turned around while his efforts would fail to do likewise. And so it came.

This was how dialectics work. Malicious Marduk were thinking twice

of his other conditions as a fallen angel. A dark angel, but an angel, nevertheless right from the start, almost as good as the creator himself, but only almost. And that was why he had looked for a field of action, that hadn't been utilised – and that was the evil as such.

And what of the evil hadn't been available, that could become invented. By this way he also became a kind of creator too.

This were his whereabouts in general – well, as a very vague draft in fact, and could hardly be found in reality, being neither wholly right nor wholly wrong, but somehow distorted. His agreement with Death and his close connection with Chaos and his hefty embracement with sufferings of all kind, had done its destructive work. But had such been independent beings?

As far as death was concerned, he surely was an independent being of his own, and probably the Chaos as well, but the Sufferings had their dependent mode. The question was, what independence was. Life was hard to disguise. He never succeeded, because he might be him, and for him he lacked of understanding, except the one, that he couldn't stand someone next to him, and that he became expelled because he dared to get close on the same level., as had happened in the aeon before last.

That was by now quite a while ago. His striving had been harshly refused. How could he be so rancorous and still be - after all these billions of years, and still be so sulking?

Right down to the deepest hell, without much ado. Was that decent behaviour?

And now it said, sort yourself anew. Learn from your mistakes, understand things anew and see them rightly. His doings either implement or have them disappear. That wasn't sure yet. But what was he going to do then? What was he good for?

'Nihil est sine ratione' nothing is without purpose, not even the naught. If he was the Annihilator, as he was blamed and stamped, sitting in that drawer and hindered to get out, as there was obviously no way of jumping out.

While now everything referred to the new beginning. Perhaps this time something would come out, while he didn't see land yet. He still hoped and his Miseriors pitied him in all their misery, that got at them so unexpected.

Where did such notions come from all of a sudden? Demons of the darkness they were. shying the light. As their chief he stood above them, because he never gave up his connection to heaven altogether, and had still a

consciousness thereof, and knew what he did. That was the difference between him and the demons, who were his creatures nevertheless. He created them. But now he didn't know what to do with them.

They were already sitting in the chaos and death was around them, the sufferings embraced them with wild claws. What was there left? Only the disconnection, the merciful end of the soft caring nothing of eternity. Yes – or the transformation. Perhaps something useful grew out of them, would the proper seed be laid into them.

Blood-thirty hunters of the darkness they had been. Roaring beasts driven by an untameable hunger. How to feed them? - after their hunting grounds were destroyed? While there was nothing left for them in the world? Would it be done with a kind of diet plan? light food for convinced meat-eaters?

The biggest mammals on earth lived of the tiniest food, you can think of. They changed over billions of years, or never enjoyed meat at all. It is not only possible but also likely. The lamb might lie next to the lion and the fox next to the hare? The robber function then as a kind of health police. Allowed to eat only what was dead, and that would be good though, in order to have creation always neat and clean and beautiful that is the paradise.

Even the leaves would be eaten. No waste would remain, but everything made sense, while it took sometimes a little longer, but what did time mean then?

Time is no problem of its own, but of those who need it and don't have it. But still there is surplus time. Time is sometimes like chewing gum, yawning being drawn long and longer. The faster impatience grows the slower it moves.

Is that all but fake and lie? The time you feel is seldom the time as such. Since there are clocks, more so with a second hand, people cannot fly into their private cave anymore. It's the end of privacy.

Rich and deep life dwells out of the plenitude, as it is breaking forward. Seen that way, life has definitely no time problem. Not in the beginning, not in the multitude, while the individuals are being caught, and extinction of species is still likely. Is it predestined?

An expert comes here with the dinosaurs. While even in the trouble-stricken twenty second century the dying and emanating of species tend to balance. Probably not here in artificial Laptopia of the Repetitors but outside – way off abroad. well – hopefully, but doubtful either.

So wide is the steppe that opponents needn't meet in a hundred years, to find out who is faster to run for life. A race about life it would however be.

Would the looser die, under the altered law? Would death of the weaker still be arbitrary?

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Arundle knew it. Laptopia had been arranged by the Repetitors. And she had been the initial ignition, when she returned so disappointed from her trip round the world, without finding anything that reminded her of the future. No Frankfurt or Frankfort was found while there were many though.

Now things were a bit like in a self-fulfilling prophecy. But as she had been in the future, and the future then looked like the future the Repetitors now arranged, no escape was possible since the presence had reached the future. That was why the Repetitors had no choice. They had to arrange things the way they remembered. There was no other option.

Perhaps there were sites which looked also similar like the recreation resort in New-South-Wales. And those sites might not be arranged artificially. And perhaps there was a General Armyless, who ordered his Artifacts and was the only half-sane being, or even as clever as the acted General of their Laptopia.

Much further the likeliness couldn't go on a probability-scale. The Repetitors remained on the safe side, when they arranged and created their own Laptopia, and when they defined the roles, to be acted, while the role of the big opponent couldn't be influenced.

That was why they wanted to control the frames and fiddle about the details as far as they had knowledge. Thing remained so secret that even they themselves didn't remember everything. This was how Billy-Joe ended up in such a tragic trap. – that is, the real genuine Billy-Joe as was present and not the other Billy-Joe, the teenager, who couldn't be influenced, because he came in from the past which had once been the future. He did so in order to save mankind. The youngster survived triumphantly, but had the old Billy-Joe not been to help him out of trouble, the fight between David and Goliath had taken another end. "...got to be clear by now once and for all..." Arundle never stopped to mention.

"Short is the memory of man, when the grief is weak" she thought and would have liked to weep again, while no-one was there and alike to feel the ache-blood pulsating afresh.

9. The Visitors from the Past

The visitors from the past came as they liked. While the pre-warning system functioned meanwhile and the alarm shrilled a couple of seconds before arrival, sometimes even minutes. That wasn't very much. Depending who was on watch gave him time to alarm the crew, so the actors knew what was coming.

The two armies for example needed much more time, of course. Not even an hour was enough. you needed days alone for the Maroons and the tribes to get them together, if you managed at all. You couldn't do that too often. Because life went on. At best it worked with the false Churingas, who were dwarves from the underground in reality and had only to put on their furs in order to look wild.

For them the nakedness of the Aborigines was offending. While the true Churingas didn't stick to an acceptable dress-code – in their eyes. The tribalists felt fine the way they were, like their Tasmanian brothers and sisters, one of whom Susamee was.

By the degree of modesty the dwarves defined themselves as an old people of culture. They didn't know how long the Aborigines or the Tasmanians existed, and what fee they had to pay until they ended up without all that stuff on their bodies, as had assembled over the years, and can be seen with others still.

'Perhaps, one day, you also may realize' they might be thinking. They pitied their tied up and over-dressed co-fellows whom they feared nevertheless, and felt hated by them at the same time. Stripping off the bonds of civilisation was also a act of freedom, and the start of a new and reborn life. No matter how unusual it looked.

Scientists tried hard to understand and explain, and came to no definite conclusion. While not only clothes were denied but also other benefits of civilisation.

The little Churingas, who were in fact dwarves acting as Tribe's-men, felt much better with the neat little fur-jackets, made of the skins of all kinds of animals, felt much safer, while some animals becoming aware of that, felt wrath and sorrow.

The dilemma couldn't be settled otherwise. The dwarves wouldn't show up undressed, but had to look somewhat savage, that was why the

Repetitors didn't see an alternative to their outfit they had agreed with. That was why they appeared in the village the way they did. And as nobody remembered how they did look like in the first place, nobody would object, except those fellow-animals, mostly kangaroos or hares or dingoes, even cats found ancestors among the dresses.

As a matter of fact the dwarves preferred as habitat their caves and tunnels, and only showed up on demand, in order to assemble under the trees of the village centre or a little further away in the woods.

In the underground they were at home, and there you would find them without those furs but nevertheless clad the dwarves' way.

Those time-travellers didn't know it better, and nobody knows what would have happened if they had met the genuine Churingas, while nobody knew if there were any in reality. Would those endangered strangers from the past had had a better stand then? You never know. While the potion they invented - served the purpose and saved not only their fellows but also Professor M'gamba's life as well as the lives of the poor petrified horses of Laptopia.

The false Churingas turned out to be the least problem, because there were always some dwarves around, since the underground was occupied by them under the resort. They only had to put on their little jackets and take off the dwarves' hoods and were ready for their role in the fake village as the fake Churingas.

More trouble caused the petrified ponies. You couldn't just petrify any horses but had to calm them down somehow, before waking them up again, which was finally done, while the poor creatures didn't survive for long, that is, they disappeared from the stage.

Fortunately the horses weren't the dwarves' cup of tea. Still they experienced an appointed lot by the ruthless behaviour of the surfacers. The latter tended to act more then ever egoistic and ruthless so the dwarves realized. They didn't honour or even notice what the dwarves did for them, how much they offered and suffered and spared their time, in order to perform the big show as was expected by them and was arranged and talked over with the director, who was never content or could be satisfied but had always something to argue. Often they had to improvise, as there was no definite script, or the witnesses couldn't agree on the event as it happened.

Mistakes were made from all sides. The artificial dragon, which was built after the Repetitors' advice, didn't spit fire the proper way, and got often stuck in the narrow tunnels. From this side no severe harm came, so the witnesses reported, and that was why nobody noticed or stumbled over

such mistakes, as if there hadn't been any.

Many a spearhead mission from the past failed and returned unsuccessfully. (While this went hand in hand with blank spaces in the director's script.) And sometimes the script left them alone that was based on the memories. Because after a hundred years they could hardly remember any detail. That was no wonder. So they had to improvise, and that was not only sometimes difficult but also dangerous.

Sudden encounters occurred, which nobody controlled. Scholasticus had once almost been burnt, because the stunt failed, and Arundle had once been almost tortured to death, when acting her role all too serious and couldn't be stopped. Not to talk about those adventurous trips, which took them abroad sometimes, having serious trouble to find back again. So those visitors from the past were luckier than they deserved.

The dragon was repaired and slandered, so its fire reached the flying at last, as was laid down in the script.

The only real victim however, was Billy-Joe. And Walter was also punished badly, because he went too far and overdid in space in order to please Grisella and her students.

Walter could still live these days without the terrible encounter of the worst kind. It had been the horrible force of Malicious Marduk that made of him a helpless tool, to become pressed like a lemon and spit out at last like an overdue kernel. What a shameful fate.

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The script had foreseen a visit to the Hall of Fame and Honour so Tibor mentioned who was skimming through a thick manual. "Yes, it's due today, provided our calculations are correct."

That wasn't easy to find out because of the difference in time. No matter whether those differences were real or just estimated. When reconstructing you had to prepare a certain day and a certain time for the transfer or the flight, as they called it.

In order to get a little further in that mode, the magic stone (shortly before he disappeared with the old Shaman subsoil for good) – and Arundle's magic bow opened their data loggers. The crux with such loggers was however that data was saved in there, but not the occasions when they were stored. Thus the information became rather vague.

At first the Repetitors had hoped to come to clear results by

comparing. but had to realize how they failed. And when Billy-Joe disappeared this chapter had to be closed anyway.

“Would only Billy-Joe be still among us. He knew when it started.” Arundle grabbed for a handkerchief and blew her nose. The other Repetitors in the round looked aside ashamed. What could they say?

But Billy-Joe also knew not all the tricks while alive – in many ways anyway. Arundle might see that different, To get her out there was not only unnecessary but also cruel.

Tibor thought it being cleverer to let her stick to her almost childish view. Billy-Joe would have been as confused as they all were. If someone was at all able to understand the magic bow better then everybody else, it was Arundle herself, no doubt about that.

“To be honest” the magic bow exclaimed “It had been Pooty’s fine instincts which surprised me ever more” he went on, while he was reading in the wide sea of thoughts of the humans around.

The magic bow felt teased by his honour. Thus he came forward with the coordinates as far as they complied with those of the magic stone.

“In the intersection you will find the value in question, as to our calculations, and that has to be copied into the valid calendar” he explained and looked rather self-satisfied.

You name it –“just copy” – that was exactly the problem. And nothing had changed thereof. The forwarding of such adoptions didn’t work. That was the trouble. What would happen if they ended up once more on the wrong day or time? Perhaps only pushed the one way or the other by a tiny bit of a bow-second?

In order to consider all eventualities they lacked of sufficient resources. Such a hall had to be furnished, but the Repetitors frankly admitted that they were unable to do. The task was too much for them. They couldn’t get any further. The director gave up. Had it only been the correct time, they might have managed somehow. But the time was only a minor problem, they realized when they began to tackle to task.

Being stuck Arundle contacted the Advisor, whether he could help them with a tiny little swindle. But he waved off. This soup they should be finishing all by themselves, it was their cup of tea after all.

But Arundle didn’t give in. They were acting at best they could, and the matter was the future of mankind, and that was no peanuts. So at length the Advisor change his attitude, and accepted that the Repetitors didn’t have a choice, after they once started with the recreation.

“We must get further. We have spent all our lives working towards this decision. We couldn’t do as if our deeds were without effect. As soon as the time picked up with us, we knew what would happen, because we experienced it in reality.”

Scholasticus shrugged in silent desperation, when he spoke. After all the Advisor had descended down to earth and joined them. That was a good sign.

“And we did so much rubbish” his sister-in-law assisted. “When I only think of that silly cloud-shooting, for stuffing those so-called time-holes – of course we didn’t understand much of the future then.”

“In the end it had been our naivety, that made our efforts real” Arundle agreed thoughtfully.

“And now we grew into the time, and can’t do as if we didn’t know what we experienced these days” Corinia put in.

“Yes, and some bits and pieces were true after all. We were not all wrong. Tibor invented the self-induced Laptops, without thinking of Laptops not even in a dream” Florinna agreed.

“Right, I had my horse-headed violin in mind” the so addressed answered.

“Perhaps, if we went on searching after we founded the recreation resort” Dorothea said.

“Yes, perhaps there is a place, but we didn’t find it” Grisella assisted her sister.

“The world is bigger than we know. And funny it was though, that we then were sent always to the same spot, when we didn’t get lost in space by accident, or were ordered to the centre on report, as happens now once more” Scholasticus mentioned.

“Well, dear Advisor” Arundel pick up the thread – “what shall we do? Your site does exist. So it would be easiest if we came up from the past at the same site, before we recreate one artificially and certainly incomplete and poor. We do not want to disappoint us, while we know what we expect.”

“We are sitting in the trap” Scholasticus put up after a short break. “We must go on, while reality also went on, and as we know it, we can’t change it, because it is genuine life, that we lived.”

“Besides, we would offend the first intergalactic directive, whereas you cannot alter the past under no circumstances” – Arundle put in fiercely and the old youthful glow in her eyes almost set the Advisor on fire.

He seemed to be impressed and showed by whistling through his teeth, then meant just like that – “please come and see. I don’t see another way. And as far as the date is concerned, don’t worry, we are always there and never sleep, that’s the advantage of the evergreens. So, just forget your worries and sorrows about the proper date. What once happened, will happen again. That’s our concern.”

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Arundle relaxed. That hurdle was taken. But if they would have to deal with any detail, then fare well. She might be able to negotiate for all future something definite and enduring to cover everything that had happened in the past, which was in fact everything that was going on right now, and as far as it was restored in their memories.

“Herewith we put all our present and past space activities back into Thy graceful hands, dear Advisor” Arundle announced. In a way wholly correct while in accordance with the universal law and commandment.

What once happened, did happen and everything what had been the future then, had to happen again. Thus they had experienced and thus it was. That might be somewhat confusing, still it was correct, there was no doubt about it.

The Advisor accepted the challenge. He couldn’t do otherwise, after his promise. What Arundle said was in accordance with the general perspective, as was his concern. And he strongly cared to keep it.

Therefore he promoted those Repetitors with the appropriate title and blessed them in the aftermath with a photographic memory, to enable them to cope with the demands of their incomplete script and have it completed to be transformed into the reality of former times, in order to present the past according to the future as it had been once.

By this way a hundred years became like one day. And they felt as if they just woke up from a dream of yesterday, shining bright and clear before their inner eye, just as the first daylight, that is greeting the sleeper in the early morning.

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However there was a disadvantage. The Repetitors didn’t notice any

more what happened outside of their narrow horizon. But the Advisor assured them, that there was very little that differed from what they remembered. Still they would have liked to prove and see with own eyes whether this was really true. They mainly thought of scenes in between and couldn't be clearly sorted out.

Perhaps it had to do with their growing age. They weren't as open minded as teens used to be, and lacked of flexibility. Their task kept them busy and required their full attention and sucked them deeper and deeper into the artificial reconstructed world, following its defined fate.

In order not to lose close contact another meeting would be advisable they told Arundle who passed it on and asked for a new date with the Advisor.

The latter had done as he always did. He disappeared. Looking outside was therefore no option. While the next challenge came insight. It was a visit in the dark dungeons with the soul-bags and spare body-parts, where the Miseriors lured and waited behind every door with new horror scenarios.

The Repetitors surely weren't able to reconstruct such set-up, the idea alone filled them with dismay. But such scenes were part of the past future, as they had experienced in former time. So, such scenes had to be as well. The future couldn't be captured otherwise that was waiting on the other side, so was the hope for mankind. First the dangerous adventures had to be fulfilled, while the Repetitors knew about the positive outcome, they still had to master the challenge.

Things congested, but there was no alternative. They were prisoners of their own construction. Once started there was no escape, anything else would have meant a revision of their memories, which were by now photographic and couldn't be cheated. The Advisor had agreed with their demand, and they had to carry the consequences.

It didn't help when Arundle came about with her Multiple-World-Theory. Outside of their prison might exist other worlds, but not inside the world they had fixed by their trips to the future. And not only the future but also the past and the actors from the past. The Repetitors followed the trail in memory as far as they could see. For them there was also an open future, beyond the future as they knew it, and here everything was open again.

In order to keep control when the time-travellers left the vicinity of the solid earth, the Repetitors agreed that one of them should always be with the visitors, at best disguised as an actor, as required. That would be fair enough the Advisor said, when asked by Arundle, who still was the link.

Such agreements weren't easy to fulfill and required a lot of flexibility and almost divine aspirations. So the Advisor warned, who questioned their

abilities in this respect. “Either yes or no, once chosen there is no return – its now or never...” he added somewhat confusing.

The Repetitors agreed on everything. They were so glad about the arrangements Arundle had achieved for them. That was more than they had imagined in their most valiant dreams and hopes. While they still couldn't see the point in their permanent presence, as it had been so difficult to participate at all before.

Some scenes didn't require much pretention. because the presence of an actor was arbitrary – lets say when the young Prince acted open air. Such scenes were soon taken care by Edmond, who was the most flexible of all Repetitors and by far the youngest. Besides, he did fit well into the set-up, because he looked much like the young Prince, or did look like in their memories. The Prince had become regent meanwhile and was sitting on the throne of Laptopia.

General Armyless on the other hand had other problems, because Scholasticus Slyboots couldn't change so fast any more, which had to do with his age. While he was still flexible in other fields of action, but couldn't help it.

So Arundle tried hard to keep up with her son. Her role didn't suit her, but nobody cared, neither from the Repetitors' side nor from the side of the Time-Travellers, who didn't know about her double lot, that she had to carry. She had to be very careful, though, because young Arundle became more and more suspicious the longer the contact went on.

Otherwise the Time-Travellers didn't question anything, because they didn't know better. They had no connection to the future what so ever.

“Twenty years of your life. It that clear?” the Advisor told them all over again. “and you will be thrown out of your everyday-life and be put back into your past. Yes, and soon it will be even a doubled past. Because the time doesn't stand still, when having picked up with the future. That must be clear to you. What ever you do or leave, is of influence. Nothing remains without consequences. *Nihil est sine ratione* (nothing is without reason). Everything's got its hidden sense, which is going to show only in future.”

The Advisor's advice might be of help, but they didn't have a choice anyway, or had they? They could have stayed off. They could have said, “we don't want to be witnesses any more. We are no longer interested in our past, while the step is done into the presence. From now on we lay the thresholds for the future, and this time we do it as blind as is the common peoples' lot, because all we have is hope.”

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It would take another fifteen years or so, until that day would come. While the calculations were vague, as far as the loss in time was concerned. They had to wait at least so long, ready to go any minute. No matter how precise the photographic memory was, which the Advisor had implemented. When it came to dates and figures such implementation became even vaguer.

“For that the human brain isn’t laid out” Scholasticus explained, who meant to remember. One of his colleagues did deal with those questions some years ago.

After that time the visits would go down and would pass over into the simple normal past without any realized future visions. And the Repetitors would likewise become ordinary people again, who were living from one day to the next.

Since South-Michel of the Capricorn showed up for the first time, they had stopped observing the future. Well, whether they really stopped with that, didn’t know anyone then. It just happened. The trips and jumps stopped. Was that, when the University was founded on the Isle of Wisdom tooth, that is right next to the Isle? Or had it to do with the trips of South-Michel, they had done alongside the time-scale back to far Atlantis? – the Repetitors wondered.

“The visits to the Advisor weren’t part of the future then?” Dorothea wanted to know. Arundle and Grisella looked at each other stunned. Such an idea was new to them. They shook their heads jointly. As if a negation was obvious.

“But I’m going to ask the magic bow on that” Arundle said just like that.

“Didn’t the Advisor/ess always show up to our meetings?” Judith Kornblum wanted to know.

It had been so – at least for a long time, until the Council of the Menora had been dissolved. Not all voluntarily, as the Advisoress had had a mighty word to say on that.

In the meantime the future had also started to pick up with them. The harder they tried, and the more exact they defined the dates, and the closer the span of time could be limited, the closer they came to the point of no return until there was no space left and they stood in front of a big NOW.

The Repetitors agreed upon the fact as such, and that some time had elapsed meanwhile. But were that some fifty years - as was the biggest

guess – or just seventeen and a half, so the most precise guess said? The latter had to do with the age of Edmond, and was his own, because of his first memories. And he wanted to keep them connected with the space adventures of his parents.

Wishful thinking topped and overshadowed the memories despite the photographic memory and left its traces. Wishes, if strong enough, just topped the whole contents.

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Arundle knew why she hadn't been enthusiastic about her participation with those Time-Travellers. Taking over the part of the silent Princess, sitting next to the Emperor on a shaking chair, was not what she really enjoyed. The Princess didn't only trouble the Time-Travellers but also her weak stomach, which was rebelling against such treatment by fits of sea- or air sickness.

For that reason alone she regretted for having insisted. On the other hand she noticed what was going on around her. And she would have blown the arrangement of the real past, if the young Arundle (as member of the Time-Traveller group) would have noticed, as suspicious as young Arundle had been anyway already. This was what the old Arundle recalled rather lively.

How did they puzzle for hours and hours – together with Billy-Joe -- what the matter might be with that mysterious Princess. A number of theories they developed. They even invented a semi-sister of Arundle, who was supposed to exist somewhere, thanks to a fatherly faux pas, and had been activated by Anonymous after his conversion. And now proved to be wholly irrelevant, no matter whether the semi-sister existed or not, who might be leading a normal life somewhere. While Arundle, the old one, had to take over the part in the arranged set-up.

**

“Were we the only ones?” Arundle looked around in the circle of the Repetitors, and met stunned faces. The Repetitors seemed to have not reckoned with such a question.

“Well, I mean, as we travel, others might travel likewise” she added somewhat questioningly.

“Sounds logical” Grisella agreed. But that would be another question to have it discussed with the Advisor, because South-Michel seemed to be gone for good, for what ever reason, meanwhile. At least up here on the surface, while Corinia confirmed that he was still the gracious idol of the merfolk. She didn’t see him again, but from her friend Boetie she knew about his omnipresence in the secret subwater empire.

“Can of course be all imagination by them. What you believe, becomes part of your reality. We should know, with all those visions we have to deal with...”

“South-Michel might be a Time-Traveller as well, after all...” Florinna put in. Who wanted to support her sister, who answered “He never denied it.”

South-Michel comes from Atlantis. I know that from my magic bow” Arundle said: “He belongs to the dwarves, who escaped the catastrophe.”

“They dug themselves away” Florinna explained. She took part in the investigation then. “Actually all the way to Scotland” she went on just like that. But there was hardly any reliable proof.

“There was surely time enough.” Tibor said. But that wasn’t quite true.

“They almost suffocated, deep under the Atlantic Ocean...” Corinia meant to have heard.

“Perhaps they did swim – with ships and all that ... could well be...?” Tibor put in, slightly confused, and harvested a shaking of the heads, as he himself all too well knew that dwarves would never go voluntarily into the water. Definitely not to cross the ocean in small boats.

10.Emasus the Troll

Tibor certainly knew how easy it was to become an idol, without much effort. Well, the self-induced horse-headed violin had then been quite a sensation.

His fame didn’t develop on its own and all alone, so to speak, but derived from years of performing for a steady growing audience of various

creatures. Being in part one of them, he got closer, and when he took up his teaching profession at the University, he even deepened the relation in a way, while he still remained the idol for all those who worshipped him in the light of the full moon, when crawling out of their caves in order to listen to the extraordinary tunes of the self-induced horse-headed violin, or perhaps to weep together with the stones, or to look inside and have the full load of the burdened soul being turned over and over again each month.

Whether this made much sense or not. It was like that and had developed over the years and had become part of the identity of the local dwarves.

That's the way they were. Dwarves loved mystification and refrained from revelation. They wanted their idol to be as they designed him. There was no space for own initiative.

That was why Tibor suffered from loneliness, since it became more quiet between the intervals of the moon-phases, while only Susamee's ghost was wandering about, however in a steadfast manner, enjoying various ways of tintercourse with Watchman Will Wiesle.

Where had they gone – the days of an unvoiced happiness? Emassus remained lost, no matter how much they were searching, and Tika followed her brother under the double load of grief, while it became clear that the latter would never see daylight again as far as is humanly possible to tell. 'Even dwarves wouldn't be able to stay subsoil that long'.

"Down there nobody is alive anymore." the Repetitors confirmed to each other and scarcely minded the sister's grief, while moaning Arundle occupied so much space.

"Not even in the grief she is just" Tika thought bitterly. She never stepped out of Arundle's shade all her life. That's the way it had been. In death she wanted to be first, and that she managed after all. Her heart broke and she faded away. A last satisfaction that was – but for what a price!

Tibor remained back alone. Seldom enough, when he was deep down in the guts, he found his way over to the other side of the island, where the Seamen's Home stood. There he drank with the old chums, who didn't care for limits, since their duty was over and out.

"Such a life in a Seamen's home is pure poison" the confirmed bachelors hollered and cheered at each other nonchalant. Why should they worry?

When it came to the point and the horse-headed violine induced itself and eventually stood on its own legs, and hurried to its habitual place, the old drunkards followed rather swaying behind. The way they knew by heart,

while the miraculous tunes hold them tight and guided them, no matter how dark the forrest was, while the moon was still rising.

Now while grief embraced its soul, the violin wept even warmer, so that the wind in the twigs couldn't hold back, if it really was the wind and not Watchman Will Wiesle's soul, who at last had got access, while Wiesle insisted on his incapacity as far as music was concerned.

**

What had happened to Emasus? Nobody knew the answer, or if he knew, he kept it in the hide. Emasus grew up as a quiet introvert child. His mother meant to notice characteristics of her brother. Because Billy-Joe hadn't only been the sonny boy, he presented to the outside world most of the time. Emasus lacked this side, and came after the Khan family. Tibor meant to trace down his father, but Tika insisted that he came after Tibor. While the latter didn't notice, as often happens, while others must tell what characteristics they realize. Most people don't understand themselves. And others must tell them the whereabouts.

Aunt Penelope didn't hide her own opinion, she uttered soon after Emasus disappeared, without leaving the slightest evidence. Well, yes colour-wise he came after his mother as well as his father. He did so in the double sense of the meaning. A kind of sublimating Conversior he was, or a converting Sublimator, depending on the point of view.

The light frame he employed from his father's side, like many other characteristics. Had his face been less closed up, most people would have regarded him as good-looking and very sympathetic. But there was a bitter reflection round his mouth, referring to inner struggle, or even more.

Aunt Penelope meant to know about his fate. She remembered the time when she got lost, how she felt, what she did and why she did it. Without the help from outside, she would have been lost. She saw Emasus in a similar situation now.

In her case Billy-Joe and Tibor, together with Arundle and the sisters Corinia and Florinna found a way finally, while searching all over the world, until they succeeded before the energy of the two was bonded by the struggles about Laptopia, and Billy-Joe disappeared in the underground. A more definite sign hadn't been necessary!

Each corner of the Southsea down to the polar circle they had explored. All solitary islands they searched, or had searched by the crew of the Last Bounty. There were so many islands, and couldn't be done alone. So

the Last Bounty cruised about those archipels, well knowing or guessing what had happened, while doubts became louder:

“History doesn’t repeat.”

“The whole approach is false.”

“Malicious Marduk has too many faces. This one doesn’t look like him. We are all wrong!”

And what other sophisticated opinions there were, uttered from all sides, growing louder, when the search went on week after week unsuccessfully, and nobody had an idea what to do next.

While Emasus had a double chance of staying in the air. Flying was his second first-name so to speak. Flying in any way and appearance - a true Bird-man and Wind-bridal.

Thus it was quite natural to search him in his element. Perhaps this was the biggest mistake. It might have been better to look for him subsoil with the dwarves.

Instead of asking the Advisor they should have asked South-Michel, who both shied away from giving advice in such a tricky matter, when knowing of each other. In such a tricky zone things could only go wrong. The gestures of denial had been interpreted wrongly, as now became clearer, when the search went into the fourth week and no sign could be found of Emasus.

Nobody even tried to contact South-Michel, but he couldn’t be found either. Since Tibor became the new idol of the dwarves, he had retired: “Let them go on doing” his insulted comment had been. In fact he had not been responsible for a decade, while having a eye on the Merfolk.

Emasus hidden characteristics, the bitter furrow around his mouth, could have been interpreted otherwise, and might have led on his trace. But would that have been of help? Perhaps Emasus didn’t want to be found. But what did such a young person know about life and of the ache of loss and uncertainty?

His mother Tika suffered, all her shamanism didn’t help. Still she felt something. A weak signal, that became weaker day after day, until it ended one day. That was the day when she gave up. She closed up with the world. Being sorry for the gap she left behind, she couldn’t help it. Susamee wouldn’t have liked it, who was so keen on tradition and of keeping up the line. Despite the joy of life, that she enjoyed until to the end.

**

The final battle of Laptopia also interrupted Tika's trail. And after that there was so much more to be mourned than Tika's death and Emasus' uncertain fate. While the fears hadn't ended, how things would go on, and if Malicious Marduk could be overwhelmed. Everything that built up in their memories had to be renewed and realized, as the time was now definitely ripe and all decisions became real one way or the other.

From now on the future was chisled in stone, and was no airy being any more, obeying the laws of the spirit, while the matter demanded for furnace and iron- or steal-forged.

"Materialisation is our matter" so the saying went with the dwarves, and South-Michel was dwarf enough to share such doctrine. "To ground such an airy being would do no harm" he told himself, in order to justify what he had done.

Had he only known of the grief of the mother, whose heart broke, while only the father was meant. Could he estimate, how much Emasus longed for standing on his own feet? He didn't let himself being led astray and off his new way of life. He couldn't get enough of setting foot for foot, where it would have been easy enough to fly above and hush with the wind and through the world.

Thus he cared little for his common gifts and tried hard with the imperfect ones.

Solid craftsmanship was demanded. Arabesques of marble, fine bronze – all but the windy waving, he had been pampered with since he was a baby.

Nobody ever understood him, he had been laughed at. "What are you crawling about in the dirt, and tinker little figures of clay and pots. Your destiny is somewhere else. Swing yourself up where you belong, ride on the wind and let yourself drift with the clouds..."

Thus South-Michel became his friend, just like that, and without much effort, because he understood. As you make friends down at the sandy brook, where the earth opens and have the waters disappear, in order to give them free again some hundred yards further. Was that a metaphor on himself?

How much he liked the cool clay, pressing through the toes, when setting foot after foot, freeing from the embrace of the earth, done with a little effort each step. How much he loved those tighs to the earth and the knowledge thereof. The ever returning memories and the safety, and the knowledge thereof, to be one of the same kind, as all others, dwelling all about in the deep ground.

South-Michel needn't convince him. Quite the opposite - he warned

before the dangers of the depth. A being of the air wasn't able to judge, he said. Such warnings meant little. Emasus wanted to come to him. He wanted to become his eager disciple and a real dwarf. But this had to be kept secret – for the time being. But his track he would keep, no matter what derived thereof. His motherly heritage was too strong in him.

His own talents he bothered little. In this he was like his father, who insisted his whole life on becoming a Shaman, but lacked of talent. He ignored hints and didn't listen to good advice. He didn't accept criticism. Thanks to the self-induced horse-headed violin, he managed to overcome his weaknesses, while he had to convince himself first of all, but failed.

So Tibor was kind of shaky all his life, which suited him quite well. His surrounding liked his being and took it as humbleness, the more so, as Susamee was far too self assured, and Tika, her favourite disciple, strove to copy her in that as well.

By now, as she had passed away, he didn't think that to be one of her best characteristics. He felt shame for feeling so, but couldn't help it.

But still he didn't get on the proper trail, because he failed to conclude from himself on Emasus. As far as the boy was concerned he was blindfold. A fate most parents share, while Tika hadn't been better of. Wishful thinking had occupied her musings. From outside no warnings came. South-Michel was not heard, who knew about Emasus – thus the misfortune went on.

His parents' expectations were too restrictive and without alternative. He saw no chance in overcoming the conflict. Perhaps things would have gone otherwise, when he had had the courage to tell them the truth. But he didn't dare or didn't see a chance to do.

South-Michel, who could have helped, was upset about the competition deriving from the new idol. Otherwise he might have given them a wink.

After all it had been a tragic accident, while everything went wrong, what could go wrong. Perhaps Tika surprised herself most with her sudden death. Which had been out of range. The stroke, when it came, was all the more shocking.

Things didn't develop without at least some warning signs, while it was true that Tika drowned in a sea of agony. Her grief tore her down. Tortured by pain she lost all lust of life. Deep inside she felt the defence and the controversial attitude of Emasus. Thus her grief changed, and was no longer pure, but carried with it a silent reproach, or at least an irritation.

The screws of fate were handled by someone else and at another location. The hand of fate grasped for her life. Because when she died the

final battle hadn't been won yet. Billy-Joe didn't stand up as David and his Alter ego didn't yet pass away subsoil. The yokel's sacrifice was not yet executed.

So you could say that an aera came to an end with Tika. She was perhaps the last victim, or were there new obstacles in life showing up, while former causes descended?

Her grief might not please any more. No mean devil laughed or danced about and enjoyed her pain.

Still, for tragedies like hers the field was richly set, despite the fact, that the enjoyment deriving thereof was to be eliminated. While life and the world would turn out to be more reliable.

**

It took some time until Emamus learnt the whole truth. So deep he had dug himself into the dwarves' empire. He surrounded himself with the pomp of the little ones, and as he was of little height, he could be regarded as a dwarf who grew too long, as well as what he lacked around the waist. But that he hid in the dwarves gear, he put on.

Whenever someone started to talk about surface affairs, he didn't listen and had better things to do, then disappeared in the manner of the teenage Trolls. by this way he managed to ignore what had been going on, until even South-Michel decided that it was now enough and told him what had happened.

That caused him some trouble, and like a wild Troll he outed the Troll inside, but couldn't help it. You can't reverse death. While a visit the the kingdom of the dead was likely, he was told him, before he sank into depression. The kingdo of the dead was near "Its like the Advisor, who shows up" South-Michel explained, who remembered scenes where Emamus had met the Advisor, as to his knowledge anyway.

This was now some years ago, Emamus objected rather senseless and out of context and tears were running – beware dry eyes, that was over. He wanted to say that he couldn't imagine such a visit in the kingdom of the dead.

“Do you want to go there?” – South-Michel asked him somewhat questioningly, while he wished to punish the bad guy, even though he couldn't accept his mother's surrender.

Some kind of conservation might be of help, and give the hot-head a

chance to beg pardon for he egomaniac cruelty.

“At best we do it together” he invited the desperado. “At last it is as it is” – he explained and meant to have given enough advice. “The difference you notice as soon as it becomes physical. wouldn’t work, though” he went on when he saw the boy’s scowl mine.

After all Emasus would know now what he was going to do. South-Michel had him to pack some food and warm clothing.

“Does the journey take long?” the boy asked and looked over to Omirah, who was the reason for many of his wrongs he did lately. How could it be otherwise in his age?

Omirah was tall grown for a dwarf and slender as well. She was sympathetic and emanated an almost divine sensuality. In her arms Emasus forgot himself and the world. What did father and mother mean then?

Omirah was a very clever girl. She supported South-Michel with his intentions. Besides she was curious to see Tika. After she learnt what happened to her. Much good, but also negative aspects. The wolfish characteristic of her totem animal stamped her, and Emasus seemed to have inherited of that. Here was another reason found why he felt the call to the wild Trolls subsoil. Had Omirah been a Converter, Emasus might have steered another course. But who can say. He could well mix something, while it did happen that he experienced other Trolls as kind of weak, despite the activities. This happened when his own wild nature took over, while the Trolls failed.

Omirah adored him then and saw in him a hero of freedom of the other kind, and put him on one level with South-Michel, who managed to free himself piece by piece and now managed to employ his spirituality, by getting access to divinity, and replacing the old physical being by means of incomparable airy fabric, without knowing, how this was done.

With that he was in good company. The secret of creation was either not known at all, or was by now known in part. While the inexplicable divine mystery remained without reason.

Emasus tried hard to fulfil Omirah’s expectations whenever he got a chance to do.

The clefts and domes in the depth of the earth offered enough chances for him to prove his other nature. No-one ever hushed through those boiling swamps so lightly and valiantly, or rounded the stalactites or stalagmites in such an elegant manner. Only her hero could do, and that was Emasus, the Troll, who came from above.

11. In the Underworld

The underworld was at the bottom, so to speak and was located under the groundless clefts of the earth. Perhaps in a deep-sea-abyss, in sub-water mountains, where no ray of the sun ever reaches and incredibly high pressure was pressing down all life.

The truth however was, that the underworld was not of this world. And had you looked for it in the centre of the globe, you would have not found it either. No matter how hot and hellish glow was waving. The centre of the earth didn't bear the underworld.

But that didn't mean much for the trip. South-Michel activated one of those vehicles the Atlantians used to employ. Horse-less coaches travelling about on their own. Most likely as some kind of electric mobiles, Emasus guessed, who knew little about such propulsion.

The visitors of the underworld got seated inside. South-Michel led the excursion. He seated himself up front. Steering was not necessary, the vehicle knew by its own where to go.

Omirah and Emasus sat in the back and started messing as soon as they felt alone and unwatched. South-Michel harrumphed indignantly and turned noticeably around several times, until they ceased. There was a lot to discuss, and a little more attention would be certainly of help.

Inside South-Michel of Capricorn shook his head. with this generation he had trouble. Was it because they grew up without malice? In former times people did expect the worst most of the time. But now! They acted and behaved, as if there were no more latent dangers lurking left and right. Dangers, that were reduced by one dimension, but still existed, and were deriving from other but mean causes.

So it was. South-Michel experienced the young couple as pure specimen of courageous esteem. They didn't have to do much, though. While their aura forwarded everything.

So the trip took a direction other then planned, and he had to ajust. Where they were travelling, the sun was shining, and the secene was peaceful and merry. Well, in fact there were two moons replacing the sun, but their silvery shine was not bad at all, the travellers noticed when they arrived, and realized that they were at a wholly different site.

But they didn't notice only that. Everything seemed to be upside down and vice versa, not only the light, because the black appeared white and the white appeared black. A strange circumstance, they would hardly get used to. Everything looked different by that, but not necessarily more beautiful – quite the opposite.

They met Tika in a flock of Aborigines – all rather white, with blinking black teeth and white eyes. Colour-wise there was not much ado. Even an eye-sick patient on earth would see more and slightly better, as far as colours were concerned.

When Tika noticed her son Emasus – and that was the case right away – she rushed at him, as only a mother could do. She embraced and kissed him, and despite the prognosis he experienced such embracement rather physical. No esoteric were involved down here. Tika acted as if she was of flesh and blood. The only difference was the reversion she shared with her environment.

While being asked whether she wanted to be equipped with an angelic corpus and enter the angels' band, or to carry on with body and soul as she was used, she decided for the latter, with some adjustments as she noticed, which weren't all that bad after all.

Her whole being was now upside down. Emasus remembered her somewhat reserved and cool, while she now presented herself full of life and gaiety. Words blossomed out of her mouth flower-like, she was like a vivid well. She wanted to know everything at the same time, and didn't yet give him a chance to say more than a few words.

Then she noticed Omirah, who stood aside somewhat timid and didn't know why she was there. While South-Michel had insisted on her coming along, as if she had been the most important person. Now she felt like a fifth wheel, so to speak, and would at best have liked to slip back into the vehicle.

But there was no sign of an early departure. The two moons were dawning – one on each side of the horizon. The evening emerged and the steppe was growing white and whiter the further the evening went. Even the locusts slurped their tunes the other way round and sounded strange enough.

Dingoes were at home here, the guests in the underworld noticed at once, they began rushing in the grass, figures sank into the ground and were crawling and weeping vice versa as well, in the darkish shine of a fire, and Tika left her confused son after final embracement and salty kisses, who felt small again, until Omirah laid her hands on him and made him feel a real man again. The motherly ban broke. The travellers enrolled their sleeping bags. The night became rather cold, as nights mostly do. In that the underworld was not upside down. Emasus and Omirah couldn't let go, but

South-Michel didn't mind, as he was used to by then. He was tired after a long day and fell asleep deep and dreamless right away.

His sleep wasn't all that dreamless, because he soon noticed the weeping of the self-induced horse-headed violin, slurping as well the other way round, no less impressive though. Was his pursuer on his trace already?

Oh no, he only was dreaming. As if South-Michel could be dreaming only! Where the horse-headed violin was heard, Tibor wasn't far. Did he follow them? How could he know where his son was hiding, while he was looking for him for years in vain? – at the wrong sites, nevertheless.

Emasus also dreamed lively without knowing about his talent, which was hiding with this natural multi-talent under the dominant green, as a kind of silvery Red-Green invariance. An expression that didn't mean much to him and he didn't even know. He was like an untreated raw diamond, though.

The time subsoil had done more than its due. Well, his teachers at the School of Inbetween would have seen it that way. They deeply regretted him for the tragedy of a life so seemingly skipped in vain, before it had yet started.

The answer on South-Michel's dreamt musings was rather simple. Tibor followed Tika by his free will into the underworld. He had discovered his own access. Nothing kept him with the living beings. "So he also found a way" South-Michel reckoned in admiration, while he figured that Tibor hadn't killed himself, because he was already too deeply involved into the matter. While complex transformatory efforts had to be achieved.

South-Michel didn't fail. His sleeping ear didn't betray him. And he wasn't transferred into another level in time either, as far as you could speak of another reality. In fact he found himself indeed in another kind of reality, and so did Tibor. And as the hour of the full moon demanded, Tibor was here as the self-induced horse-headed violin. He was able to escape subsoil during daytime, just like the dingos did, who stood around him watching, listening and weeping together with him. While dingoes always had good reasons for grief, and were easily infected, so full of empathy and piety as they were. They even pitied the animal that they had to kill for survival.

This was how South-Michel interpreted Tibor's behaviour. His view was one possible option, but surely not the only one, while rather realistic. You didn't need much imagination he concluded to blame Tibor, without knowing the details.

Emasus wouldn't have shared his opinion. For him it was quite clear

that his father followed his heart to get together with his wife again as alive as possible. The son immediately understood why his mother decided the way she did, when she had a choice. And South-Michel should have seen that the same way, had he not been pressed into such competitive stress.

After all South-Michel had insisted on Omirah's coming along with them, and that was a clear indication, that he basically shared the same view. Whether it had been such general view or Tika's instinct, couldn't be decided any more, while the decision was executed.

The only question left was whether she regretted her decision. He would like to converse on that with the Advisor as soon as he got a chance to do, to find out about the semi-permeable wall of separation between the upper- and the underworld. (also referred to as Heaven and Hades.)

"It's at least semi-permeable" was the advising answer. It sounded South-Michel in the ear already. The question was still in which way the 'semi' worked.

The Advisor approached, no doubt about that.. This way the question of the direction got a fitting answer.

"It never happened, as far as I remember, that some-one dared the decline, except Lucifer, while he became dismissed. The 'semi' refers clearly to the ascend" - a voice resounded hollow in the wide dome of Hades.

The Advisor's voice became a remarkable echo, South-Michel noticed. Did that mean that he had the command down here as well? Was that some kind of invitation, to get started? So it seemed, because the ceiling opened and glowing sun-beams filled the underworld and changed the versa back into the vice right away, while only for an instant.

The Aborigines sat dreaming around a fire. Their nightly dingo-excursion had been rather strenuous once again. So they hardly noticed the heavenly glory, but enjoyed the dreamtime as was their habit, where they had arrived and didn't have to bother about questions of reality or likeliness any more.

Since Malicious Marduk was disarmed, only Hades remained. And their fight about the ruler's chair in the underworld had started. That meant the end of all seduction – especially down here. Against the well-fed worry, that boredom would break out. While such people as the dingo-clan enjoyed themselves very obviously to the fierce annoyance of the big boss.

And in order of not letting errors coming up, the Advisor checked on a commissionaire basis how things went on. He did so by disguising as the black angel of death. With wings and all that huffle puff. Heaven therefore open once in a while, and motivated certain individuals to ascend, which was

no big risk, because you could certainly be sent back, but wasn't as a matter of fact. Those who dared never returned. Definitely not after the big structural reform.

The Advisor himself cared for the open window all the time, as long as he mimed the Death Angel. Nobody should say later that he didn't know about the chance, or had taken it if he only had known. While there was always a next time.

By principle the semi-permeable membrane meant that the spheres were separated, and could only be penetrated from one side. Such fact was still valid, but was outdated at the same time, at least for the time being. While on the side of the overall administration strong forces worked on overcoming such basic settings, and care for permeability for good.

No definite solutions were however found for the piles of soul-trash, still piling up in ugly heaps in-between. You couldn't get rid of all malice in the world, and hope that nothing remained. For the moment it looked somewhat elegant, but in one or two aeons no angel and no human being would know where all this stuff could remain. Tragedies and mishaps there were more than could be counted. Only the topped component of lust would be cut, and that was certainly not enough. Those who saw that differently would soon be taught a harsh lesson. Who wished to drain the swamp of the underworld, had also to solve the emissions of terror, horror, grief and you name it – for ever and ever again. Just opening a window was certainly not enough.

“Shifting about – yes – getting rid – no” was the simple directive, and nobody, not even the big boss could change such setting, as this would mean self-denial or even self-destruction. Certainly a strange and unacceptable option, and outside of all what this aeon was about, “so you better let go and do not touch” - the Advisor commented.

While the final storage of the highly intoxicated debris of hatred, malice and all that yah, still stood high up on heaven's agenda.

The sharp separation – “You are here – we are there” – couldn't be kept up. Mainly because the frontier would separate Man and World right through the middle. A somewhat disliked but unavoidable consequence of the mighty work of creation, the highest institute brought forward.

– “Great work, anyway” – even Malicious Marduk admitted, while holding his share.

**

The main problem with the underworld was the anti-matter. Not only did it function like the matter itself, but there were special measures required to prevent both parts of annihilation, in case they came together. That was the main reason, why visits shouldn't be and weren't liked. This was one reason for the membrane to be semi-permeable. Nothing was allowed to escape from the empire of anti-matter. In case anti-matter and matter ever met, annihilation would follow without exception.

While in heaven things were a little more complex. Heaven was a kind of neutral zone and didn't follow either one or the other principle, but was built of ephemeris, i.e. a kind of photons, even harder to be proved than gravitons – the force which is responsible for the attraction of the planets, stars and any other material contents of the universe. Ephemeris gathered to much lighter beings than the atoms did, while all matter consists of atoms, just like on the other side, where anti-bits join to anti-matter.

You can only vaguely compare the ephemere beings of the spirit with matter. Ephemeris don't occupy space, but waver no-where and eventually now-here. They also escape the time. How they can do, is their secret. They are only noticeable by certain effects, and only by those 'who have eyes to see and ears to hear' – and that were eventually the chosen few.

On the other hand are they available in form of thoughts everywhere, where thinking beings occur.

**

People think of their thoughts, as if thoughts were their personal property, they can shove about as they please. They can use them or forget them, they can convey them on to others, or keep with themselves. There were many thoughts, people were ashamed of, and others they were mighty proud of. Others even moved the world or led to misfortune. Some brought forward sciences, discovered wholly new sights and conceptions or darkened the souls and stole the clearance.

All in all most thoughts were productive, as was their nature. While from nothing became nothing, and that was why the last ground was eventually the Creator alone, while everything that is, has to be blueprinted first, before it could become real.

With one exception – i.e. Thoughts have to start from somewhere and may derive from an everlasting pool, where they take their time to get in order in their unaccountability, sorted and sequenced for the billions of contemporaries. The outcome is, what we see eventually while looking into a

mirror, perhaps with an open inner eye and in the presence of someone so much greater, so much wittier, so much more courageous than our Self is.

12. Ties of Friendship

Arundle learnt of the trip to the underworld by South-Michel, when they met for a rapport. The part, when Tibor entered the scene alerted her most, and she decided to take more care about the poor bloke. After all, were they best friends and Tibor had been a true comrade over so many years.

But Tibor seemingly didn't want to return. Omirah and Emasus had become a true pair of mates meanwhile, with everything, contract and what else there was (same as a livelong marriage, while the traditional mother-father- child – family had become politically incorrect.)

Tibor was overdue for more than ten weeks. “The anti-matter screen is used up at length” South-Michel declared, but Arundle doubted. The dwarf exaggerated most likely, to prove his importance once more, she reckoned.

Despite all his merits South-Michel's stand had lowered considerably and made her feel more equal.

Finally Tibor came back in the twelfth week, and was indeed somewhat damaged. He looked as if he was an old pullover, having been victim of a mighty flock of moths. However something could be done in the long run. Cosmetic repairs were up to date these days.

So he went to hospital. There he had time to think about everything he had just experienced deep down under. Now, while his son was back, together with wife and going-to-be child, (still just rumours).

Omirah had overcome her Troll pHase and delivered an encouraging impression to the caring father. More so, as Tika also forwarded a positive comment post mortem, as far as this was possible under the influence of the negative upside down pressure of the underworld.

Tika experienced the same trouble as Tibor. But down here there was no hospital waiting, so she had to cope with those holes, love had burnt into her body, when they left involuntarily, not knowing if that was forever or whether Tibor landed a coup somehow, but that was written in the stars.

Anyway, it had been South-Michel who brought Emasus back to the surface, but he wouldn't have managed without the loving parents. “I only

do it for papa” Emasus commented when asked by Arundle. He wanted to take over a position in the dwarves’ section of the Island-University, and Arundle promised to help. “Besides, your father is coming back soon” she said and tenderly touched his cheek. She meant to see Billy-Joe’s young face again. They could have been twins, she gently mused. Being the son of Billy-Joe’s sister made Emasus her definite nephew and the younger cousin of Edmond. While Edmond was one head taller and some shades lighter, and his eyes bigger.

“Could Tika be saved?” Arundle asked herself when she learnt of the fate being experienced in the underworld. Even Tibor doubted.

“I think, that she didn’t overcome her early trauma in childhood, just like Billy-Joe. They both broke inside on that, I reckon. It killed them, so to speak. What was seen from the outside mirrored only what happened inside before,” Tibor said, who didn’t betray himself. Arundle admired him for that.

**

They were sitting already in the park behind the hospital, and it would take only days until Tibor would be dismissed. From outside he looked all new, and he ensured that it looked the same inside, but Arundle doubted. “Tibor always was a master in displacement and suppression.

She decided to take care of him. That would her do good and help him, so she hoped. The time of grief was over. Billy-Joe would have seen it likewise, she was sure about that. Widowed they were both now, no doubt about that.

“We’ve got to wait for a reunion til the general ascension finally comes. That’ll take its time, I’m afraid.” Tibor agreed. Arundle blushed, all in favour of her dear friend, you could see.

Her reaction invited Tibor to even further and more valiant pursuits. He saw ahead a wide land, waiting for him, and he hoped to enjoy it jointly. He felt as if a flower was dripping its blossoms and discover. A flower so blue and mysterious as only the blue flower can be, blossoming singular afar close to the hidden ground of love.

Tibor went about on clouds, smiling, and whom he looked into the face noticed he or she wouldn’t be seen, because in his reality he wandered about in an inner landscape where such flower was found, and can only be seen by a dreamer. An early buried dream that was, now becoming woken up, because Billy-Joe had left for good, so it seemed, and so had Tika. She

certainly wouldn't have accepted what was on the verge of developing there, jealous as she had been all her life.

From where she was now, no return would be possible for her, while Tibor's time hadn't yet come.

Billy-Joe had departed more than a year ago. And it was time for Arundle to turn back to life again. She saw it likewise, while doing so, was something else, and not easy at all, not whole-heartedly and without inner reserve. She didn't show purposely, but grief gushed forth like water into a leaking boat. She couldn't help it. Her grief affected almost everybody who she was in contact with, not only the most sensible characters.

Tibor – who had been in the same mood – now changed. Having his son back made him feel like a winner. His attitude touched her as well, and made her feel better than ever, since Billy-Joe parted. In fact she sometimes even felt butterflies in her belly when he was with her, a feeling she had missed for so long.

Her grief still remained but as a far ache, while a new happiness claimed the field, and pushed aside her bad conscience.

Billy-Joe's long shadow became shorter, while Tibor's grew, who could answer questions, she hadn't yet asked. And nobody else but she expected her to answer. That was the way she was. She had to investigate such matters to the deepest ground.

She might have found an answer why she shied away from final decisions, and never wanted to marry Billy-Joe, who never asked such a question. She was the only one to be blamed, for reasons, so strange and ridiculous, she now could only be pitied.

Well, her mother had been there with a yeasty love-affair, when they had been on the verge of marriage, as if this had been the most obvious matter in the world, while Arundle had planned the trip for nobody else but for herself' and for Billy-Joe's honeymoon.

While wild Hilde (i.e. Arundle's mother) had meanwhile to cope with Hansiman and Roland (who was better known as Anonymous in the intervening time), and was on the verge of departing for good, so it seemed, when Hans Henny Henne's job on earth was finally fulfilled.

"...better this way than the other, and that is - hanging about over here alone" she commented her final departure, after having realized that she couldn't keep Hansiman over here for no other reason but her selfish desire. While descend still was the exception, as a matter of fact. Other Angels were most of the time sent straight away to hell.

Arundle, who saw the parallel again, was reminded of the overall task

to become fulfilled by the Repetitors of the future, but realized ashamed, that she partly had forgotten. Or was she more her mother's daughter than she could stand?

Edmond wouldn't have agreed, she told herself, and that she meant to know. But with Tibor she wasn't all that sure, and never had been. His attitude in this respect had upset Tika, who would have liked to keep a hand on Billy-Joe at times, when Arundle claimed him as hers.

Tika then found Tibor, that was when she let go her brother. The same Tibor who raised now her affections again after a long period of melancholy and grief.

Tika meant to copy Arundle by such behaviour, and Arundle would certainly have rejected such view of herself. But there was a point in it. Tika was not all wrong. There was a kind of alter ego also slumbering and peeping up once in a while. Not only Billy-Joe, but she as well might have a secret guest, who emerged when least expected and could not be ignored. This 'Alter ego' had its stronghold on the dark side, and had to be fought and repressed. While she never could be certain, how far it was really part of her self.

Was it the heritage of long passed away ancestors? Settling somewhere hidden deep in the brain, and could not be reached voluntarily, but broke out unnoticed? Leading a secret life full of reptile colours, while the red was popping up ever more then?

**

South-Michel's advice was rather unusual. As he had checked all possible sites where Billy-Joe could be hiding, there was only one possible location left.

"I would start investigations on the other end of the scale of values, and I wonder why this hasn't been done yet", so he said and disappeared like the Advisor used to do. Was this a hint? Arundle looked at Tibor and he looked back likewise. Then they nodded at each other. Arundle grabbed her magic bow and had involved him into a discussion before they took off.

But the Advisor didn't show and couldn't be found, where the magic bow expected him to be. He said he had had a clear and definite reference. "Otherwise I wouldn't have departed" he explained rather upset. He didn't know about the whereabouts and that made him uneasy.

"Perhaps because South-Michel was sending us" Tibor reckoned.

Arundle nodded and the magic bow calmed down. They stood at the same spot from where they had just left one moment earlier.

“He doesn’t want to tell us, what he knows. Otherwise he would have shown up at last. He knew quite well how much such disappearance made me suffer” Arundle fumbled about with a handkerchief, while she was saying that. Tibor helplessly touched her arm. Now that he knew how well Tika was, it didn’t mean that he didn’t miss her.

Billy-Joe hadn’t been in the Hades, not where they met Tika, anyway. But Hades was certainly bigger than the camp and the surrounding steppe was, they had seen.

Billy-Joe could have been further out with the giant kangaroos, or even further. Arundle asked the magic bow to do some calculations of likeliness. The bow came up with less than ten percent declining the further they guessed him away. “As to the likeliness he is sitting right among them, Nothing else makes sense” she confirmed again what she just discussed, and the magic bow agreed the same way the horse-headed violin did, which impressed him greatly. That was why he wanted to keep up with his only string, well knowing that he was missing three more.

The rejection by the Advisor they took as a sign, to spare heaven for now. While both knew that they wouldn’t give in before they would see Billy-Joe with their own eyes. His corpse or his mummy, or what was left. Neither Tibor nor Arundle believed in a total displacement but expected to find something definite of the physical body they were looking for.

Arundle was angry with the Advisor. Did he still not pardon South-Michel for that Tinnitus? That was kind of ridiculous. While neither Billy-Joe, nor Tibor or herself had had anything to do with it. If things were handled in such a childish way over here, you needn’t wonder about the topsy-turvy down there.

While they were still moaning, the Advisor showed up and asked in a sweet and pleasing air why they had come. They told him in moving words and Tibor didn’t forget to add where and how he met Tika. And if something could be done for her and because of the holes.

The Advisor promised to care for that “for what else” he said to himself in a low voice, but loud enough for Tibor - “As if we had not enough work to do already”. Tibor thanked nevertheless. He might have better asked South-Michel for that, he thought and felt the Advisor to be ashamed.

“Just bad luck old chum” Tibor murmured, while feeling guilty himself, as sensible as he was. “Up here he is definitely not, this is what you wanted to know” the Advisor explained, referring of course to Billy-Joe.

“You wanted to know, didn’t you? – Our joint friend remains in a peculiar condition and makes us wonder” the Advisor explained. “We cannot tell his exact position, but back to the roots shouldn’t fail in this case. Go, where everything began. your friend will guide you”, he said and disappeared the common way.

The magic bow didn’t signal total ignorance. Certain aspects might be of help, but happy he was not, with so vague an advice.

“Sorry, I’m stuck” he commented. “My only hope is the magical stone to be somehow involved. – Let us think together. What did the Advisor mean with his Sybillic words?”

Arundle and Tibor looked at each other. “Go where all began, your friend will guide you – what did the Advisor mean? Perhaps to the cradle of mankind?” Arundle figured. “Its Africa” she added doubtfully. “Did he mean Africa?”

“Most likely not” Tibor agreed. “And if we ask South-Michel again? Perhaps such vague advice is clearer to him?” he went on, when Arundle shrugged “Perhaps when everything started for Billy-Joe – perhaps this cave there...” Arundle vaguely remembered.

“Was that not under the battle-field?” She couldn’t ask Tibor for that, who hadn’t been in the boat at that time.

Where had that cave been? Somewhere in Australia for sure. Right next to New-South-Wales. They walked from the resort, but that was gone by now for good, some hundred years later.

Before the School of Inbetween it had been. She just had met Billy-Joe. Billy-Joe’s old teacher in that village of the Churingas guided them the last part to the hidden entrance of that cave. So it had been. Arundle concentrated and asked Tibor not to disturb her. The magic bow also indicated concentration and Tibor shut up. What else could he do?

There the entrance was. Arundle meant to see the old man, as he put the twigs aside, and waved them by to enter.

She up front because the magic bow’s eye was their only source of light. The comrades followed. Walter had been still alive then, the sly giant kangaroo with the brain of a professor.

Then a sudden step into emptiness, followed by an endless fall. A swimming of the head, trouble to breathe. Arundle felt the suffocation again. Then Billy-Joe’s rescue-efforts. So sweet, so intimate and at the same time effective, so she stood on her feet again in no time.

Further and further they went on. Billy-Joe’s uneasiness was growing,

until they came to that statue and on Billy-Joe's call those glow-worms appeared. "You called us, Master?" a squeaking voice was asking. Billy-Joe was startled and so was Walter and herself – and Pooty of course who put on his hood and disappeared.

"What's that?" Billy-Joe asked – at least Arundle meant to hear his voice, as if he was speaking right into her ear, while he looked around bewildered. The statue seemed to become alive, was growing and extending into the open space, became more and more alive and with it the hall.

They were no longer in front of the statue but were all in now. Around Arundle saw with Billy-Joe's eyes not only Walter, and herself as a child, but Pooty as well who seemed to have lost his hood and was emerging. She also discovered her friends Florinna and Corinia, who joined them in their dreams.

And not only the two Arundle could see, but behind were others forming a circle around Billy-Joe. And in the background she noticed many little creatures. The hall was filled with them, who turned to Billy-Joe in admiration.

The vision ended. Arundle woke up and Tibor was relieved, because such a stiffness could easily be mixed up. She wiped away the foam from her lips and apologized for having looked awful, what Tibor politely denied. She didn't believe him though. But she was now much more certain where to look. The ban seemed to be broken and a lever seemed to be found. 'How good it is to have friends' Arundle reckoned and wished Florinna and Corinia to appear. This night she would contact them and ask them to come with her into that cave, if they recalled that dream at all, which was by now quite some years ago.

Her friends remembered. This first hurdle was taken. So they dived jointly into the cave, and took good care that nobody stepped into that hole again. They were looking forward of meeting Walter again and Pootsy and that friendly old teacher of Billy-Joe, who made fun of them with his riddles, they had to solve, but couldn't.

In the dream Billy-Joe was somewhat untouchable and was like a shadow of his common being. He began to dissolve as soon as the glow-worms appeared and that photo was taken of the headless statue.

Down there it was far too dark and no clarity could be achieved. The dreamers said good bye and promised to meet again awoken in order to find out in reality the mysterious whereabouts. This time fully equipped for the underground exploration.

The equipment was gathered easy enough, and so were jeep and driver. But where was the entrance to the cave? In their dreams they gained access

in no time, but in reality it was different. Where they had assumed the village to be located, they found nothing.

Such villages come and go with the inhabitants, and time had done the rest. so they were happy enough when they found the valley – well, they hoped it was the valley they needed. Now Billy-Joe’s nose would have been of great help, while his sixth sense was required for trail-spotting. Billy-Joe had been able to lift the weakest secrets. A few olfactory molecules sufficed – the rest was done then by intuition.

With him even Tibor couldn’t cope, while his sense was now good enough to pick up the trace. Arundle remembered their first visit when they walked for almost one whole night from the village to the cave. The entrance hadn’t been that close to their starting point, but definitely inside the valley.

With the jeep the distance was just pea-nuts and that was why they went up and down and back and forth half a day, to all likely spots around the valley, without success.

At last they fixed a centre-point to be certain they wouldn’t miss any likely spot and made sure that they didn’t overlook any likely spot. The entrance, this was what Arundle remembered, was a hidden one and not easy to be found, somewhere at the edge of the valley. The bush up front, might be gone meanwhile or could well be a mighty tree after almost a century.

Tibor didn’t believe in such a turn. Holy locations would endure, and this cave was a holy site, no doubt about that, and was visited frequently, no matter whether there was a village near-by or not. The Aborigines were known as good walkers, and didn’t mind distances. Other than most of those Europeans.

13. Back in the Cave

The day was dawning while the night emerged, when they finally found the entrance to a cave. Tired and shaken by a long days ride over bumpy grounds the travellers decided to have a rest. They eventually didn’t look as old as they were, but the years they felt in their bones nevertheless. The youthful image was but outside furnish. So they settled in the jeep at best they could after a short supper, and slept until the late morning.

Once more they ascertained themselves of the whereabouts of their equipment, then entered the cave, where twilight and coolness embraced them, after they had done some fifty careful steps. The pace was almost flat, but soon the curvy part began, where Arundle had dropped. So they paid attention and pointed their beamers on ground and walls and ceiling for obstacles and clefts.

Edmond and Emassus were leading the group. “We’ve got to take care of you oldies” they reasoned with a wink. Florinna and Corinia followed and after them Arundle was next in line while Tibor was last. All were equipped with strong beamers fixed to the helmets on their heads, so they had their hands free. In their back-packs they carried with them all necessary equipment you required for a subsoil expedition, non the least ropes, which were of great help soon.

As soon as the straight ground lay behind the leaders handed out the rope and all travellers hooked up to the belt around the waist. So they were in contact with each other outside as well, while the inner bond held them with courageous esteem.

The rope turned out to be of great help when Edmond dropped into the same cleft as his mother had done so many years before. His outcry alerted the followers and made them aware of the sudden weight a coming. Hand over hand they managed to tear the boy back to the surface.

Except some minor scars and scratches Edmond remained unharmed. Arundle knew about the singularity of the cleft, but that she kept to herself, and didn’t object while the rope was fixed with the last in the row as well, who had been yet exempted, and felt now much safer.

On the march through the cave Arundle had a chance of remembering her previous visit more closely. The event that caued her vision and the cave expedition lay definitely before the catastrophe when Billy-Joe got killed. That is – the Billy-Joe she had grown old with, who sacrificed his life. Because if he hadn’t done so, there would have been nothing left to sacrifice for. Such paradox sounded pretty crazy but was factitious, no doubt about that.

What ever was waiting for them in that hall up front, couldn’t be the scenery of her vision. If her suspicion was correct, that she met old Billy-Joe right there, who was worshipped as a kind of God-like Saint by his Churingas, that is by the acting dwarves.

The show the Repetitors felt forced to undertake in order to cope with the expectations of the visitors from the past, contained such fuss as a welcome by-product, as was part of the memory of some representatives as a matter of fact, while last doubts now were blown off referring to the

Shaman's identity of the Churingas, that is the adorable idol possessing powers that were overriding human abilities by far.

Even that young Billy-Joe became suspicious, was a necessary part of the arrangement, as had been experienced in the past. Billy-Joe never got rid of his suspicion all his life. He knew all the time how he once would end – as Shaman of the Churingas. While neither he nor Arundle had had an idea of how his sacrifice would occur in detail during all those long years. And when Arundle found out the truth, it had been too late and Billy-Joe was trapped without a chance to escape.

Unfortunately none of the Repetitors who were responsible for the arrangement of that cave adventure was with them, while Arundle withdrew when asked and Tibor had been absent as well on the search for his son, whom he had been looking for elsewhere then.

So the explorers of the cave now didn't know if they were in the same cave as was arranged for the time-travellers, where they met that statue and the band of worshippers.

But the magic bow knew now where that central dome was found, and that was right under the battle-field, where many years ago the mighty scull of some kind of Goliath rolled, and a wild young warrior sounded aloud into the world his cry of victory, he hadn't achieved without the secret helper from underneath.

Remembering all that alerted Arundle to expect the worst. Should her beloved husband be there? Where they at the right trace? Would she find his corpse slaughtered by that remarkable happening on that battle-field where the fate of mankind was decided? The latter was saved but not the yokel, who gave his life.

Arundle wept overwhelmed by memories, combining with the vision. The comrades noticed her state of being and the little troop slowed down and finally came to a halt.

“Thank you my beloved” she whispered in a low voice – “let us carry on, so close as we are to the mystery. May it now disclose.”

There they stood and their eyes followed the rays of their beamers, and what they noticed didn't meet the expectations or only in small part, which they had made to themselves all alone and without reference to the others, after they learnt from Arundle the interrelations.

None of the fake Churingas was to be seen, of course not – the cave-explorers were no visitors from the past but contemporaries. The original scene had been executed a good while ago, and was long forgotten and past. A lot more had happened in the meantime. Other and by now more important

occurrences overrode the tragedy, while the statue stood where it kept standing when the decision fell. There the old Shaman of the Churingas stood frozen in death and stared with open eyes right into the beamers pointing at him from all sides. One hand erected up to the ceiling as if the upper world still was in need of his assistance. His mouth opened for a last outcry, still hanging in the air, but was long gone for good by now – about a year later.

Awestruck the comrades stepped by. With timid hands the one or other touched the shiny surface. Arundle fainted, unconsciousness embraced her. There he stood – Billy-Joe as he used to be while still alive. His hair now down to the shoulders, white and silvery as was common for a wise elder.

They didn't meet any more though, when Billy-Joe realized what fate was waiting for him. Clandestinely he disappeared, because he didn't need witnesses for what he was going to do. He would not only suffer but overcome death at last.

The body didn't show the faintest trace of putrefaction, or was hidden under the wide cloak. The face seemed to be alive, if it hadn't been motionless. How could that be? There was no sign of rigor mortis, while the stone felt stone-like. Tibor felt reminded a long passed scene. He would have liked to have a word with Arundle, but she was still unconscious. He had to try. He shook her and a minute later she opened her eyes. When he pointed to Billy-Joe's face she also seemed to remember. Yes, they had seen such a statue before, and not only seen, but...

However, it was too early for that. First they had to ascertain themselves.

Staying down here didn't make sense, but Edmond wanted to keep on with his father.

Tibor forced the return trip "The earlier we leave, the faster we return" he argued and turned around on the heel. He rushed away and with him his son, who would take care of him, because the boy reckoned what his father had in mind.

Tibor was the inventor of the de-petrification potion, also known and used against all kinds of psychic diseases, almost like aspirin and could be found almost everywhere.

They were lucky to find it at a filling station after half an hours ride in the jeep, and only one and a half hours later they were back.

With a trained hand the expert rubbed the skin of the statue till it began to feel somewhat softer, then he set the syringe, and some minutes later Billy-Joe began to move as after a long sleep. He tumbled insecure on numb

legs. Arundle put his head carefully in her lap and wetted his cheeks with tears of joy. The others joined. The situation was so moving.

After a while Billy-Joe erected and embraced his saviours, who didn't give up believing in him and didn't accept the death sentence. "Such a year can be damned long" he croaked, then he drank and asked for food.

"Don't overdo" Tibor warned "It'll all come back". But it was too late already.

"I told you" Tibor added. Life had his friend back. Somewhat clumsy the tall man stumbled - supported by the two youngsters - towards the exit.

"An old man is no fast train" Billy-Joe said when feeling pushed by the impatient youngsters. But that were the modern times these days. Arundle stayed at his side all the time and couldn't let go - not for a second. Was it the age or the forced standstill?

As soon as they were back home Billy-Joe decided to see a doctor to have a look at his knees or even a total check-up. The result was satisfactory "For a hundred plus there's not much fuss" the doctor said with a wink when Billy-Joe left, who felt like newly born. Life had him back. And now they wouldn't part anymore, the two friends decided and moved together.

Tibor had to leave once a month to see Susamee and the audience and that was good enough. Billy-Joe was busy sorting his involuntary enclosure, he just left behind. "As long as it is still fresh" he pointed out and returned to his desk. Arundle blossomed between the two men, because what the one didn't have, the other had, and vice versa.

Tika also was upset when she learned of Billy-Joe's return, and didn't want to stay any longer in the underworld, and Tibor promised to do what he could to get her out.

So he took Billy-Joe with him - well packed behind an anti-matter-protection, because he was still somewhat shaky after his forced enclosure.

His stay in hell he called enclosure - "nothing is as bad as permanent tranquillity" he said and went back to work he was busy with - a pamphlet titled "The Philosophy of forced Tranquillity".

"He is freeing himself of a trauma of his soul" Arundle commented his behaviour, without thinking much about it. But she didn't publish, but felt ashamed when she realized this terrible notion of arrogance.

When Tika saw Billy-Joe, nothing kept her down here any more, except when he had come as well, but he had no intention. In vain Tibor argued that she had given up too soon. No-one had forced her death, except herself.

“Death is something final, dear sister” Billy-Joe agreed. “Such an enclosure is like death, but not the death, that’s the difference. I try to understand right now, and don’t yet manage.”

Tika began to weep and didn’t want to calm down, and didn’t let them go, despite the fact that the protective screen began to flicker, and the first corrosion set in.

“First nose and ears are endangered, then the fingers – its a little like leprosy, I was told. Tika, we’ve got to go, I’m so sorry. We come back – promised.”

Tika grabbed their legs and pleaded, which was no good for the legs. Before they lost them they had to leave, while Tika was suffering none the least, and for her no hospital was waiting to have the damage repaired.

How could you get someone back from the underworld? A real challenge for someone like Tibor. While they once experimented with anti-matter, and out came the de-petrification potion. They had had big trouble in catching such anti-matter bits. Now they knew where to find them. South-Michel was all too willing to show them the way down there, but first of all they couldn’t take any anti-matter with them and were secondly endangered by such visits. The protection, they put on, was built of anti-anti-matter-bits and was a very fragile form on being (in fact of not-being), that wouldn’t last when taken away.

Besides, they didn’t understand the principle of the chaises and the route they took. Without South-Michel they were therefore totally lost. So Tibor asked Arundle, whether she could do something for them and have a word with the Advisor and how he saw the case. Now that the underworld was in a state of dissolution, because malice didn’t last. A very strange situation, though - also for the Advisor, who had to cope with, but didn’t yet fully manage.

From the material side South-Michel waved off and rejected – “I can’t help it” he said “That’s like fire and ice”.

Such statement let the Advisor renounce. Was that what South-Michel intended? This was how South-Michel was of help in a way. The Advisor had now to prove that he didn’t flog a dead horse, but knew what he was saying.

In the back of his mind he had without doubt that semi-permeable membrane, but the latter only worked between heaven and hell of the old fashion, which had by now become obsolete to a certain extend – thanks to God.

14. Anti-Anti-Matter

The inventor's spirit was still alive in Tibor, he never got rid of, not even when he longed for becoming a Shaman, while he couldn't keep up with Tika, who was always ahead of him, not only because she was a woman but also Susamee's darling.

That was the way Tibor was: his talents he cared little, challenge only was, what he could hardly or never reach. While he gave away his talents for nothing, because they seemed to him all too obvious and just common, while very few people shared them with him.

This time things were as different as they had been when they were looking for that de-petrification potion they had then been in desperate need. And so it was now once more. They wanted to rescue someone, and this was reason enough to combine Tibor's talents and strivings for a second time, thus giving hope to the greatest solutions again. And so it was.

Billy-Joe, Arundle and Tibor formed a team of researchers facing the anti-matter. Did they once fish for lost individual bits they now had to find out, why such bits go astray, without causing a hefty reaction. In other words they wanted to find out the reference and interaction between anti-matter and dark matter. While the latter formed the overall cloak of some 90 per cent of the space surrounding the visual universe.

The first of their hypotheses was that anti-matter was a derivative of dark matter, while dark matter was the rule and matter the exception. The secret of creation was in reality by the visual matter. What had to happen that matter became real in a visual sense? That was the decisive question, everything was about. Who ever was able to answer this question laid his finger on the secret of the creational power, the visual universe was caused, which surrounded and applied the in visual dark matter like thin porridge spilled down the Milky Way.

Tibor formed the head, Arundle and Billy-Joe assisted – as had done previously, as far as the three remembered, but that wasn't the point. Success was all what counted, and the time was against them - same as once had been. Tika's state went from bad to worse each time they met her. Her problem was first of all a mental one. While the holes also bothered the poor creature meanwhile, but the centre of her sufferings sat inside and there little help was available. Tibor injected the de-petrification potion, and that was of little help, but released her from her worst aches, and closed small open wounds. So they left behind a fair amount of injections, who she could handle by herself, but didn't anticipate what would happen to the boxes,

which dissolved and had the contents spilled on the ground eating up a mighty hole there. Tika gathered the precious liquid and rubbed it in where she reached, healing wounds, while the fingers and hands also suffered and dissolved. Fingers couldn't grow when once gone. Only an operation could be of help. But for that she had to come over to the side of the living, and that could only be done by a depolarisation, but was not possible as to the Advisor. He offered instead an astral body of heavenly design, but limited herewith her earthly presence, by sensuality. An unacceptable offer for Tika. Arundle could well understand.

Could such offer be regarded as a preliminary solution she wanted to know, but the Advisor disappeared. They were stuck in a one-way-street without a way back. "Who once left the state of a caterpillar in order to explore the beauties of the wide world as a butterfly cannot return" the Advisor reasoned, somewhat fishy and disgusted, while imagining such return.

He didn't understand that woman. Why did she keep what she had and didn't let her becoming rescued?

"Man's will is her kingdom of heaven" he said in an angry mode. Why was that woman so eager to remain. How can a being be so stubborn? he wondered and dissolved for good.

Thus the only option was the changer and it worked out not too bad, all in all, while the basic principle was the Trans-substantiation, that incorporated also some principles, one of which was the doubted fact that each bit referred to its hidden anti-bit somewhere in the universe. Every thing and in consequence every human being had its anti-being somewhere. Whether as solid units or in an open range of dissolved fractions was not certain. Tibor and Billy-Joe came across each other on this and might even have split without Arundle's intervention.

Billy-Joe's point of view was that such preliminary details didn't bother, while Tibor kept stressing on dissolution and extreme risks for the gathering part. And he referred to Tika's appearance, who indeed didn't look nice.

"What's the benefit of the most beautiful trans-substation when the result is a scattered being like a puzzle of thousands of pieces no-one's able to solve?" was Tibor's comment. "Just nothing" he went on

"Tika doesn't want to assemble as a patch of flowers, but as a woman of flesh and blood. We could burn her body and stray the ashes, that would have the same effect." Tibor went on.

His logic was unbeatable. There must be another way, a way the underworld showed them. The secret lay in the entrance and with that

ferryman Charon over the river Styx. The exchange occurred on the way, together with the loss of memories while the river Styx mounted into the river of forgetting. The travellers even forgot about themselves before they arrived on the other side.

“These are all mythological assumptions without proof.” Arundle put in.

Tika was in any case an exemption, who didn't forget her human whereabouts. So she didn't stick to the rule of the Greeks, who invented the Hades-thesis. Such were the questions to deal with, the researchers agreed as well as with the entrance procedure.

“It's the best evidence against the assumption of the scattered puzzle-thesis, as can clearly be seen in the underworld. Humans are in one piece, while built of anti-flesh and anti-blood, so to speak.”

“The trans-substantiation does occur, but not the dissolution, but a reversing of the poles, that's an important difference” Billy-Joe agreed.

“We should have a closer look on the route to the underworld. South-Michel might help us in that, while in his chaise he seems to avoid the problem. We all arrive over there with our common being.”

“Right, perhaps the river Styx is pure nonsense and there is no Cerberus or Charon.”

But South-Michel didn't tell them the functions of the chaises.

”It has nothing to do with your Conversion or Trans-substantiation. – We slip into naught on the tidal of time.” he added after a short break and hesitation. Did he refer with that lyrical insertion to the functional principle of the chaises?

Those chaises were closed in the back. Passengers couldn't look out and that seemed to be wanted. When you were sitting up front, you were a little better off, but the windows were small enough. And emotion-wise there hadn't been much fuss. A kind of blackout was what most remembered who did the trip more than once. While on the way back they were busy with the scars and holes.

Been asked for an open chaise, South-Michel refused. Never ever had the trip been done in an open chaise, such a demand was absolutely unacceptable and offended the common sense.

Such an advice sounded strange in Tibor's ears, because that was not South-Michel's familiar attitude. So Tibor reckoned that he touched a weak point. But he was bright enough not to insist, but to wait what would happen during the coming up trip, he intended to absolve in full awareness.

Done as said! – at least on the voyage there he paid attention. He even took secret photos by holding the camera out of the front window, and hoped South-Michel wouldn't notice, who surely would have forbidden. Arundle kept their guide busy by asking all kinds of questions and even flirted with him. South-Michel wasn't used to so much friendliness and paid no attention.

Later on the return-trip he sat discontented like an old miser alone up front, but it was too late, because Tibor wept all the time, because of Tika's bad shape. She wouldn't endure much longer.

Back home Tibor doubled his efforts. Arundle backed him up at best she could and Billy-Joe anyway. The argument was forgotten. Whether puzzle or firm body they didn't mind as long as they succeeded.

"If we don't come along with a solution next week, I'll go and see the Advisor personally and ask for an official place in heaven. Better a complete astral body than such damaged debris" Arundle hollered. But Tibor respected Tika's wish for an ordinary human body and for a regular life on earth.

"Hans Henny Henne's descend to earth worked all fine, so why not Tika's?" Tibor put in somewhat upset and angry, and couldn't understand why the Advisor made up such a fuss.

"He might just challenge you and make you grow over yourself by inventing the transformer. You might be closer than you realize" Billy-Joe answered and didn't know how right he was.

The solution was hanging right in front of their noses, but they didn't see as often happens when you don't see the trees any more in all the Blackwood Forrest.

What did they have? Nothing you could lay your hand on. Just a few thoughts. A film where nothing was seen but monotonous grey. The film at least could be touched or watched and that was what they did again and all over again. Once in a while a faint figure appeared, and a kind of gate, otherwise only grey water and grey sky – grey in grey .to put it that way. And only because they wanted to see the gate and the river and so forth. It could have been something elses as well.

They were convinced that they didn't see, what it was all about.

"Let's assume that our film shows the Inbetween" Tibor thoughtfully said. "The anti-matter on a transformatory step in-between on the way to black matter, or better the other way around, because the dimensions demand such a reverse conclusion. We are material beings, therefore we approach everything from our materialist mode of being, and we end up as the crown of creation, while from another perspective we could be well seen as mere

scum. But that's not the point.'

"Well, it may be the point, though" Arundle put in.

"It makes a difference whether someone clamps with all his might, while everything is drawing him into the dark unknown, where he comes from, and where he eventually longs to go, despite the fact, that he doesn't necessarily know" Billy-Joe added to Arundle's injection.

"That's why the Advisor is so angry with Tika. Hans Henny Henne was a special case, he had a task to fulfil" Arundle went on.

"Perhaps Tika has also a job to do, and knows better than the Advisor?" Tibor stood still firm on Tika's side.

"Well, the Advisor's offer is still valid" Arundle confirmed.

"His half offer, you mean. While Hans Henny Henne got his whole body back..." Tibor went on.

"At least what was left behind" Billy-Joe put in.

"Well, yes, Tika's got to be thoroughly checked as well, if she manages at all..." Tibor stood with both legs firmly on the ground. He was fully aware of the risk.

"I think it would be a good idea if I joined the next trip as a deadhead on the ferry? things might become clearer with Charon."

"You mean the myth is still alive?" Billy-Joe asked doubtfully. "I thought it was just one of these stories"

"They all have a substantial kernel" Arundle corrected him. "Such old tales are told, because there is a point in it. In every fairy tale is a deeper sense hidden, and long to be found. Fairies and tales are good means of transporting."

"A stowaway on Charon's ferry, what an idea. But only the dead find their way to the banks of the river Styx" Billy-Joe put in, after those doubts seemed to hang over them in the room like a cloak of smoke. Billy-Joe didn't mind one way or the other. "The nicest tale can't help" he said "if there is no-one who finds out what's behind before he's dead."

Their task was to cheat death. Charon was not just anybody, but the genuine death in person. And Tibor wanted to trick him out.

"Death is going to smell a living being right away" Billy-Joe put in and you could hear fear in his voice – fear for a best friend, though.

"We might better have a word with South-Michel on that and see what

he thinks about it”

“Let us compare our different approaches” Arundle suggested. “We can check with South-Michel at any time.”

“If he doesn’t hide – you never know” Tibor put in.

“I would still suggest to try. Well, what do we have?”

“We have that de-petrification potion. It helps, but only a little. We would need a full bath-tub in order to test and find out.”

“And someone’s got to be the guinea pig though..”

“And there are those mysterious chaises for the trip from one sphere to the other without much trouble.”

“Don’t forget the protective screen. You can’t do without.”

“What’s the fabric then, what’s such screen made of?”

“That’s of minor interest for now. We don’t want to protect ourselves, but converse and transform. We want A to become B. Even clearer we want to transform minus A into plus A, that’s what we want.”

“...And without deviations...” Arundle agreed.

Conversion means in the sense we know it that something hidden steps forward and takes over command. It has to do with relationships and opposing attractions of antipodes...”

The arguments and suggestions flew back and forth. They went on taking about the Time-scale and the natural being of the Uncertainty Principle in the Nanoverse and whether it could be freed from there and transformed into the material world.

South-Michel was asked how to trick out death, but he didn’t know and referred them to the Advisor, who didn’t want to out himself and referred to his former offer and the advantages, you could find therein. But Tika was not to convince. Tibor had reached his limit. What could he do more?

Cheating death was easily said. But what would happen if he petrified himself? How had that been? Somehow they surely could manage. It happened often enough, back in the future which had now become a kind of presence, but was still dominated by the Repetitors. So they should eventually know how the petrification worked.

Stunned faces all around, when the Repetitors’ meeting gathered. Nobody actually knew how this happened.

“The dwarves were responsible for such subsoil stuff. We needn’t do much except for the dragon, by the way” Scholasticus said.

So Tibor went on to the dwarves, but there he was handed further. He was sent to the dragon-watchers but they had had little to do with those water-punchers as they called the petrified beings.

At last he found the basin as had be described. Arundle asked him to jump in, while she came with him, because she remembered vaguely and didn’t want to leave him alone. The water-punchers waited in the background and eyed fearfully over to them. The wet ones were by now stiff like a marble statue.

The petrification was a left-over from the Brotherhood of Infernalialia that escaped into the future by accident. Malicious Marduk took it with him most likely in order to cause trouble, because he wanted to set a foot into the future, but without success. The defeat of the dark side in the last battle meant for him the absolute finish.

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Tibor still stood in the basin completely stoned, so to speak and Arundle had trouble in getting him out. The dwarves didn’t dare to give her a helping hand, because they didn’t know about the potion in Arundle’s bag. She took a sound gulp and the water could do her no more harm.

“You wouldn’t believe how heavy such a slender being becomes when stoned” she reckoned while she meant to feel the awful tickling again, as if the many years passed by were but one day.

The dwarves behaved strange and stuck to their role, as was dictated by the script. Even the cries of war of the Churinga-warriors they imitated, while some even waved their boomerangs threateningly. Yet nobody gave her a helping hand.

So Arundle laid Tibor down and let him be as he was, while hoping that Death would come to fetch him. And that was exactly what he did. But he didn’t take the corpse (as Tibor had been hoping) but just the soul, who was kind of irritated. Should she go with him, or not?

As she was the only one who knew that she was still alive, she didn’t worry. They played a big pot, so to speak. She had to find out how the transformation worked, and how such beings dwelled in the underworld, feeling fine, as long as they were left alone.

Tibor’s soul decided to leave his body back at that basin, but didn’t

carry on with one of these chaises but by ‘thought-train’, in other words in no time. His anti-bits were already waiting for Tibor. It seemed to be some kind of automatism. Most likely any being had its anti-being waiting in the underworld, in order to wake up when Death’s duty was fulfilled.

This was what Tibor learned. He had to find Tika’s real body, not the copy of the anti-being. Somewhere in the underworld the body was hidden, because Tika went down there as a whole, and that was the difference. But where was the body now? Tika had passed away some months ago, but her corpse was never found.

The souls must be of help. That was a typical task for the Animations. They had to stimulate Tika’s soul so that she came back with them to the surface and help them searching for the hidden body, in order to slip right back in as was common for decent souls.

In case of success the body could be saved and rescued and fixed up to acceptable standards by modern surgery.

When the Animations learnt of Tibor’s plan, he was back already. His anti-body was located back in the underworld and he had some more grey hair, but was otherwise alright.

The younger Animations didn’t dare the trip down there, but the older ones did, and slipped like Tibor into that role. They searched for Tika and pampered her soul, and encouraged it to come with them, and finally succeeded.

Then they jointly looked for Tika’s corpse. They found it in the basement of Susamee’s island. Neatly conserved like Snow-white in a coffin of glass. Like a Saint she lay there worshipped by the dwarves of the old school, as had been by hundreds in Atlantis many centuries ago.

Tibor was happy. Such necromancy occurred behind his back – while some of the dwarves had been knowing all the time.

Those who were involved among the Repetitors were almost as glad as he was, except for one thing. The Anti-Anti-potion had not been found. While they understood a little better how life functions, and that any body and any bit had its anti-bit somewhere else. While the living soul was a kind of hinge of both. Depending of the location, such a body was still alive and with it the whole human being could be revived.

Getting together both sides was impossible, because the spheres ate each other up as soon as they met. As to the rule of logic the known world had to have an unknown anti-world.

By that science was richer now by such a discovery, while only a speculative one, as only a glimpse had been done into such anti-world.

Well, Tika's ascension could be taken as a proof, and this was what Tibor did, and with him his comrades and friends, who helped him.

15. Pandemia Research

“Without that coffin I would have become dissolved” Tika commented her resurrection, when she fully understood what had happened. Because she didn't remember the underworld. Tibor had to tell her how things went down there. However, she all too well remembered her death and how it happened.

She had been working as a nurse, and one day that was too much. So she didn't only die for grief about her lost son, but because of physical weakness.

“I was lucky that the priestesses embalmed me, but not like a Pharaoh, as they let my brain and bowels untouched” quite a awful idea, though, to become cut up while still alive somehow, she reckoned.

“Otherwise I would have been gone over here.”

“You could surly have done with an astral body, as the Advisor suggested anyway” Tibor commented dryly and earned an angry look. Did the Advisor really know about the procedure and had refused to help therefore? They would never find out.

But then Tika discovered her son Emasus with Omirah in his arms. She rushed at him full of motherly love, while she greeted Omirah rather cold – for the time being, Emasus reckoned, but still hoped.

Tibor had warned him. “That's the way mothers are” he tried to ease. Tika was a typical mother, though. She didn't find a good word to say for Omirah, but hurt her by hidden taunts. That was no good and forced Emasus to withdraw from the family again.

Omirah was no angel either and attacked Emasus from the other side. Tibor saw the tragedy coming, but couldn't help it. But that was only one side of his wife. Omirah was not only a dearly loving wife full of tender empathy but a real comrade every day. She even tried hard to manage on the surface, but felt better when she had some feet of solid ground above the head.

Tika soon found out and knew all too well how to play the trump. Tika couldn't let go. Deep inside something couldn't let go. It was a kind of left-over from early childhood. Where there had been a good chance to overcome

by the forced separation which just lay behind, in order to find a new and riper relationship.

Thus Tika's revelation was of minor value, and sometimes she longed back to the state of a half forgotten being pressing forward once in a while.

But there were still the friends, first of all her brother Billy-Joe. They dearly cared for her, and did their best to get her out of the melancholy she used to suffer long before her suicide.

The best and most effective push towards recreation she got from another side, and had to do with the Repetitors, who found a new field of action, while the future was by now arranged and the visitors from the past were on the verge of entering the present tense. They picked up with those still alive, one of which was Billy-Joe, who now became one again, after his rebirthing procedure, while the divided personality became a past and precious memory.

Those from the past who had not been involved in the Repetitors' striving, were certainly stunned when learning about the facts, and threatened to stumble into a deep hole, as had Tika. That was why they focussed on the Pandemia-Research, as the disease was the new threat of gigantic dimensions.

As long as the mysterious plague endangered mankind, all progress was in vain. With Tika's shaman knowledge she was of great help and took over a leading role, because she had been only one among the few who cared for the disabled and handled the sick in the Australian metropolis. While down here on the islands, where the Repetitors were at home, and in the rural parts of the world, the disease was more or less unknown. That didn't mean that no victims were living here at all.

For the centres of the disease you had to go to the real metropolises in the North or the deep South. While the larger cities in Australia seemed to be rather unimpressed. Certain single cases occurred, but that was it. Not like in the North, in the USA or in Northern Europe.

Mysterious enough the disease was. It affected the Northern regions and came to a halt before crossing over to the Southern hemisphere, but was popping up again deep down South only. The best scientist of the world hunted for a causative organism, but failed up to now. While contamination seemed to be obvious. The disease spread just like pandemics did, but only in the defined regions.

Why were the people of the South less endangered? In former times it had been just the other way round. Temperature seemed to be a hint, or the geographical location. Was the Gulf-stream involved or the Meridians of Cancer and Capricorn? as South-Michel suggested, who was still in the boat.

“Lets not overlook the Gulf-stream” South-Michel started to explain – “The Gulf-stream brings tropic waters way up to Skandiavia and is responsible for the mild climate, while the West-wind-drift is responsible for the regular rain-falls in the Northern region. Down here in the South its nearly the same in principle, but here the warm streams in the oceans are by far weaker, and the lack of bulky land can’t be compared with the huge mass of the North, despite the fact that the South is affected by strong arctic streams.”

“... might be a resistant killer-virus enjoying cold temperatures while avoiding the warmth” Corinia put in, who knew what she was talking about, being a biologist and expert for submarine life, and geostatic meteorology.

“A virus, dwelling in the cold and feeling well where it is wet and cold. The Northern weather as we experience it mainly in Autumn and Spring seems to be ideal. Just around freezing-point. Then people collapse like one-day-flies and never get up again – we know by experience” Tika put in. She knew best what she was talking about as an experienced nurse.

“A virus resistant against any form of influence or common medicine, like penicillin, aspirin or the like” Professor Slyboots thoughtfully added, and went on “any treatment of this kind had failed, the disease went from bad to worse...”

“It’s not at all sure that we have to do with a virus” Corinia put in.

“What else should it be?” her sister asked and gave the answer right away: “a Virus is the survivor number one. It is adjustable, quick in learning, and clever in hiding when its existence is endangered.”

“While people of the North in those metropolises scarcely stay in the open” Corinia seemed to have an idea. “The climate doesn’t affect them, neither do the heralds of the wheather like rain, drizzle, winds or snow – all what can transport infectors”.

“They might be eaten, then...” Florinna suggested.

“But then the disease should occur anywhere...” Edmond said . “But doesn’t, as a matter of fact...”

“Food is not like food everywhere” Emasus put in.

“What about the water?” Omirah asked.

“The quality of water differs to a great extend all over the world” Edmond objected. “It could be the water then...”

“Definitely not, because the water in the South is limited and often of poor quality, still the disease doesn’t pop up”

“Looks like a typical civilisation-disease, caused by the living conditions” Tika put in and Dorothea backed her up.

“So it looks” Scholasticus agreed.

“Something must be different of infected or non-infected. Is there anything known under such aspect? Are there appropriate studies?” Arundle asked.

“Yes, there are. One alarming difference was that the proportion of the number of Erythrocytes and Leucocytes between both groups differed significantly.” Tika knew by experience as the field-worker she used to be, until she then became so badly infected herself.

“That’s obvious, in a way. Any dramatic disturbance of the organic system leads to such consequences. It only means that the army of caretakers march on, while something or someone unknown entered the system” Judith Kornblum put in. She’d been late for the meeting, but managed to get right in.

“ Or a fake alarm’s mobilising, without outer thread. That happens once in a while” her husband, Professor Adams, who came with her, added. “Kind of pseudo-placebo-effect, though...”

“Way back in the old times in Laptopia we put everything on the electro-smog, do you remember – those who were with us...?” Arundle recalled.

Those who knew, nodded, except the younger generation, who wanted to be of help as well, although they were lacking the Time-travelling experience, but had taken up appropriate roles among the Repetitors instead.

While the loss of time turned out to be overestimated by far, and that was why the electro-smog – as a side product of the time-loss - also was questioned, while it remained a serious source of danger.

“Are there reliable studies of risks and dangers in this respect?” Edmond wanted to know.

“The quality of the air we respire is under constant observation, while the allotted limits became shifted about, though. The air, people must breathe, is of poor quality in the cities, that’s for sure, and used to be even worse... A lot was done to reduce the CO2 emission. And when the fissile fuel was finally burnt up, it became replaced by natural sources like wind- and sun-energy, and last but not least by the so-called g-propulsion – the mysterious source of ‘the Arundle-Post-Einstein’ area. if I may say so...” Professor Slyboots explained, making the mentioned person to redden.

“When the Ecologists put their emphasis on ray- and light-pollution,

things were even more difficult” Grisella backed up her brother-in-law. “Disclosing inner connections here was far more complex. and the fashionable cellular and I-phone communication became never part of serious considerations, while the emissions of nuclear power plants and the likeliness of nuclear accident was rated high in public opinion.”

“Could well be that the accumulated radiation, especially in the Northern regions, played a major part on the search for the pathogen of the mysterious Pandemia” Professor Slyboots confirmed. “While the world is busy with the paradigmatic change” his former assistant Peter Adams added.

“It is certainly no contradiction that the disease popped up first in the very North, though” the Professor went on. “In the end of the 20th century some dozen nuclear submarines patroulled the icy oceans.”

“Only by rumours the public learnt of horrible scenes, and incredible accidents” Peter Adams put in.

“As part of the cold war and its renewal half a century later” the Professor said.

“Pollution there was - more than enough...”

“Right, but not all showed the typical symptoms. The fate of the Russian soldiers was tragic, however their symptoms didn’t comply with the Pandemia...”

“Well, the happenings up there were kept top secret. Nobody knows what was really going on...”

“Who can say?”

“We don’t want to see, what’s obvious, I’d say” Tika backed up her husband.

“What do we know about nuclear pollution and the effects on the human body, on the organs, the skin, the lungs and last but nor least genes? A lot of damage is done in the dark, hidden and unknown by the public. Hardly one surgeon, only a few scientists took a deeper look. Winds and the West-wind-drift are spreading all over the Northern hemisphere their deadly cargo, and add up with lokal emissions of other high frequency rays. Its such a cocktail people breathe day by day, is that not source enough? “Arundle summed up what had been said.

“Then it’s no contamination from individual to indiviual? My experience was somewhat different, when I worked in the hospital” Tika objected.

“The beings get shot ripe by those rays for the outbreak of the disease. I think that makes sense, at least to me ...” Arundle picked up the thread. “So let’s not hunt a dummy as we did when we shot holes into the sky, as we did – don’t you remember?”

“You might even see one of our balloons still...”

“We could only sit up there on those cloud-banks because we weren’t real” she went on after a short thoughtful break. “How else could we have reached the future?”

“For that Billy-Joe did a good job.” Pride glew in Edmond’s eyes. when he said that.

“I didn’t see it that way” Tibor put in “Your heroic deed rates high and higher. Now I understand why you couldn’t do without support.”

Billy-Joe waved him off, he could hardly stand such babble.

“I did what I did, and I’m not proud of what I did” he mumbled. Others seemed to know more than he did. Neither he nor Arundle thought about their physical conditions in the future. They took things for granted and didn’t wonder why they had been able to sit on those cloud-banks.

While having been rather thick and impermeable, sitting on them had by no means been obvious. And they wondered in the aftermath why they didn’t explore such amazing fact right away.

“Only an Astral body escapes its time” the Advisor explained, when Arundle asked him a hundred years later. The Advisor was very interested in the Repetitors investigations about the Pandemia and was present as often as he could.

“What’s meant by an Astral body?” Pooty popped up for this question out of the pouch, where he had slept most of the time, while Billy-Joe was petrified, and woke up together with him.

“An Astral body, my dear child,” the Advisor started for an excessive explanation...

“... its kind of a ghost which looks like somebody, who is real, but can’t be present at the time being” Arundle threw in, cutting the Advisor short. Who was by no means upset. “You are right, I couldn’t have said it any better.”

“Today we would call it the ‘virtual omnipresence of the individual’. We all own it, while only a few are aware. – Some so-called savages, who didn’t allow to have photos taken from them, had an idea of such fact” – Arundle went on, looking around somewhat self-content, while she certainly

was one of the chosen few, but knew of course of the limits of photography in this respect.

“Yes, the advantage is right at hand,” the Advisor picked up the thread – “this way it is possible to escape from one’s time and move along the time scale up and down. Imagination is wholly free to do so. How else could I be here then?” he said and disappeared, as having learnt enough for the time being.

“Not to mention the advantage in weight – if its an advantage to weigh practically nothing...” Arundle added unimpressed. She knew her comrades. But the Advisor most likely didn’t hear any more.

It wasn’t all important for him, because he knew, while the generation of the sons and daughters among the Repetitors listened all the more eagerly. Their future was due to be tinkered, so it was high time to learn how to use the tools.

“Such a virtual image is of great advantage, as there is no ‘best before’ limit of the matter involved. Thus, such an image cannot break a leg, for example, or have an inflamed appendix. It can’t catch a cold or suffer from heart-ache – while I’m not sure about the latter. But suffering in the physical sense isn’t possible” Professor Slyboots explained who took over the Advisor’s part.

‘Is that so?’ – The youngsters listened alerted and eager, while Arundle would have liked to return to the main topic. But the Advisor seemed to have been right when departing. ‘You shouldn’t overdo’, she told herself. They had touched a lot and learnt even more, that was worth it.

16. The Expedition

It might be of help to see with own eyes the origin of the malaise, the Repetitors decided, and prepared for an expedition right up to the area where the Pandemia seemed to originate from, and that was the Northern region above the polar circle. Of course with the necessary care taken.

The Repetitors took with them all kinds of protective devices against all kinds of radiation they expected, and protective gear as well, while the temperatures also had to be taken under consideration.

They preferred the Northern polar circle over the Southern one, because deep down under only very few people lived for one, and the

Pandemia was therefore of minor importance there.

Up North the situation was entirely different. Not only Russian submarines with all the infrastructure as a consequence, was situated up there, but also even real cities in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia, with large populated areas, while the further east you went, the thinner the population became. Which had to do with the influence of the Gulf-stream, though. While the Pandemia showed almost exactly the opposite, and set foot the other way round. Metropolises like Archangelsk, Helsinki or Oslo were hot spots especially in the long dark winters, when at times half or more of the population was infected and had to be hospitalised or treated otherwise.

The left behinds of the Red fleet, with all the evil secrecy, topped the scene and were one likely centre of origin for the malaise. So the Repetitors prepared and meant to know where to take care and where to pay attention.

The leading question for the expedition was how to spot the cause and origin of the disease, when they broke off from the Isle of Wisdom tooth. They took the most convenient mode of transportation by the help of the magic bow and the magic stone, who was very eager to show his abilities after such a long rest in the darkness of the cave inside of Billy-Joe's medicine pouch.

While preparing for departure the organizers found out that they were too many, who wanted to go. So they had to make up their minds. Billy-Joe had to go, because he was the bearer of the magic stone, and without, the trip would fail anyway. Arundle was in the boat for the same reason, as the bearer of the magic bow, who was the declared navigator. Corinia as deep-sea specialist was not questioned, nor her sister Florinna for world-wide experience of all matters of archaeology. Tibor came along because of his origin in the Northern part of Mongolia. He was the only one who could speak a few words Russian, he said, while he owned in fact an excellent command of the language.

That was it then. Emasus and Edmond became sad big eyes, been filled with tears when they learnt that they had to stay back, but Arundle skipped the sentence when she noticed the outcome. A good decision, as they soon learnt.

The magic stone argued back and forth, but when confronted with the alternative, that meant to travel the common way, finally was almost on the verge to give in and to accept the - more than - full load. Had there not been the overall general directive, for once.

When Judith Kornblum learnt of such pell-mell, she backed up the troubled stone and took his part against the magic bow, who wouldn't mind

regulations and orders, but was eager enough to carry on. Arundle who was on his side mentioned all the formalities they had to overcome in case they took the flight. All those passports and documents, the safety-regulations for Southerners travelling up North and the like, but Dorothea, who was on Judith side, offered her help and in no time the group had all necessary documents, tickets and allotments what so ever.

Since that new orbit was in use some 240 kilometres above ground, such a journey was no big affair any more, and was done in four to six hours by means of g-propulsion.

When the magic bow learnt of such option, he convinced his pal the magic stone to interfere, for such ignorance. They ended up as extra cabin-luggage, though, and with the promise of eventually necessary side trips while under way.

Things were finally all settled. So off they went. Their task was clear enough, why they went up to the furthest North first. If such Pandemia was caused by radiation, the responsible rays had to be spotted in the epi-centres. Up to now, there were no such investigation-results available, while suspicion tended towards this hypothesis for the time being. In order to gain certainty, the scientists had to isolate such factor among a sub-group of radiation-victims. So their task was clearly defined.

But that came later. First they had to overcome the immigration rules and regulations when they entered the North-pole space station.

The trip up North had been easy enough. From the Isle of Wisdom tooth their own cruiser took them up to the Southern Space Station and from there in less than four hours with all their equipment to the North pole, where the trouble began.

They had to overcome some health checks and for that had to stay in the hospital on the space station. But the area where they intended to start with, was still off limits anyway. Dorothea had been expecting something like that and had arranged a special permit beforehand, defining them as a group of researchers underway in secret mission. Thus they managed to get out of the quarantine after only one week. Had they gone by magic transport, they certainly would have stranded as soon as they set foot on the intoxicated grounds, where they were freezing now in the icy Easterly wind, heading for the hotel, Dorothea had booked for them, well in advance.

Up in their rooms they unpacked their equipment – all those Geiger-counters and x-ray-dose-meters, the frequency-regulators and the like and placed them on the balconies. The air, they reckoned, was the same more or less, they told to themselves, while they felt somewhat strange. Having been seated on a dog-driven sledge somewhere in the open for a defined target

would have been certainly more romantic. But what they were looking for should be found everywhere or nowhere around here.

Their set-up looked somewhat sloppy, but in fact was not. The metres worked perfect and the control even better. Day and night the instruments were read at the defined times. Professor Slyboots, as the senior scientist, was the leader of the team and arranged for the shifts, assisted by his sister-in-law who was also responsible for the hygiene measurements to be strictly obeyed. That was why the whole crew was clad in white smelly overalls with oxygen-masks for the face, they only put off for the meals.

The suspicion pointed already into a certain direction. They were indeed looking for confirmation of their assumptions.

“Hygiene is the absolute must to avoid infection” the Repetitors agreed, when washing their hands the tenth time already, and grabbed for the mouth-protector. In their white stiff suits they looked like astronauts on outer mission.

The team spent almost a week in the hotel, before they went on but didn’t redress, as per advice of the team-leaders. Emasus was relieved that Omirah didn’t participated, because she didn’t want to risk the life of the growing foetus in her womb, and all other unforeseeable circumstances of such a journey.

By cruiser the team went on to the next space station. They could decide between Chicago and Toronto, and favoured the latter. Toronto was far enough in the North, but not too far and was definitely affected by the disease, as Judith knew, because the Corporation sold a lot of the newest artifacts, called Severin or Severine, by now already approaching the half a million mark.

“I wonder how many there are all together in fact. While the 500.000 refer only to the latest model” she explained.

She was looking forward to the sight-seeing-tour her husband intended – Toronto was his home-town after all.

While they all stuck in their stiff white suits and had their faces covered too, such a tour was acceptable, the team-leaders decided. When underway first checks could also be made. Others were busy already collecting data meanwhile, as time passed by and the threat didn’t lessen.

Edmond was happy with his parents for once, as there had been little chance for such three-someness lately, if Arundle wasn’t busy otherwise or Billy-Joe ‘shamanised’. i.e. was mentally absent.

Since the big swing he favoured such habit. He wished to fulfil his fate orderly, as had been predicted since childhood.

Edmond himself was the most flexible of the three. But as it was, he also looked for solid reference and engaged in the Island University to a great extent. His subject was the colour-scheme. He tried to enter deeper into the secrets and interdependence, he was surrounded with in the School of Inbetween and on the Isle of Wisdom tooth. His parents were just the right addressees in that, and were all too happy to be of help.

Motherly instincts awoke in Arundle, she had long forgotten or never experienced, all the more so, when the magic bow expressed bewilderment when asked back. For such instincts it would certainly be too late by now, he let her know when she packed him into a white protective cover of the same fabric as were the space suits. The bow refused but Arundle insisted: "We all protect ourselves. Even the magic stone is safe under his cover on Billy-Joe's breast."

The bow asked himself whether she had turned nuts, when Arundle's hefty reaction showed him that she didn't. While reading thoughts was no sweat for her. How could she have infested herself while she stuck to all protective measurements and precautions.

So the bow recommended a pet, as no grandchildren were in range and Tika certainly wouldn't share hers upon arrival.

Was she getting old? Arundle asked herself. You might not realize yourself, while other do. Did she become strange and forgetful? She might look for an extended SLOMES-therapy, as Judith recommended ever since.

The aging process didn't pass unnoticed and the grief about Billy-Joe's disappearance did the rest. It might be high time to find a joint matter of interest again. For that they had good reasons. They might be on the right track already.

So she thanked her magic bow, for the little wonder he performed on her, who didn't know what for he deserved such over-boarding gratefulness.

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The comparative investigations of all relevant factors didn't come to a definite result. The Repetitors also concluded to a multiple chain of causes, you could compare with a polluted river that carried with it more and more waste till the point of no return was reached and the water changed into a swamp. The example showed the break-out of the disease, while everyday life in the metropolitan environment stood for the assembling of dangerous matter. until the day came when the system collapsed and the disease broke out.

“The pitcher that goes too often to the well gets broken,” Professor Slyboots said, and Pooty added: “ yes, yes, - you better not do that once too often” - so even Scholasticus blushed, still the sensible being he’s ever been.

In the organism the break-down of the immune system enabled the poisonous VHX-rays to fulfil their destructive work in the brain and in the genes. Such special sort of rays were now the discovery of the Repetitors, and were reflected in the factual results of the investigations, and that was the main point.

With such a result a number of conclusions could be drawn, which in majority referred to the basics, while immediate measures came in sight. In the long run the environmental situation had to be bettered dramatically, to avoid and prevent the fall-out or break-down and the turn-over of the local systems and Ariel situation. But that was only one aspect, the overall outside conditions, while they were not responsible for the disease as such, but one factor of the additive sum. While nutrition was another. The final push however came from the mysterious VHX-rays.

The mightiest break-outs of the Pandemia interrelated immediately with the level of such VHX-rays. The latter were connected with the climatic circumstances, as they defined the Northern regions. A certain type of weather combined with negative temperatures favoured the outbreak, and it looked as if the human beings contaminated and infected each other, while the lack of hygiene did the rest. As a matter of fact such VHX-rays could easily be kept off by a proper cover over mouth and nose, and were simply spilled off the skin as well, but were likewise passed on from individual to individual the same way via skin contact without such measures of protection.

Excessive leftovers of former radioactive fall-outs as had been several in the region, rounded the silent, unnoticeable creeping danger to a monstrous reality to be spread by wind, snow, ice and hail, - and by the immediate contact of infected individuals with others, who had been well, so far. Thus the disease appeared to be spreading by a causative organism.

The researcher from the Isle of Wisdom tooth, when come that far, undertook some comparative studies, be make sure that they were right. But the further they went, the more evidence was found, while one major aspect hadn’t yet been considered satisfactorily, and that was the nutrition.

The results were published and out came a catalogue of a variety of causes. Radiation, electronic smog, and radioactive fall-outs were found as the basic culprits. Together with the Northern weather conditions, the lack of sunshine and a poor nutrition, combined to a dangerous preparatory cocktail. The last kick however was found in the mysterious VHX-rays as the final pathogen.

Many triggers had to be pulled at the same time. Common habits were questioned, radical adjustments had to be made. Not all pathogens could be influenced or even shut off. So the authorities favoured what could be altered, while people had to change their way of life.

The perm-cloud which prevented the sunshine from getting through to the ground once troubled the visitors from the past already, and so did the nutrition. Backed up with the results of their investigations the Repetitors initiated a number of necessary measures. First successes were promising, The revolutionary move rose and took up speed.

Toronto had been so proud of its subsoil mall-area under the city centre, were you never needed to come up to the surface in winter or summer. In the other metropolises the situation was alike. All this was now radically questioned. "Tear down grey city walls" resounded all over the troubled zones.

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Lasting changes needed time, Rome wasn't built in a day, so to speak. Still, those wintry pandemics ebbed away. Some epicentres remained closed and the infection stopped. Be it that the immune system stabilized or the hygiene measures were handled properly. The space stations installed larger and cleaner washrooms for all travellers, where they had to take showers and change their whole gear before they were allowed to carry on. And without proper mouth protection no-one was allowed to get on or off.

Nutrition was also a field of action. It was a tricky one. People enjoyed the synthetic slime they were used to for once, another reason was the food production as such. People weren't used to fresh fruit or vegetables, and didn't know how to grow or cook. Even the artifacts had no command of cooking real stuff and couldn't be re-programmed right away.

One basic step to better the situation was the dissolution of the perm-cloud, while sunshine was the base of all life. Without proper sun-shine nothing could be achieved and the cities would continue to suffocate under the ungood cloak.

Not only the sun-shine was missing but also the fertile soil on the ground. So the idea came up to build and install large floating islands in a further orbit. Peter Adams, the former Torontonion, and his wife Judith Kornblum came up with that, and as they also had the necessary infrastructure at hand to realize such an idea, they soon developed a booming side branch of the SLOMES corporation.

The autarkic eco-systems worked fully automated and resulted in good harvests. But they didn't suffice by far in order to feed the population on a natural basis healthy and sufficient - until then many years had to pass by. While the success stimulated others to pick up, as the first freighters returned from Mars these days, filled to the tops with precious metals.

None found its way down to earth however, they weren't built for that. They were unloaded right at the outer orbit and were sent back empty. While on the satellites an army of artifacts carried on. Meanwhile the shades of the huge floating patches worried the public and the authorities, until the idea came up to have them rotate against the turn of the earth. That helped and shortened the shade enormously.

17. Edmond the Prince

Since Edmond took over the role of the Prince, he was getting cocky. He couldn't get out of the messianic gestus, he soon had internalised. His mother didn't quite know what to think of that, because such role had been adapted for him. He had been the right person on the right spot at the right time, so to speak. But Edmond didn't always stick to the script and had arguments with the Repetitors about the concept.

In the beginning he apologized once in a while, for being absent-minded, but later didn't any more, but stuck to his point, right or wrong and accused the Repetitors of negligence, which they certainly rejected.

When his presence wasn't needed any more or just occasionally, the Repetitors hoped to solve the problem, all the more, when past and future fell in one joint presence, and the time-travelling became obsolete, and uncertainty ruled over an open future, as was supposed to be.

What became of the Prince Regent? His little fixed empire in the real world consisted of a holiday resort near the coast of New-South-Wales, but didn't exist anymore. It disappeared just like that, when those Miseriors fled and Malicious Marduk was revised sorrowly.

But what should be done with the hoarded treasures, down there in the dungeons and secret chambers of the palace? And what should be done with those spare-parts, factual or artificial? Nobody wanted to deal with such left-over of a past time. Methods had become more elegant, while the cloning of organs meanwhile replaced a lot, and was far less problematic.

The former Regent of Laptopia felt like the rulers of the apart fallen

former Soviet Union. What should be done with all the hazardous debris of the past, piled disorderly in unknown or forgotten underground locations?

Whenever Prince Edmond felt like, he retreated into his palace and surrounded himself with a flock of servants. Once in a while visitors came: General Armyless (alias Professor Slyboots – who occasionally sent his brother Amadeus, while nobody knew of the other.)

They talked about former times and their great deeds, the more so, when Scholasticus came with the former and young Billy-Joe Karora or even the young Arundle herself (who had pampered the little prince ever since the day of his birth.)

The Prince lost contact with his true followers among the people, the more he plunged into such role, all the more, as his people consisted of artifacts by ninety percent. Only a few of the fake Churingas had been left by then. The majority of the dwarves had returned to Susamee's island – as soon as they could be spared.

For public events in the hall of fame and glory the crowd was still sufficient. Thus the fake Prince deluded himself with the lost glory and still felt like the regent of the world by Lord's grace, as aristocracy likes it best. While he was no aristocrat, or was he?

Together with South-Michel they tinkered a curriculum, wherein the secrets of his princely birth was taken care of as a heavenly arrangement designed especially for him.

In this South-Michel didn't make himself clear. Was Billy-Joe more, or less father? And what role did the messianic prediction play? What had the founders of the resort to do with all that? Did Mynona Wilder really disappear without a trace, and Sam Smiley as well, a little later? Had they left behind a child? Did they stem of King Arthur's line? Sam perhaps not but Mynona, which could easily be proved by reading her name backwards, in order to find out the truth.

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When Edmond came about with such nonsense his mother Arundle refused to listen, but South-Michel had always an open ear for him. He even tried to find the two lost natural parents, all the way back to far Idaho.

Prince Edmond's aunts, the sisters Hare, opposed the view of the Prince 'Menowatch' (as one of his names used to be formerly in Laptopia) not as harsh as his (God-)mother did, (who was in fact his real mother!)

As noble aristocrats claim Prince Edmond wanted to have his offspring based on divine roots, so he transformed his mother to a willing servant, once destined to carry out the Godly semen. While Billy-Joe's role was a precarious, but that's the way it works in Holy Families.

When Edmond slipped into such a perspective, he lost Mynona Wilder and Sam Smiley out of his eyes. On the other hand, so he mused would two genetic lines be always better than just one, all the more so, as there were these attacks of those misers, whose intention was to hunt him down or even to destroy him.

When Edmond was in that mood, Arundle seriously doubted his sanity. She had had trouble while young to discriminate reality and fiction, and had often enough been carried away by her imagination. But what Edmond as now doing was a lot more and exceeded the worst of her actions, so she reckoned, while not considering, that her interferences were much more effective than his, so far and as yet. Had there not been the magic bow, she would have denied a lot of her past.

Florinna and Corinia, Edmonds, - i.e. Prince Menowatch's - aunts also wanted to be of help and get the poor boy back with both feet on the ground again. He might, - so they let him know – overdo in identifying with his role, the Repetitors had designed for him. They sorted things out the other way and made it very clear that he definitely couldn't be the baby of the Laptopian Regents (while that was the third of his options.) For one good reason, because the Regent couple never occurred as real, but were always represented by actors. Therefore they never gave birth to an own child. That was why Mynona had to step in with her new-born baby, because she gave birth just at the right time. And that baby, the two globe-trotters took with them, when they left.

It had been a child, that now grew up in the Danish Christiania, where she lived on up to now, so the rumour went, while any trace of the couple was lost. Nobody found out what happened to them.

“His parent's talents he didn't inherit, that's for sure” Florinna reported when she came back from Denmark where she had been in a dream. Corinia confirmed: “but she's a beautiful girl”. She also took a picture of the beauty, who had taken over the role of a Prince while still a new-born child. Edmond cocked up with that advice.

Such a wink of fate he shouldn't overlook. Their fates were too closely tied in one. His imagination overwhelmed him once more, while the role of the Prince for once became stale. Perhaps his parents were right, and he mixed up things and overdid.

Would he be able to see the strange beauty – something like a sister-me

and identity-twin in one – face to face? he wanted to know of his aunts.

“Fair enough” the two replied and looked at each other. Would he be fit for a dream-trip? Should be worth a trial, though - they mused while watching Edmond carefully, noticing a shallow grey shade around his contour.

He should have a clear picture of Elouise, that was her name, though. Otherwise it might become difficult finding a dream-track all the way up to Denmark.

An easy task for the Animations, who sent their souls on and didn't bother much, whether they knew the area. In fact it was the other way round: the further the better.

That was why the sisters implanted a picture of Elouise in Edmond's soul, in order to awake in him another kind of yearning, and managed very well. Edmond inflamed in love. – But was that really an advantage?

The wretch immediately combined his old obsessions with a new one and presented himself as the unhappy Hamlet – by mixing his roles, which was easy enough as Hamlet was indeed the best well-known Prince of Denmark ever. And that was all right before he was pushed under the eyes of his chosen, or had spoken a word with her.

Would that work? Things went the like in fairytales, but not with emancipated self-assured young women of the ending twentysecond century. While the love-stricken Prince was allowed to enter her dreams, and stirred up the adored likewise. While in a rather stange way, Elouise wouldn't manage when awoke.

So things went on for a couple of weeks, until Edmond couldn't resist any longer and entered a star-cruiser to the Northern lands.

Copenhagen was by now a rather dead city, as the Pandemia had found ideal conditions. In his dreams he hadn't noticed, there he had only had eyes for the adored.

The city was dominated by those eager Laptops patrouling Laptopian like in the street, while being busy for their masters. Even rounded houses there were – in one quarter near the harbour – and reminded of a well-known scenario. Only General Armyless and his troopers was missing, and of course the fake Prince.

Edmond had just an address, nothing else and his glider being programmed on sight-seeing, and was gliding through the glens and ravines above the heads of the eager servants and the few cripples with those stumbled limbs, waving at him as soon as they noticed him above, moving the sensible Pseudo-prince to tears.

Had Elouise suffered a likely fate? Why should she have been spared? At the space station he had been told that whole Copenhagen was an endangered zone and could only be entered on own risk.

He was also told that he had to expect severe problems when leaving, unless he could prove permanent protection. Thus the false Hamlet stuck in one of these white smelly suits inside which he was completely on his own. The suit might be the reason why he raised attention though, when gliding above the heads of the citizens.

**

The glider finally stopped. Under him lay the famous Christiania. The glider cruised about through many clefts and glens, getting narrower ever since and finally stopped in front of the house number 44 in the so-and-so-lane. Edmond climbed somewhat maladroit in his stiff gear out of the craft.

What had he had in mind? In such an outfit he just couldn't step in front of the adored. Addressing her "here I am" via intercom-speaker.

He looked around, then made up his mind for a risk. While preparing for the trip, he had learnt a lot about Christiania. He knew now that Christiania was an autonomous free patch, where-in the authorities seldom set foot. Christiania was a kind of free estate in the middle of a metropolis. And that was special, while the Maroon-mentality prevailed. No-one who cared, would enter on own risk, but was accompanied by a protected tourist-taxi and had the scenery explained from above.

Edmond had been warned too, and knew what he risked when he climbed out of his suit. All alarming lights blinked and switched on red distress, while the glider threatened to crash on him as he stood there, almost naked in the eyes of the caring artifact that steered the craft.

But Edmond just jumped into the house through the open door. There he was and was happy. Up to here everything worked out fine. Would that glider pilot inform the authorities unquestioned? Well, it wasn't authorized in that, and could scarcely risk to offend the priorities. But you never know!

He got his mouth-cover out of his smart backpack he had on his back like a globetrotter, and climbed up the narrow staircase, as there was no other option, he could have chosen. He passed some kind of air-slucice, as he realized when he heard the air hissing. His clothing became blown up heavily, as if torn off his body, while the mouth-protector flew off.

Freshly ironed and dusted he felt like renewed. After the cold shower a

hot one followed, that was loaded with all kinds of refreshing odour, and all dampness went right away. He felt happy now, while had been somewhat upset for that sudden assault.

After two more bents he stood in front of her – mysterious like the blue flower – and more beautiful than in his boldest dreams.

Even without pre-warnings he'd be overwhelmed. So he stood in his freshly fixed gear and breathed the air of a meadow in summer waving all about. Behind Eloise open a wide roof-terrace of which she seemed to step off, like Boticelli's springtime, in an airy tunica embracing her womanly limbs.

Edmond remembered the fashion of his age, so he hoped, as up here in the far North things might be different than he was used deep down under, where he came from, and Pandemia didn't rage the way it had done up here. And might influence habits.

No physical contact with strangers. Who dared to step closer than one foot to a stranger, stepped him already on the feet, so to speak. Coughing at someone, or puffing the smoke of a cigarette at him, as well as talking into one's face were absolute no-goes. If you had anything to say you had to move your head into a direction where nobody stood, except an artifact, of course, which couldn'd be infested, so they didn't matter.

While doing so you tried to catch a glimpse of the person you referred to, to let him know that he was meant.

Here and now this was not necessary, as there were no other people in the vicinity.

Eloise seemed not to care about such rules. She didn't feel molested. Quite the opposite. She did the first step by approaching the young man, making herself clear when embracing him gently. When a soft kiss touched his cheek, he felt as if heaven had opened. No words were needed to convey the sentiments neither way. There they stood, looking at each other admiringly and couldn't let go the deep blue seas of the eyes, they sank right in, and couldn't stop sinking until they reached to grounds of their souls.

18. Eloise of Christiania

What did Elouise do? Where was she going? How did you grow up in free Christiania? Christiania – the freed zone in the middle of a metropolis. Nowhere else you could find anything the like. And the germ of a general upheaval might be found right here, while the rejectors and misfits all over called themselves Maroons after the former slaves of Santo Domingo.

While here in Christiania the people didn't show any slavish appeal what so ever, but understood themselves as the most free of the freest. And for their freedom they did a lot. Thus the inhabitants of the quarter managed to keep their position and settled more and more, by gaining status and privileges and independence to an almost unbelievable extent. While opposition came from the ever same side. But in the end even the worst conservatives saw the advantages and the priority of free Christiania, and even began to copy the one or other idea.

So Christiania was accepted as a special case. While authorities slowly acknowledged that the misfits were no crazy bumps like the Amsterdamian junkies in the harbour-quarters, who organized – if anything at all – the drug trade for Western Europe.

Under the impression of the Pandemia the makers and activists of Christiania were for once regarded as the spearhead mission of defence against the disease instead.

While the mainstreamers became victims of the disease, the little isle of the untouchables kept the nose up. Like one man or better – like one woman the inhabitants stuck together. They invented all kinds of very effective defence devices, like the air sluice Edmond had passed through, and each household possessed one meanwhile.

From here in great number almost all clinic personnel swarmed out every day to the hospitals of the city, and the adjacent quarters adopted the advantages likewise, thus the area widened as well as the influence.

For some hardcore Christianians such growth was regarded as a sacrilege. Others sat on packed suitcases like Mynona Wilder and Sam Smiley the parents of Elouise who might have been gone for good already, but being afraid of contamination on the journey. Those without occupation looked back to the days when the tourists daily came, spending time and money, though.

They missed the attention now, while had felt molested in the old days. Each block had been some kind of circus and traded with handmade craft and a variety of potions and cremes. Sam and Mynona attracted the crowd with the dance of the wind and made good money. So lack of money might be the reason why they left.

Tourism went down to nil with the outbreaks of the Pandemia, and caused the Christianians to look after themselves and to employ their inventive spirits for themselves. With that the hausse boomed all the more. Christiania became a model of representation. From all over the world expert showed up to see and copy what could be bettered, and there was a lot.

While the way of Christianian life wasn't so easy to copy for once but was regarded as the cause of health. It started with the food first of all. The Christianians ate what they grew on the roofs and in the backyard gardens, or in hothouses. Thus they managed without any imports from the outside surroundings. In the extended hothouses they even produced their own climate, their own air, and their own rain, and their pure water. Their waste was refined in a waste-system, and was cultured into drinking water to become re-used.

Producing light wasn't all that easy, but was achieved by beamers, while the stream of life became safeguarded again. So it was, and every day something new popped up somewhere. Creativity didn't find an end, though.

The experts from abroad soon realized what was cooking, all the more, when the study of the Repetitors backed up their findings. The question now was how to turn the wheel of fortune the other way, and how to stimulate and furthermore to steer initiative. Enlightenment was but one factor, structural reforms another, and a new consciousness for all was arbitrary. A consciousness that had been growing over the years in Christiania for several generations already, and wasn't easy to achieve.

As a matter of fact you had to deal with a growing number of disabled out there, who only had television and copulation in mind. Thus the reform seemed to be a Sisyphus-task, no authority could handle alone. Still, it had to be tackled. While the solution was easy enough. All they had to do, was to copy the way of Christianian life, and change whole Copenhagen into such an isle of the happy ones, as a first step. Then the other metropolises had to follow, if they wanted to be freed from the pandemian plague, which they – of course - all wanted.

The artifacts picked up want was needed for the new type of gardening in no time, while their masters had more trouble in switching from the common stuff to healthy nutrition. But managed step by step. Soon the roofs turned out to be far too small to cover the demand, but where-ever a wasteland was discovered it became cultivated right away. Often a new hothouse of the latest design was built that could be left alone like an autarkic organism, and soon produced excellent vegetables and as by-products fresh air and potable water.

**

Edmond understood right away what was cooking. The love to Elouise didn't make him blind. In that he was the son of his mother. The deep love with Elouise freed him from the blinder of his imagination. Right here in Copenhagen he realized that his dream of Hamlet had been somewhat strange. He dropped it right away together with other imagoes of similar kind.

Elouise made him set foot on the grounds. She introduced him into the secrets of Christiania, which weren't all that secret, but only shut off by ignorants. With little effort you could jump over hurdles or even the own shade, if you tried a little harder.

Thus Elouise took him by the hand and helped him up, and whenever he stumbled, she was there to help. He invited her in return to take part in the dream-world of his, for one good reason. No matter how nice life in Christiania was, you were imprisoned into a tight ghetto, which Elouise never had had a chance to escape in childhood. While boundaries seemed to be insurmountable.

She gave him her share and he in return gave back his, and that was a good base for a lasting liaison. His dream of being Hamlet had been nuts in a way, but as a dream it seemed somewhat different or even legitimate, as it opened a door to another world for Elouise as well, that had never before opened for her by her parents for once, disillusioned as they were, while journeying through the wide harsh world out there, and breaking apart inside. Such a life stole illusions, and caused resignation, while the new world, governed by artifacts, did the rest by killing all space for dreams.

**

Artifacts supported Pandemias, more or less involuntarily. They had no sufficient sense for health needs and no empathy what so ever for organic beings. That was not their fault and not the fault of the producing agencies, which were meanwhile also artifacts, while bionic spare-parts were in use, but didn't alter the basic set-up.

The way they cared for their masters was affected by such fact. And the disabled patients were treated according to such convictions. In consequence their chances to recover tended towards nil.

Thus artifacts favoured the disease and step by step approached an

unknown and sorrowly hidden target, and that was the take-over of the world, where organic life was a surplus obstacle and a useless remnant of the old days. There were no intentions involved, still the motive was clear enough: organic life was irrational and opposed reason.

Human beings all over the world noticed such covered notions with their artifacts, despite the obedience they showed, ever since. Luddite riots where the answer and Pandemias the consequence.

Artifacts of the new type assisted with survival, no doubt about that, but under the harmonious surface a hidden danger lured, although the servants never thought of doing harm to their masters, because they lacked of imagination and couldn't be re-programmed for that.

The danger lay in the ignorance against organic life, its needs and definitions. Artifacts had no sense for good air, for poisonous radiation, inclement weather conditions and the like. They vice versa feared rain and water, which the organic beings needed badly and couldn't do without.

Things were even more complex these days while the pan-bionic interaction mingled both spheres, and nobody could decide any more where one began and the other ended.

Hidden mistakes pointed towards unanswered questions. Where did such impetus come from then, if not from the kingdom of imagination and phantasm, traditionally reserved for human beings, though? Could such be spared when intelligence was in question? Did intelligence not always desire imagination? Could such fields be spared at all?

Humour as well played a decisive role. In order to please their masters, artifacts probed what they felt to be jokes and produced sounds reminding of human laughter, without being trained that way. Such seemed to be a side-product of the thinking- and imagining- competence.

**

Thus Edmond conveyed pieces of his great treasure of his musings and his profound knowledge, he assembled while taking care of the regal role the Repetitors had designed for him. And that was his form of morning gift, you couldn't grab by hand, but wasn't just nothing real. Elouise thanked him and overlooked the eccentricity – while it might not be all that eccentric, though.

The Prince of Denmark and Hamlet fitted in such category of legends, as well as his blue-blood offspring. That is - as he used to do, while meanwhile overcome, since he got to know Elouise and lost his last milk-

tooth, so to speak.

Even Elouise had had an early role to play in that drama of the future, he had to consider. But other than Edmond she managed to overcome such childhood-trauma with the help of her courageous parents, who fled the scene in time, while the inner circle of the Repetitors had had no choice.

Had his family not been involved, the way they had been, he might have grown up the common way. His father, Billy-Joe, on the one hand, didn't manage with his own past, nor did Arundle without magic of the bow on the other.

Both of his parents hadn't been free, and were scarcely able to pass on normality. And thus it seemed almost natural for Edmond to make such fuss about his decedence, as he then did.

Something good came out of this: Edmond met Elouise and internalised the model for healing the sick world. That was more than the Repetitors achieved on their investigative tour, while they got as far as he did theoretically, but Elouise and Christiania were way ahead in practice.

There was that sophisticated system with those air-showers or the experience with the independent hothouses – and the internal climate as such. As was managed so close and wholly independent of prepositions. The situation up here in Copenhagen was by no means other than in other metropolises of the North.

While the big swing was under way now, calculation began. How much space was needed for the world population? Climate and quality of the soil came into account here. The mere number of heads was also in question the authorities realized. Counting in the metropolises was comparatively easy done while polling the outskirts and the so-called forbidden zones was hardly to achieve.

As a side-effect it became clear that such a gigantic work couldn't be left to the national states of the old fashion.

19. Space Gardening

The big swing food-wise was assisted by rumours – something seemed to be wrong with the synthetic food many people still enjoyed, despite the new trend. Such food derived from carbon, that is – altered carbon to be exact, but not coal or peat soil or other photogenic, a rather awkward source already, but a great amount of such remedies derived from organic rests of

the most dubious source. Even human left-behinds seemed to be considered. Instead of being burnt, corpses were mis-used in such an awful way. First only used for pet-food, but soon also for human nutrition.

When such rumours circled, the synthetic stuff was out and over for good. Almost no-one would consume such stuff any more, except hard-core ignorants.

The planners of the big swing would have liked to get more time for preparation. The space gardening programme had just started and the roof-gardening was still a privilege of the few. The servants were also not yet re-programmed for home-cooking, and could hardly operate the micro-wave.

The wide fields in space, as many as there were, hardly managed to grow the quantities required, or they did, and trouble set in when transportation was due. Only those independent locations like Christiania managed well without help from outside, but were even able to share with others what they gained.

The majority of the Christianians had become vegetarians, though; not only for ethical but also for ecological reasons and preferred vegetarian nutrition. While inhabitants of the furthest North couldn't cope. Without fish and flesh they'd been stuck up here in the permafrost zones.

The gauchos of the Argentinean Pampas came about with similar arguments, not to talk of Indios and Papuas in the rainforests. They saw no sense in giving up their common way of life, and went on eating, what they ever ate.

But all in all the big swing worked, slowly but steadily, despite the shortcomings of the first days, when rumours had to be corrected and rectified. While the space gardens kept growing in dimension and number.

Most shortages – as there were - originated in transportation, despite the fact that the ways had become short. While human shortcomings still prevailed and were the real cause most of the time. Where-ever artifacts governed, things soon turned to the better, so it seemed.

In case of unexpected circumstances however, human beings had the nose still up front, their intuitive abilities couldn't as yet been topped, while artifacts suited better for long-term missions.

That was the reason why the large space stations were manned by people and not only by artifacts, while they suited better for the outdoor routine. Artifacts didn't experience solitude, they didn't require entertainment, and didn't long for care or had emotional demands and suffered from passion.

Besides artifacts were easily satisfied. They didn't ask for food and

drinks, and the quality of the sun-rays didn't bother them. But just in that their greatest manco derived. They didn't understand the plants and animals they had to care for. They didn't see their demands for tenderness, or the quality of gravitation, only a human being could feel, and that was most important for growth and well-being.

The gardens, which were served by human gardeners grew better than those of artifacts, beside the fact that quarrels happened, or even tragedies of solitude occurred among people.

**

Edmond was carried away by a wave of enthusiasm. Instead of leaving for home, he applied for a space gardening job together with Elouise. They got the job right away without problems, because space gardeners were desperately wanted, all the more those with a green thumb. In that Elouise was up front, while Edmond had not much to offer in this respect, but his intuition helped a great deal, as it referred to all organic beings. Elouise wondered, when listerning him talking even with plants, which told him their needs and worries, or even made fun of him, so he reported. Sometimes they asked for wind, or a light summer-rain or had him to darken the sun a bit.

Elouise didn't stay back in this, while she never spoke when she was alone in the garden, because she didn't hear answers like Edmond. So why else did he speak then? When she realized that it worked, she tried as well to publish her impressions and emotions aloud. And sometimes she felt as if very low voices wanted to pluck in on her – some kind of whisper or waving in the artificial wind like an answer.

**

Artifacts were responsible for the overall maintenance of the floating garden-patches. In fact, such a patch was some kind of an artifact as such, and a meteor-like being under a cloak filled with air. That was chosen to be topped and filled with organic life. While fertility had highest priority.

The idea was that any such space garden housed a commune or family. But in case of Elouise and Edmond no suitable other applicant could be found. Well, in fact wasn't sorrowly enough searched, as the pair felt fine alone and would certainly do.

Edmond, as a Somnior, trained Elouise, who was a gifted scholar. By

that ability they enjoyed excessive voyages by guided dreaming together and where ever they wanted to go. And for the common way of travelling they had their glider. The nearest space station wasn't far either, so they were free to leave one way or the other, when-ever they felt like. Of course they had to arrange for their animals and plants, but the artifacts never slept and did a fair job, as long as it was routine.

**

Like big oval flat bladders, the light beings swaggered through space, almost jelly-fish-like they appeared. Above the dark flat ground a transparent heaven vaulted. The fertile soil was spread on a tableau, that housed a number of technical devices: pumps and hoses, steering valves, safety-outlets, tappets, fans, flaps and so on; as well as CO₂ and H₂O converters, what ever was demanded. In addition there were spare- and settling-tanks, a weather-conditioner and artificial winds that were waving one way or the other, when-ever wanted.

The space bladders thus were closed systems, and from far they really looked like huge transparent silicone-jelly-fish. And daily new ones added up.

The drifting islands threw shades on the surface of the globe underneath, and didn't please while the home-made clouds over the metropolises were shadow enough already. In this the out-sourced gardens were no advantage for the situation as a whole, while they were better than the robbery of resources to cover protein and carbohydrate to cover the demand. All the more when secret papers became public.

The scientists on earth estimated the shades of the space gardens by less than ten percent. While the perma-clouds above the metropolises were by sixty per cent. Still you couldn't talk away the obstructive facts of such method, while effecting the whole surface.

On the other hand such space gardens protected against the dangerous UV-rays, and the ozone-hole didn't play a destructive role any longer, while right there over the poles patches were gathered, serving as a shield.

The technical innovation turned out to be an advantage in many ways. While the first gardens were built on the ground and then were transported up to the orbit, the further production was done right up there already. Material was found in adjacent asteroid-cumulus.

The soft fabric of the cloaks prevented the islands from severe damage when colliding, which occasionally happened.

Minor cuts of the coat became repaired by an automatic repair-system, before the precious air escaped. The coat of the cloak consisted of seven layers in fact, and functioned on bionic basis.

The average size of the islands proved their efficiency and amounted in some nine million square feet. With that the proper gravitation could be achieved, without which no plants nor animals would grow properly, neither would human beings, while artifacts didn't mind for once.

Once a week a cargo-freighter cared for the transport of fresh fruit and vegetables down to earth. The craft harboured on the pier outside, where artifacts did the loading by means of conveyor-belts. Some fragile fruit however needed the gentle fingers of intelligent laptops.

Buildings and stables were designed like those on earth. Each team could choose among several types.

Up there you weren't bothered by climatic circles, thus three harvests per year were the average. Except for some fruits, while everything else grew best in short time, as if time itself differed, and ran a little slower than down on good old earth, thus things grew faster, and wheat-fields waved golden every three months, three times a year, while one quarter was required for recreation, interchanging with other crop in cycles.

Soil was nurtured from within, and winds blew off the loose sand. The latter was collected on the edges and was incorporated into the system again, while the soil became turned over accordingly.

Pesticides, fungicides, insecticides and artificial fertilizer weren't used out here for once, and didn't make sense, while the ecological overall system included natural home-made dung fertiliser, as well as a number of insects and birds. Thus bees hummed and birds twittered, but true variety of species was not achieved and couldn't be, while on some islands unlimited evolution was favoured and jungle mastered the scene.

**

With Billy-Joe at her side Arundle didn't feel surplus like a spare tyre, as she might have done without him. Therefore she looked forward to meet her son and his young family (to be) up there in their space garden, in order to see with own eyes how future was nurtured.

There was no need to ask Billy-Joe, as he was all in favour, and so was the magic bow. Pooty jumped like a mad tennis ball up front of Billy-Joe's chest in his somewhat faded old pouch, while the outlook on a future plastic-

made replication eased him done, and had him deal more caring with his fragile home. The magic stone looked forward as well, although the outlook of voyaging in one of those strato-cruizers made him feel awkward.

As there was no need for magic, not even a pressing demand, no permit would be achieved, no matter what the bow found out, who usually didn't mind, and would have taken the risk.

Pooty didn't mind such preliminaries and was all happy and gay. The idea of travelling in an earth-made thought-fast vehicle raised all his curiosity but turned him down to earth when he was prohibited entering the passenger cabin and being banned instead into a dark hole filled with luggage and more or less dubious stuff, were a smell of urine and fear wavered about.

While the magic bow shared a similar fate, being regarded as a weapon and was therefore expelled down into the hold. As a matter of fact Malicious Marduk had been banned only a few months ago, so special care seemed still advisable.

Pooty changed his mind, who had rejected crawling into a pet's cage, especially designed for creatures of his size. So the two ended up jointly in such a disgraceful state, they'd never forget again.

Pooty could do some good to the excited dogs in the surrounding cages, which changed his mood considerably. He trained with them some challenging tunes and they parted as good friends. They certainly would have liked to meet again under more attractive circumstances. So Pooty promised to have a word with Arundle and pass it on to the Mistresses and Masters for once, and another one about the travelling conditions of beings to the airline's shareholder Judith Kornblum, one of the mightiest women in the world and Arundle's friend.

The journey ended soon enough on the Northern Space Station. From here a glider brought them to the space garden patch. Edmond picked them up, who was again all in favour of his parents, and had them scramble into his glider. He still felt shame for his strange behaviour, and all that fuss he'd made of his offspring. But neither Arundle nor Billy-Joe minded, or did show.

Elouise awaited them with an excellent dinner, reminding them on the palm-leaves-covered buffet of former long-gone times back home in the School of Inbetween. Involuntarily they were looking for the old friends, who certainly didn't show up.

Proudly the gardeners presented their island the next morning. A fast walker rounded the patch in twenty minutes. Not so the guests and their hosts, who carefully watched step by step each step, while explaining details

and interrelations. Thus the walk took almost two hours, and after a break, they met again at the dinner table under the memory-loaded roof, while Billy-Joe would have cared for a solid piece of meat.

Elouise got his unspoken number right away, and served him a bloody half-raw piece of beefsteak, that made his man's heart jump in delight. And had the proud flower of Christiania his heart not yet conquered already, she would have done so now.

The others stuck to so-called flying dogs, the tamarind-drapers and sea-grass-nets on coconut-cream-flakes and mulberry-sorbet, while imagination had no limit. Taste was individual. Blossoming titles were but a hint. Tongues developed their preferences one way or the other. Just like those synapses and connections of the brain. Some just couldn't do without meat, no matter how they regretted. In case they were enlightened and environmentally affected contemporaries, as was the case with Billy-Joe, no doubt about that.

Blood dropped off his teeth and lips, onlookers could hardly stand. A border was passed which Arundle better not stepped over. She signalled to the others that she was ready and apologized for getting up right away, then stirred up Elouise, who'd also finish for an after-meal stroll. While Edmond, who was taffer, remained at his father's side.

The meat had been imported some days ago. Their own life-stock remained untouched though, which shared their solitude out here.

The days passed by all too soon. The flight back was booked. Departure had to be. Pooty couldn't make up his mind whether to stay behind, and had the magic stone agreed, he would have done. The solitude up here in the vast unending space all around reminded him of Walter, his unforgettable mate of the old days. That was why he couldn't leave Billy-Joe for once.

The magic bow seemed somewhat indifferent. And accused them all as blinded by unspecific charms, he didn't intend to explain any further.

Edmond didn't notice, but Elouise felt with female instinct, that something was in the air, opposing her. Perhaps the magic bow only mirrored what Arundle had in hidden mind. As to her - things were too straight, too flat and too pleasing on the surface, but were they the same a little deeper?

She enjoyed of course that Edmond had overcome his spleen, but feared that he'd jumped right into another and even bigger one.

While Elouise's parents left the School of Inbetween rather quick, and never really settled. Although they had been pampered right from the start

for being such gifted Sublimators.

That was why she had pleaded her son to come home for studying purposes, while there was so much to be learnt.

“I can’t help it, but to me it looks as if you had to hide something” she said just like that and didn’t know how right she was – referring to a certain person, who hadn’t yet been noticed. But that had to do with the legal situation out here in space.

The space gardens were ex-terrestrial territory in a way, while also a questioned part of the earth. At least some saw it that way, others didn’t, but turned things round. Were such patches bridge-heads or overdid South-Michel as well as the Advisor, who watched the development with great sorrow, and were of the same opinion for once, as they seldom enough were.

When Edmond was honest with himself, he admitted that he only stayed out here for Elouise. Otherwise he would have accepted his mother’s invitation right away, the sooner the better. He felt the deep yawning hole after the departure of his family. Even the most gentle affection couldn’t compensate, nor a three-someness to be.

In vain Elouise showed him the beauties and the advantages of their life. She couldn’t push aside the loneliness, and she knew it, because she felt it herself. But deep inside there was something commanding her to stay, and not to leave the site under no circumstances ever. She’d abandon her friend before, but wouldn’t leave – definitely not for the earth in general and even more definite not for those islands of Edmond’s parents in specific.

Did that boy not show up at her place somewhat insane and out of himself? She’d worked hard on him to get him back to the ground again.

What was a place like, the poor fellow had been formed the way she had met him? She might have had a second thought on the idea, when Edmond had recommended Christiania as a target. She also felt homesick once in a while, and was also hoping to find her own parents one day, but didn’t see a chance for that, where Edmond longed to be.

20. The Fallen Angel

Destruction is so easily said, isn’t it? And on earth destruction seems easy enough. Throw a piece of paper in the fire then nothing’s left but a flock

of ash. Whole cities can be diminished that way and have been. Warriors of all ages aged with similar fascination for flames and fire.

This is the way it is on earth. While nothing disappears to nil, despite of such impression. The wider the perspective is, that we take, the clearer such facts become, while in fact nothing ever disappears. What ever diminishes keeps on being in another form and in another form of being.

Such is all regulated by law. No-one and nothing ever escapes such law. Not HE himself, the one without name, the untouchable, HE who makes the law. How could he overstrain himself? HE, who is the law. Not only this law, but all laws. And that certainly means that HE is this law as well. Yes, HE is who HE is in bottomless depth and immeasurable dimension. – Kind of paradox that is!

As predicted, the Miseriors were banned together with their boss. They lost their base, and lost their ground under their feet, and fell into nothingness, and kept on falling, and falling and never arrived – if they weren't needed somewhere as might be written in the stars.

And because nothing occurs without reason or sense, such fall can't be endless. Be it, that its purpose in itself. But then they would have been falling ever since, and not only after being banned. Because everything has its starting point and its basic ground, and that was why a steep bumpy terrain, where they nevertheless got hold, somehow picked them up, after the fall through aeons. Nobody ever measured in time.

While they halted again, their master also came by, dressed like an angel. The mighty black wings somewhat fancy turned out, with wrath-shining eyes, and full of disgust for their failure.

Generous with himself he overlooked his fault, being considerable. But somewhat guiding, as he was the only one equipped with such feather-wings, which were black, but couldn't deny their heavenly offspring.

While they fell helter-skelter, he rounded above hawk-like and uttered his cries of distress, looking for prey in vain, as far as his eye reached.

The feathery cloak suited a noble figure of incomparable grace and shining beauty, as no human eye ever saw, or would ever see. Not man, not woman and nothing in between. His only sense of being was to miss-use, to miss-guide, to miss-advise – as it pleased him, and without sticking to any sequence or order. A Borgia on heaven's throne, that is - on the Holy Seat of Rome.

Pictures the like flashed by, strove along and mirrored delight on the noble feature. He is also nameless again, free and unsteady, as he likes it better. He also acknowledges his thousand faces. Names thereby are just

nothing.

Thus the transformer set free such unholy being and was yet well thought and well meant. What did the Advisor overlook? Did he overlook anything? Or was it unavoidable necessity? Could it be not managed otherwise?

“A little fun must be” the deer-stalker roared and hit the prey fast - right to the blood.

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Arundle doubted her recognition. She sorrowfully checked her motherly motives, jealousy and the like, what mothers bring forward. But couldn't find evidence, not within. She wasn't jealous. She didn't feel the love fading between herself and her son. The distance made no difference. She didn't lose Edmond. She passed him on, thankful for a person you could show by now, being no longer the queer child, she had worried about and had been afraid of, what had been worse.

She should have thanked Elouise, and did it in a way. If there hadn't been that sting. A little itch each time, when she was on the verge to let go, let finally go for good, while the task of bringing him up was over. Such a child becomes a whole being one day, and what is still unready must then be worked over by others or by himself and the conditions of life. The pebble-stone gets shaped in the flowing brook or in the ocean's tide, by compradores, who suffer the same fate, becoming alike ever more.

Arundle understood too much of life, of being overwhelmed by wrong emotions – not now after escaping the sea of agony. She left behind black melancholy, was cured from the mental blindness, darkening the world, stealing light and colour.

There was something about Elouise, she felt rejected by, familiar and strange at the same time. Deep dismay flashed up once in a while instantaneously, and was gone as soon as she grabbed for it, to safeguard and analyse her emotions, which never betrayed her, causing uneasiness now.

She longed for certainty, but wasn't achieved for a bargain, she realized. What could be done? What was right and what was wrong?

She tried to talk her worries over with Billy-Joe for once, but with meagre result. She felt the drawer shut hardly before it opened. Billy-Joe's ego was affected by Elouise. He liked and admired her. He couldn't do other. He saw her with different eyes.

None of her friends knew Elouise. And Arundle didn't see a way of changing such fact. She just couldn't go to Judith, or Grisella, or Dorothea and ask them to go up to that space garden patch. "I'm all confused and unable to sort out what I feel. Please check whether I'm right or wrong, whether I'm just an old mother-cow unwilling or unable to let go..."

Was she conveying prejudices from Mynona on to Elouise - her daughter? Mynona Wilder who was suspected of espionage, had escaped, because she couldn't stand the other pupils, so it was said, being age-wise and talent-wise out of reach.

Without the resort however, the parents-to-be would have been lost, Arundle well knew. Still she was convinced that her suspicion had been sound. While she could never prove it.

Did she now convey her feelings from Mynona on to Elouise? Had Elouise picked up something weird already with the breast-milk?

But didn't she just turn around facts? She was afraid of her feelings, not Elouise, who stayed calm, and never lost her sphinx-like smile.

The mysterious beauty bewitched Billy-Joe and certainly Edmond, and even herself when looking into the mirror. She was a beauty, no doubt about that. Dorothea might be the right judge - should be worth a trial, though.

Beautiful Dorothea once was the most beautiful in the world, admired and wanted not only by her sister - Dorothea had enough of that certain feeling, you needed to judge, and might be able to identify and find out from inside out, whether something was wrong. If there was something wrong - there was something wrong. Arundle couldn't fail.

Dorothea rejected Arundle's motivation almost with disgust, but for the old friendship she joined. "But find out with your son whether the visit of two old ladies is acceptable."

"We can travel any time" Arundle answered somewhat brisk. So they prepared. Arundle shoulder her bow for the trip. She took him because she was so used to and didn't dare to reject him. This time she managed to smuggle him into the cabin under her coat. And up they went to the Northern Space Station.

Edmond picked them up together with Elouise this time. Thus the young and the old beauty met for the first time on neutral grounds so to speak. They showed great interest, so it seemed. Still Arundle couldn't find out whether they really liked each other.

But it looked as if they did, she wondered, and faint resignation threatened to flood her sensitive self. The mission might end up as a failure then, she reckoned but didn't yet show. At least tried not to show, while

Dorothea knew her better, and told her straight to the head. “Your boy is a lucky one, though. Elouise is a loving and caring wife, and a mother-to-be, as I understand. While her striving for solitude is somewhat strange, I must admit. In this you are right... Might have to do with the narrowness of the Ghetto, where she grew up... A kind of perverted claustrophobia she seems to share with Edmond, though: – Narrow enclosure for once, while roving and facing the endless universe day and night at the same time.”

**

Arundle knew about the latest heavenly command or was it prohibition? Opinions parted on that. And the way people dealt with it, made Arundle sick. While there had been no such progress in history so far, as was achieved by the banning of Malicious Marduk. Mankind received a present of incredible consequences. But most who knew didn't bother, while the majority had no idea what so ever, but lived on as had been living ever since.

In other words: hell had been diminished and all its aides were set free and got into a spin. So it was. Of course the evil master tried at best to hold the line. Such a wolf could eat chalk by kilogrammes, but no lamb would appear. What had the Advisor had in mind?

The way of thinking differed considerably in heaven and on earth. The question was which way of thinking matched better with reality. Wishful thinking, that all knew, allowed the likely and the unlikely at the same time, and even the most beautiful you could think of. But with that you didn't get an inch closer to realisation – unfortunately, that you had to admit.

All felt fine first of all, all who had an idea, of course. And that were only the chosen few. Hell was dissolved and evil was done. The agony still prevailing, derived from the necessities, while nobody enjoyed any more; nobody enjoyed the aches of the tortured. Torture as such was banned without torturers. Such was the post-hylic theory. But what was everyday practice like?

And what did that mean for the Repetitors of the future? Was their job finally done? Was nothing left to be revised or corrected or predicted? What was meant by ‘the World’? Was it the world of the beings – man and beast – or the big wide world with everything that belonged to it, visible and invisible?

World in the narrower sense meant that Malicious Marduk searched for a quiet spot somewhere in the universe, where he let things go hang, and think about new malice. Perhaps of such kind the Advisor in his ultimate

goodness would never dream of.

Where was the frontier? Who drew the line? Was by hell meant a location, same as heaven, then a line could be easily drawn. But it wasn't all that easy. Hell was also a state of mind and being, employed by individuals, either by free will or enforced. If that was so, there was of course no border, and no line could be drawn.

You may say: "wipe out malice in the world" you could as well say: "malice was erased in the outer world". But then everybody would have understood that it went on in the inner world. That nothing would be gained by that, because it would still be there. And what was meant by the inner world didn't get any clearer. Was that the interior world inside of the individuals, or the world of the Nano-verse? The further you kept on digging, the meeker and weaker were the results. All the more when combined with efforts of truth, because you ended up one-dimensional.

So it seemed that the law, i.e. the legal prohibition of malice, was hardly worth the paper it was written on. If it had been written down at all. The phraseology derived from the Advisor, as far as Arundle recalled. But that didn't mean a thing.

A clever lawyer would tear that law apart, and would show the truth and validity of the opposite. But the Repetitors didn't want to see things all that dark, and struggled free from such pessimism. After all it was a law by now. Perhaps not a perfect one, with holes you could creep through, and hard to stuff, and would certainly cause headache to all of them in future. While Arundle was most convinced, that she was able to recognize Malicious Marduk in any of his thousand appearances and disguises. No doubt about that.

True by letter, the dark angel showed up at the edge of the outer world. All the more in bright beauty, if it was true, what Arundle suspected. And to have things not remain too easy, Elouise expected a baby. Had someone taken for granted, what had been said by poor Edmond about offspring and all that, before hand?

Had the almighty dark lord recognised the beauty? Perhaps in a way, she hardly noticed? Edmond was a passionate lover though, and was absolutely quickened by her charms in the beginning. Meanwhile with the years his fascination weakened. while hers didn't. Old musings awoke again in the boy's mind, when he learnt of Elouise's good hope. He did no longer refer to his own mysterious offspring, but worried now about that of the baby-to-be.

Was his mother right? he began to question. Who was the woman he loved? He wasn't sure any more who she was. The poor boy didn't know

what to think and couldn't speak with either side.

Arundle didn't feel any better, the more so, because Dorothea couldn't find any wrong on Elouise's side so far, except for the baby, and the strange insistence of remaining off-shore, so to speak. But couldn't communicate either, while logic is complex at times or even cruel.

21.A Two-Fold Vision

Dorothea had her own problems. Sulamith, her daughter, was also strange. That was why Dorothea managed so well with Elouise. In fact, her worries didn't refer to Sulamith alone, who was by now with both feet back on the ground, while the far-sited expectations never fulfilled.

All too early the girl learnt what it meant to pass the light sluice at the age of ten already, sanctioned by the Advisor himself. Such became her trauma, instead of doing her good, and changed her life radically, but not to the better.

She skipped school at the age of fourteen, never finished her basic course, and ran away while on a visit with her school class in Sydney. Watchman Will Wiesle meant to have seen her among a band of punks. But couldn't take her with him. She'd never return to the Isle she let him know.

Money she collected regularly from her account. She somehow soothed her parents by that. They took it as a sign that she was still alive. Scholasticus' heart broke. He sank into deep depression and gave up his profession. Had the Repetitors not been, he might have died of grief.

But Sulamith as yet already returned to the right track, so to speak. All in all her drug-adventure took less than her puberty. While Scholasticus never fully recovered, despite the good end.

“Look at me” – how often had Dorothea addressed her husband that way in the troublesome time: “Without you, I'd ended up in the gutter, believe me. I stood near the abyss more than once, believe me... – and then you came...”

Eased and pleased the tortured embraced her, although his trouble wasn't solved. Sulamith remained the way she was: complicated, ignorant in a way, and stubborn sometimes, and depressive as well.

With men she had no golden hand, but the other way round. They tore her down, used and besmirched her, and left her as soon as they had enough of her, or because she woke up and closed the money-tap. Whether her wealth favoured her distress?

To the islands she never returned. She lived in a small flat alone not far from the city centre and tried to help street-kids out of their misery, while she knew how things worked.

From those high-brow dreams of the islands she was far away. She saw herself as a drop-catcher and tried to fetch those who risked to be smashed in no-where, before they began to live their real lives.

After all, Sulamith might be the proper addressee for Elouise, Dorothea reckoned. But the one had to get off that garden-patch, or the other had to get on.

As time passed, she wasn't convinced any more of her idea, thus the meeting wasn't favoured whole-heartedly. All that was left was a certain vague feeling.

Life was limited on the islands, no matter how important it was presented. They were but a mere artificial section, hardly other than the world of Laptopia had once been for the time-travellers, who tinkered as the 'Repetitors of the Future' their future by themselves when time was ripe.

Dorothea rebelled. She did it for herself and for Sulamith, and – at the same time – so she hoped - for Elouise likewise.

“Perhaps there are others who experience similar trouble with the way of life, offered here on the islands. Without joining the Maroons or dropping out all together” she addressed to Arundle in order to tease her a bit. While in fact she was talking to herself first of all: “Well, there are others out there in the real life, who made their experiences and now press on that favoured 'Third Way'. Which isn't pre-designed, as it is, but guides at worst towards grey emptiness” she went on, and then continued: “By that we are back to the helter skelter tumbling Miseriors, who ran short of their basic home-stead, without replacement.”

Dorothea knew what she was talking about meanwhile, even Arundle wondered, who still didn't want to accept defence-strategies in favour of Elouise. She'd given a penny – (in fact a hundred guinees) Dorothea reckoned – if she'd been able to share her knowledge with Sulamith. There might be a chance now, and Elouise would also be helped. This time she wouldn't push aside anything, Dorothea concluded. And Edmond would be helped likewise, who had no chance amidst the discord of the women.

Arundle's idea was not only straight forward, but also somewhat strange. As to her, one of the demons – and certainly one of the major ones – had halted while tumbling, on Elouise's space garden patch. The demon settled, took command, and forbade her to ever leave the garden, but to stay with her mate and bring up the child to be born soon. Such plot settled in full detail in Arundle's queer mind. But was her mind really queer?

She wasn't sure herself, but took it as a hypothesis to work with. She had no proof, whether such a raid had happened. A gene-test would certainly clear the matter, as soon as the baby was born. In this Arundle was the same as her son. While she was convinced of the devil's ability to manipulate such a test.

Genes in their vague generality didn't say much. If you considered some 97 per cent of human genes were to be shared with other mammals, you could imagine that a genuine devil was not deeply impressed or in trouble, and would certainly be able to hide a hundred per cent in such a pool, and enter like the Logos once did. In that case, Edmond had no chance what so ever to find out. And only future could unveil the truth. Who was able to guarantee? Was it not gruesome enough to carry on under the shade of despair?

Arundle was thinking of poor Sulamith, but didn't want to let her mother know. Had she done it, she would have been stunned how close their musings were. Dorothea had no illusions any more about her daughter's character, as she never had illusions about her own. She was no angel, despite her appearance. She was selfish and futile, and fixed to her ego. Without Scholasticus she would have never managed to escape from such vicious circle. That's why she pitied her poor daughter for not having found a mate the like. Was it her fault? Was the poor girl fixed to her father? Had it to do with the isolation on the islands?

Sulamith's rebellion, her flight and negation pointed in a wrong direction already. "With false figures no equation can work" she heard Scholasticus mumble, who insisted to have known it all the time. "Afterwards you're always slyer, old Slyboot".

She should have noticed, just she! Soon routine had taken over again. She kept hiding behind the workload and lost her child out of the eyes. Had she only remembered how things started, when the peace of the islands depressed her more then she could stand.

As soon as she then plunged into the whirls of happenings, rescuing the world and all that, she finally had a job to do, a real one and a good one. Forgotten were then all the little worries of the early days.

She'd only forgotten. And her poor daughter had been sitting in a

similar trap, but nobody was there to help her out. While this would have been a mother's plight.

Bright light suppressed such heritage, which was still growing unnoticed within the child, and gained power and finally governed.

While Dorothea remembered all that, she felt closeness. She meant to understand Elouise likewise. But that was most likely not quite true. She might overdo and mix cause and consequence, but didn't notice, because she was full of good-will and eager to help, and at best avoid what happened to Sulamith.

Thus Dorothea's imagination overrode her empathy and was rather weak and shallow. It was fed by her memory of her daughter's fate and her own failure.

Did Arundle see things clearer, than Dorothea? Arundle didn't care much about Dorothea's resentments, but overdid with her point of view and left no space for alternatives. If Elouise got off her space garden, so Arundle reckoned, then she would think over twice, but that would never happen, Arundle was quite sure.

The nearer the day of delivery came the lesser the chances became of getting her off the space patch of hers. Midwife and doctor from the hospital of the Northern Space Station came to see her regularly, where the young mother could be taken care of in case of any unforeseen circumstances.

"She certainly accepts" Arundle predicted "because the Space Station is located outside of the two hundred miles zone" The magic bow was her witness and enforced her sentiments.

How would things go on? Should she leave Edmond alone? Could she help him? Could she save him? Elouise, that she meant to know, would defend her baby with claws and teeth, no matter what happened. Edmond, however, could be saved.

Thus fate took its course. No matter who she asked, or who she addressed, she didn't get relief. South-Michel suggested to see a psychologist and have her mental abilities checked. The Advisor ignored and fled her. Billy-Joe favoured education over genetic conditioning, but gave in when his input was ignored.

And all that happened because Elouise didn't want to leave her garden patch in space and give birth to her baby on earth. Her reasoning was clever and convinced all, except Arundle. For her the place of birth was the crucial point.

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What reason had Elouise? Arundle was almost sure, that she knew. Could a devil forced Elouise to remain on the space garden patch, because it was located just outside of the set borderline? While the foe and his disciples had to remain outside, as was the new law since last year. Who-ever tried to offend the law and enter the earthen zone would be re-poled – his evil being would be exchanged by a good one, in other words – devil became angel. Therefore the big boss of the dark side took great care to keep his entourage off the earthen zone and in the set limits, where the space garden patches were found.

That was why Elouise's baby was so precious as a being in the zone of influence, and such were in part the space garden patches, one of which was Elouise's home, as well as the future home of her baby, as long as it was delivered right there.

Eloise had another vision and it said that a witch awaited her newborn baby on earth, who'd take over command, as soon as she set foot on the ground down there.

Such prediction Eloise had received long before she met Edmond, when visiting Delphi rather conventional by means of an interfly air-ticket. Since then she knew about the dangers and therefore was so relieved when she took over that job as a space gardener. Why the witch had no access to the garden patch she didn't know and didn't care to know, but had no reasons to doubt her feelings, though.

As a progressive and emancipated young woman she was ashamed of such fairy-tale stuff, and that was the reason why she never told Edmond anything about her motives, and didn't give in, no matter how desperately he inquired, and even sent his mother and aunts.

When Edmond's decision matched hers, she was made the happiest girl in the world. While any such visit from earth caused her trouble, all the more so, after her baby was born. In her imagination she even inter-mixed those guests with the evil prediction somehow, and relieved only after they had left for good. Elouise wouldn't even accept guests from the Northern Space Station any more, except the midwife or the doctor and nurse to care for her and for her baby. Like in all such predictions she expected the evil to approach from an unexpected side.

In the aftermath Edmond understood a little better, why she had been so open for his queer ideas, being superstitious herself, and didn't even argue about the Prince of Denmark. 'All of us have such fancy imaginations once in a while and in some cases they are allowed to take over the lead, as with

Hamlet in case of Edmond', so she reckoned and opened a door for her own imaginations, which did remain somewhat fancy nevertheless, no matter how hard she believed.

But she didn't want to run a risk, not for herself and certainly not for the baby, that was why she didn't give in and forced Edmond to stay on with her and their little daughter, who grew up with the years and became a beauty, same as her mother.

Things went their way. The little one lacked of mates. Mother and father weren't enough. Children need children. Lambs and calves didn't suffice either, that was why a sister or brother would do better. But nature not always obey to the will of humans. So was the case here. Good hope stayed away. Elvira, the child was called, remained alone. Years passed and loneliness grew, not only for poor Elvira but for Edmond as well, who wasn't even allowed to see his parents any more.

Fancy Hamlet and feudal decadence went further and further, while accepting what were still cruel facts in his eyes, but most willingly did facing the obsessions of his wife. And as she was no less unhappy than he was, he felt sorry for both of them likewise and for the little one of course. who grew up and closed in more and more. Her relation to animals was ambivalent. She enjoyed playing with them on the one hand but tortured them on the other, when unnoticed. She seldom laughed, and if she did, it was no good or humorous laughter.

Had Edmond known about his mother's mental reservation he would have been even more alerted than he was. By now despair threatened to overwhelm him. He saw no way out. There was no reason for looking forward, while things went from bad to worse.

The workload in the garden kept him busy, as he did Elvira's job too by now, who had to stay in bed most of the time, hoping for a second child on doctor's advice. This was what she told him. And he had no reason to doubt her words.

Life was sad not only for him, but also for Elouise who became depressive the more she waited and the meaner Elvira became, who was left alone most of the time and ignored her father's orders or pleads, but was no less unhappy.

Elouise ignored his advice of seeing a psychiatrist, as that meant to leave the patch. Edmond felt helpless. His love faded like water of a leaking bottle in the desert sand. As soon as all water had gone, they all would die of thirst. With the last drop Edmond gave up.

Had his mother heard the son's cry of desperation by telepathy? Or was it incidentally, the caring mother travelled with Billy-Joe one day way up North, and collected information right at the Northern Space Station. What she learnt alerted her even more. That was why she rented a glider together with Billy-Joe who had a licence for that by now.

Lucky they were to have the magic bow and the magic stone on them, because when they arrived, they found to ramp closed, where piles of rotting food waited, so you couldn't get by. By means of magic they beamed over and had the glider standby idle in internal orbit.

They found Edmond unconscious on the kitchen floor, while Elouise was leafing through a magazine on the couch in the lounge and a fierce wild beast of a child showed claws and teeth as soon as the strangers came near by.

Billy-Joe looked at Arundle silently, but his gaze said enough. Both nodded at each other. There was no time to lose. And before the little family became aware, they were seated in the glider by means of magic, and a little later in the stratum-cruiser. Elvira with foam before the mouth in a strait-jacket, seated in the emergency ambulance with her parents, not to disturb the other passengers. From the ground-port they went straight to the hospital on University-island, while both grand-parents meant that best care was given right there, and didn't hear any objections from neither side.

Already during flight Elvira experienced a dramatic change. Her raging faded step by step leaving her motionless with empty gaze.

"She's re-poled now" Arundle said, somewhat laconically almost cruel as to Billy-Joe whom the heart almost broke when seeing his little grandchild suffering so bad.

"That's not her" Arundle eased him "The demon's suffering. You'll see what nice a little girl will come out soon..."

And so it was.

Not only Elvira recovered fast and completely, Elouise also returned from her depressive dusk, while Edmond laboured hardest, who had carried the whole lot all the time and couldn't believe that the nightmare was all over now.

22. The Changelings

The tragedy of the little family was no individual case. In the logistic centre of the **World Food Organisation (WFO)** they began to wonder, when the delivery of supply didn't work the common way. Something disturbed the organisation.

Arundle asked her friend Judith to have a word with the board of the SLOMES corporation and have the crucial personnel exchanged in those space gardens affected. Especially where children were born lately. And that was the case in quite a few patches. A measure which resulted in immediate success, as soon was proved.

Still the two women thought it not advisable to publish the most likely cause, to avoid panic. The Pandemia was already threat enough, and needn't be fuelled by others, with the likeliness of leading to short-cut solutions.

“Enterprise Changelings” (so the assessment was addressed) remained under cover. Perhaps one day when mankind had become ripe enough to pick up the battle, that was fought in secrecy for the time being, than perhaps... But that was – as so much else – written in the stars.

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The more Elvira got rid of her brisk behaviour, the faster Elouise recovered. And Elvira managed when she felt that she was accepted, while she didn't have any experience with peers. Up in space no child really played. Not with grown-ups who only pretended to enjoy and not with other children because there were no others, only pets and kittens, and with them it had been different – with the demon inside. They now were rid of - once and for all.

The bad-tempered became good-natured, which could be seen everywhere right away, as if characteristics became exchanged. Elvira stunned herself most by this, how friendly and open minded she could be. She had to train of course, as human beings don't inherit on its own, but must gain what parents and ancestors deliver. Five years of solitude had to be compensated, and that was not done in a day. and not in a month, and not even in a whole year. You needed a lot of understanding and patience, everybody was all too willing to forward, because it was worth while to assist with the coming out of a willing spirit.

Elouise same as Elvira had inherited the talents of Mynona and Sam. Elvira was too young to judge the quality of such inheritance, but she showed enough aura, and convinced all who employed the other way of seeing. In

the proper circle she would surely find her way, Tibor, - the old Dean of the Sublimations - reckoned.

She was still young and should take her time with that basic course, and might do better by picking up with the regular school stuff.

Out there a lot didn't exist, she now had to deal with every day. Adults don't even notice, but a child had no other idea of the world, and took for granted what was to be seen. Perhaps metropolises didn't look all that different, while laptops out there in space also paraded up and down the narrow tracks between the crop and cared for the well-being, same as in the cities. While human beings didn't show up either place, or if they did in the cities, they hid in sedans and gliders. Not to mention animals which could scarcely be seen in either location.

The critics of the modern way of life even argued that the changelings had been better off out there in space, than most of their peers in the metropolises, while interacting with livestock and pets. While the city-kids did schooling and had class mates, though. Such a view neglected however the terror of the evil spirit who had taken command over the poor little ones outdoors in space.

Thus it was great luck for the changelings, that their characteristics became exchanged as soon as they touched the ground. Still they didn't managed with mates and peers just like that, but had to learn first, by gaining acceptance, as city-kids were no angels by nature.

That was why there were votes in the heavenly board of the 'Enterprise Changelings' who questioned the total exchange, because it made the Changelings weak and vulnerable in the struggle of existence, so they reckoned.

"You need a healthy mix" South-Michel recommended, who'd entered the scene with approbation by the Advisor. While the just shortly ordained Hans Henny Henne, as well as his pal Anonymous, - as experts for earthen affairs - held their chairs likewise.

'Enterprise Changelings' was one of the most important results of the newly altered law. Those in favour of the law stood behind it as one man, while sceptics warned of excessive actionism. For them the whole package of the law wasn't yet ready. Too many loopholes there were, and some experts even doubted the sense as such.

Their opposition was not guided by piety for the mean banned creatures who lost their home, but doubted whether the radical negation solved the problem. For them the promoters of the law were idealists, who shied away from looking reality into the - more or less - mean eyes - by the motto - 'what I don't see don't bother me'.

The Advisor lead this faction (as couldn't be else), while South-Michel claimed for himself the solid ground of the naked facts, and felt in alliance with the former world-citizens.

The Advisor's followers consisted of Arch-angels and some minor Saints, who lost contact with their decendence, and were worshipping below the feet of the heavenly father for thousands of years, but never put a foot back on the ground. That was why Anonymous had become Emperor. Facts wouldn't make sense otherwise. There were loads of other aspirants worth such an enormous honour.

Malicious Marduk had been a real Isnogood, no doubt about that. But then the big BUT came. Who never tried to realize his self on earth, wouldn't know better. Not everything that Malicious Marduk had done was wrong. In order to have fun and enjoy life, while an accomplished life was the cause of life over here. Even the Advisor wouldn't be able to come forward with a better reason. While he certainly had a trump in the sleeve – the old trickster. This was what South-Michel suspected, and there were good reasons that he was right.

Malicious Marduk was creative in a way, and had great potential, the board of judges had to admit. First of all the idealists, who condemned devilish activities, no matter whether there were sense in it or even creativity.

And now such a brilliant idea of the rascal! Had the Advisor (i.e. the Law Control Panel [LCP]) not counteracted immediately with those changelings, who knows what had happened.

The tracking of the hidden left-behinds of the eager demons turned out to become tricky and most difficult. Most smelled the attack beforehand and built up barriers, by forcing the parents for joining a mars mission, the parents would certainly never admit. For the control panel they were of course all volunteers. In contrary the OKdM favoured such settled crews. By experience real couple were by far better then mixed singles on such long-lasting voyages.

Those were out of range for the board of judges. Mothers to be didn't admit their conditions before departure, and many weren't pregnant yet, the LCP was unable to spot the demons. When the LCP became aware what was going on, it was too late. You couldn't get off a Mars Mission. Definitely not during the journey, when the astronauts were put into an artificial coma, while mothers were woken up for delivery, of course.

Mars was by law no part of the earth, but part of the intergalactic sphere, because no own culture or civilisation existed, while the fall the demons had to absolve was defined that way, as punishment for continued

misbehaviour, and for the manipulation of the time-scale.

“That’s how it starts” South-Michel objected – “they get punished for something they do not deserve. You should have noticed beforehand, now it’s certainly too late!” But was that so? South-Michel didn’t always stick to the truth!

The Advisor was upset, nonetheless. The meeting was a complete failure and he would have liked to leave, as he often did, but then South-Michel would take the chairman’s seat. Before that happened, he would carry on, and so he did.

What could be done for the poor beings far out in space, who would grow up unchanged? A devil’s army would rise and couldn’t be helped. While times were crucial anyway with all that Pandemia disease and long term consequences for generations, and mankind was on the verge of conquering space by means of new technologies. There were enough problems already. Even the Mars mission wasn’t all that safe.

It was too late now the LCT (Law Control Treaty) reckoned, - bitter verbal warfare amongst the wings of the panel kept them busy for the rest of the night.

While little monsters terrorised their poor parents undisguised, and out of control. Avoiding any form of collision with those freighters, because such would lead to the breach of the mission at once. And that wasn’t wanted. The evil kids should grow up uncontrolled and beyond earth.

Such unchanged Changelings could build hidden hides on undiscovered planets or space islands. One day, when devil’s legion was prepared and ready for action; the time then would come for a rehearsal of the final battle, and this time, the chief demon, Malicious Marduk, ascertained his entourage, - this time the dark side would win.

Meanwhile the poor parents suffered from the cruelties and the meanness of their offspring, and the older the kids became, the more the parents suffered. Malicious Marduk’s aim was to involve as many Miseriors as possible to catch space-ground under their feet, while he risked to lose them for good. Because as soon as such little monsters set foot on the grounds of earth the changeling became re-poled and a little devil became a nice angel instead. All meanness became goodness. And the Miserior was lost for hell for ever.

Had those Miseriors known what blessings there were, they might have changed sides voluntarily right away, but they didn’t and couldn’t be convinced either. Thus their being - fetched by their master - was quite something for them.

In vain the far away LCT members in their heavenly resort mused of contacting such weird beings. Not even the Advisor had an idea, nor had South-Michel, not to mention the Arch-angels, who could only wave about with their inflamed swords at the entrance to paradise. But that was it then. They didn't see trees of Good in the Wood of Hood any more, or the crumbs of light in the dark ocean of evil all around.

Yes, the heavenly order urged for reforms. But where to start?

“We depend on what's going on down there. Since that last fundamental revision we are bound together as an ecological interdependent total system. Perhaps someone failed, or the development went astray later. Fact is, if they don't manage down there, we look rather old up here.” The Advisor sniffled thoughtfully and audibly, and had all members of the LCT cock up. Is he pitying poor mankind, after all?

South-Michel grinned, but unnoticeable. He didn't want to raise unnecessary emotions against him. The Arch-angels stood in stoic ease and leaned on their swords. They waved their wings for air. Those swords emitted quite some heat. That wasn't favourable up here in the well-tempered surroundings.

They felt drawn outside where the cold winds of hell passed and where you could see those Miseriors tumbling. A rather funny view. At last they experienced the horror in person, they used to spread so generously.

Arch-angels were no deep thinkers. Thinking was not their occupation. With them it worked a bit like with the limbs of human beings, which do not think or act on their own, but depend on the leadership of the brain.

Despite the limitations Malicious Marduk still managed to keep his Miseriors away from strange influences. They obeyed his commands as well, while falling, and the heavenly voices didn't get through to them. Thus the heavenly choirs could sing as loud as they could, and hammer on cymbals, strike harps, or blow trumpets inviting for the great feast of mercy.

Malicious Marduk made their point quite clear: they were the condemned, the desperados and outlaws. By that he managed to raise their pride. Such misfit-image was also good for an identity and a durable one as well, as could be seen. Despite that uncomfortable free fall, where each Miserior experienced the deepest loneliness ever, while such identity still prevailed.

“Salve Caesar – the damned greet you” was to be heard by far louder back, so the heavenly choirs failed their tunes and couldn't be heard out here, or if a Miserior who passed near by learnt part of the message, then the big boss turned his speakers on, and had the heavy metal inferno roar that you felt your stomach vibrate. Thus the spheres interrelated almost on the

same level.

Up here in heaven such technical gadgets were unknown, synthesizers and the like out of the question, not even light-shows were employed, while light was substantial up here.

Since Blues and Gospel parted, the strands went astray, and the further the harder, as for the Blues' side, being blamed to be devil's music, though, while the mainstream of a negative de-sublimation passed the cruelty of a freed society on. Malicious Marduk sucked in all such evil aspirations all too willingly with various addictions, drugs and sexual exploitation. No Blues was found here any longer, of course, not even the straight Rockn'Roll or the Cannabis-swaggered Reggae – a last trial, which failed to cross the roads of the Lord for once.

The LCT commission had no answer for those falling Miseriors, and couldn't stand the challenge, but Malicious Marduk could. He felt, what his disciples felt and grabbed of the least straw on their behalf, and that was the deal with the unborn.

The procedure was simple enough. You had to mingle unnoticed into the intimacy of a couple and were back in business as a Miserior again. Only solid grounds you had to avoid, that was it. In order to do so, you had to be careful and hide your true being, while the human child grew up. As soon as the proper age was reached, you were destined for the devil's legion somewhere out there on a hidden space garden patch or a left behind space station, or even a small planet or moon, where training camps and military bases were formed for the last battle, that is, for the very last battle, as the previous one was lost, but the coming one wouldn't.

Spies of the LCT mission strove through universe, when heaven had learnt of the threat, and did discover the one or other camp to mark it on the strategic map of the counter-insurgency.

First there were but a few marks only. But with the years the quantity grew, but couldn't be helped because of the law, while such manipulations occurred at the edge of legality.

The chairman of the commission was helpless. In the commission he wouldn't be understood. The opposition around South-Michel was strong and would have liked to dismiss him better sooner than later. But as he was forced to endure, he stayed, glued to his chair, so to speak.

So the Advisor – perhaps for the first time – asked somebody from earth, who hadn't yet ascended, but bravely kept the stand, so it was. And whom would he have liked better but Arundle, his long-term mate in the struggle for salvation, he still could see ahead.

His optimism seemed somehow enforced by now, the opposition around South-Michel reckoned, who hadn't yet forgotten the defeat, while reconciliation didn't really happen, because the Advisor felt no guilt.

23. The LCT-Commission

South-Michel and the Advisor pulled on the same string, therefore they were seated in the same commission. It couldn't be otherwise. But they had different ideas and drew different conclusions. South-Michel insisted on his **materialist perspective**, while the Advisor claimed the **general perspective**. Each now insisted that he saw more and better than the other, and could consequently come to truer perspectives in any detail.

Without question – here was mediation required. Would Arundle be the best choice for that job? Was she not already the Advisor's bridge-head over here? And did she not owe South-Michel's confidence likewise? She doubted as far as she was concerned but was certain about Tibor, her friend. As best friends, they were miles away from the childish quarrels of the commissioners, and seemed pre-destined for an advising role, as was foreseen from above. Both were experienced, though. Emamus hadn't been threatened by a falling Miserior, but his Trollic ambition he practiced when young, was much alike.

His mother Arundle was also affected, but indirect via Elvira, her grand-child. And she thanked fate for the wink, that initiated the salvation of the little family by getting them down to earth.

Thanks to the 're-polisation' of the Miserior, Elvira became a nice and neat little girl, who tried hard to overcome deficits and making friends. She still felt drawn towards adults, but didn't avoid peer-groups any more as she had done in the beginning, with the new attitude.

Her grand-mother Elvira liked best, and vice versa because Arundle never experienced the mean beast Elvira used to be back up on that space garden patch. While her parents were still unable to overcome such bad memories.

'Re-polarisation' seemed to be the answer against the late upheaval of the dark side. That was why the Advisor wanted to set the lever right here, while South-Michel was looking for an entirely new approach, in view of the fast growing legions of hell.

"After all", so he reckoned and thought it an advantage - the last battle

would not been fought on earth. “That’s quite something, isn’t it?”

Such appodictive statements stunned the Advisor considerably “What makes you so certain about that, dear colleague?” he asked in a mocking air. South-Michel grinned, but didn’t show. The Advisor stepped into the trap. Once more you could see that the materialist perspective was better and made things clearer than the Advisor’s general perspective.

The last battle would be fought in intergalactic spheres. That was the idea. This time the earth would be spared. The question was now a very tricky one, wherein the earth took part with a crucial role. By adding two and two together you ended up with a stunning solution that had to do with that dubious ‘re-, or de-polarisation’.

There was something most important which the Advisor couldn’t see, no matter how hard he tried. And as this was so, he began to gather angelic legions, just in case, while urging the commission to have a second amendment prepared for that law in question, and see, what could be done on the legal and juridical side.

What the general perspective didn’t show, was a very simple fact. If you had that in mind, the last battle could be avoided, and a wholly new order could be established at the same time.

“Fact is” so South-Michel began “the last battle had to be fought in intergalactic spheres. “

“Why that?” the Advisor asked.

“Well, as soon as the troopers of the dark side set foot on earthen grounds, they become ‘re-polarised’ i.e. they become turned helter skelter, vice versa, and upside down all in one. - Mean devils become nice angels, though. That’s in short the side-effect of your law, which turn out to be a good law, after all, despite all those shortcomings and loopholes, we argued about already at length and in detail, while didn’t see what dangers were coming up...”

South-Michel sank back into his seat with a gentle smile on his face. The Advisor was certainly not amused. South-Michel was right, all he said was true. “The chair is yours, dear colleague” he said and stood up to leave for a back-bencher stool. While on the way, he said to himself that he could have noticed by himself, had he not been sitting so proudly above all with his general perspective. In fact it seemed easy enough to lose a closer perspective, as South-Michel claimed his own.

He was, after all, prepared now to admit errors, first of all such which shouldn’t have happened. As the first custodian he should be familiar with the law. How could he be in charge of something he didn’t quite understand?

‘Re-polarisation’ was in fact a major effect of the jurisdictional amendment. The whole reform stood and fell with it. Without doubt it had been made for the protection of the earth, and while it began to work by now, the keepers of the law had to become aware of the consequences deriving for the universe.

No-one in heaven had thought of such clever strike on the evil side. Whereas it should have been clear that such helter skelter business couldn’t go on for ever.

The conflict had only been postponed. And now after a long period of time (seen with earthen eyes) an evaluation seemed adequate. Was the outcome worth the effort? Had paradise returned on earth – or was on the march?

Such were the questions the Advisor was busy with, but had no answers. Others might be challenged, who had their ears closer to the pulse of the earthen reality.

Arundle was without question favoured by the law, by saving her grand-daughter by means of such law – after years of sufferings and with great effort, though.

That was why she had to disappoint the Advisor, who had expected her whole-hearted agreement. Of course, Arundle saw the advantage of the law, without which the little family would have sunk into agony and destruction. Their lives would have been destroyed, they would have lived in vain – broken, disappointed, without happiness or sense, hardly other than those Miseriors while tumbling from nil to naught.

So far – so bad. When you took another perspective, and that was the Advisor’s after all, things looked different. While no-one gained from the sufferings, the world hadn’t become better. For sure not under the whip of the pandemia and the consequences for mankind. Such the Advisor had to admit.

“Without malice” so Arundle told the stunned Advisor “mankind isn’t wittier in handling each other or nature, or the circumstances of their lives.”

Clear and straight Arundle gave him a realistic out-look, and made him wonder. Even South-Michel couldn’t have been more pointed. Yes, truth can hurt. He now found out all by himself, how the world really was, he was responsible for.

“You certainly found means of handling such plague, and have taken counter-measures, and found a suitable solution” the Advisor put in, somewhat timid. Arundle had to agree, upset as she was:

“...doesn’t mean a thing, in order to escape the pandemia, the whole

mankind will have to alter their way of life, first of all nutrition, but that doesn't work from one day to the next. With the pandemian long-term consequences our children's children will have to deal, still. And that's only one of our problems. Now that we approach immortality, we realize how precious a good life is. Failures are the rule, not the exception. I could go on like that. The worst and the meanest with your law is, that we are limited to the earth, while the dark side governs outside. That is our biggest problem with such a law. Therefore we would appreciate more favourable conditions. Perhaps with some more tricks like the late g-propulsion to be better prepared in handling distances, i.e. the meanest enemy of life in a way --- but otherwise..."

Arundle went quiet, somewhat uneasily. She was bewildered as well about her plain words, and she pitied the Advisor, as she saw him looking like a wounded prey, but couldn't take back what was said.

When South-Michel got similar information from Tibor, who didn't like all that fuss either, the two squabblers found themselves sitting in the same boat, so to speak. And with them were all the Arch-angels and Saints and other entourage. all at their wits' end. What should be done with such law, that turned out to be rather unripe and out of balance? Were you allowed to skip it? And what would that mean for mankind? Would the dark side not beat back in plain wrath and take bitter revenge for the suffered outrage?

Taking into account all that, there was no space for more than a mediocre novelette of the law, considering the problems of astronautics on the one hand and a limited 'raison d'etre' i.e. the right to live – for demons.

A soft winding verbalisation had to be found, which would no side allow a straight forward claim. A real task for jurists and Privy Councillors, a few of them had managed to pass the hurdle of entrance, while most hadn't done so lately, so that their outdated knowledge was by now little more but trash.

Some of them joined the commission anyway and fiddled about until they came up with a proposal.

Meanwhile, so was said, the old law co-existed, as far as it didn't oppose the novelette, which was considered as the worst case, while astronautics and intergalactic intercourse became exempted to the furthest possible extend.

"Decisions must be found case by case. We've got to let the dark side endure, but can lower or increase the price for worst cases, though" - the Advisor concluded, turning to the leader of the opposition during a final meeting. South-Michel agreed in general with the purposely found vague verbalisation. But suffered from stomach ache nonetheless thereof. Such

aches he intended to share with the Advisor soon. Perhaps there was a suitable occupation coming up for measuring their powers.

Such basic alterations weren't transmitted to mankind one by one, and face to face in general. Only a few would have been able to stand such revelation. A few had to be picked, to become involved in such secret knowledge and the legal aspects in heaven, no matter how complex or even inexplicable they were.

The Advisor exposed himself to Arundle, and so did South-Michel to Tibor. And the two were now challenged to bring into line both sides into a reasonable correlation, which was no easy task. Therefore Arundle visited the Advisor regularly again. And South-Michel opened up likewise for Tibor, whenever the latter managed to get hold of him, which was seldom enough.

Such a development was by no means a trustworthy enterprise, as far as heavenly wisdom was concerned. After all – so both sides agreed – was the intergalactic endangerment for well-trained and skilled astronauts not bigger than on earth, while the law was more or less the same everywhere. By demanding to keep the evil as low as possible, without hybrid seduction, by intending to erase (a delusion lacking a sound base, though.)

The adjusted novelette now said that any criminal would be banned, who gained satisfaction out of his crime. By that the novelette didn't differ much from the novella before the adjustment. Serial killers and rappers had been the most disgusting criminals anyway. A novelty might be that satisfaction gained from betrayal, falsification, torturing, and all other forms of imperial prostration fell also under the same category by now.

This was the pragmatic approach the LCT-commission favoured, when presented by Arundle and Tibor, who both knew the conditions on earth. They were concerned enough to realize what living conditions would look like, if the novelette was wholly deleted. On the other hand they saw the astronautic aspirations in danger, as soon as all evil activities came back to earth, as had been the reason for the novelette in the first place.

The crucial question was, if mankind was able to exceed the narrow bonds of being, without such negative impulses. Most inventions in history served military demands first. Man was most constructive when searching for destruction. Most progress based on destructive regress of the worst kind.

The challenges ahead were by no means hypothetical. If man wanted to keep up governing, the sense of evil would certainly be of help, while artifacts as yet lacked negative impulses.

Such of their musings sounded somewhat strange, Arundle admitted, while Tibor referred to his blood-thirsty ancestors he had in mind, who performed great deeds by conquering Asia and Europe. The pathos of killing

and of death was certainly no minor drive of evil.

Arundle didn't want to go that far. For her the remaining sources of evil were by no means less dramatic, even tragic in the result. Thus she reckoned that the little appendix of pleasure that was added to the broad stream of agony, wouldn't add noticeable substance.

She argue somewhat unselfish, though, Tibor realized. What had happened if Elvira hadn't been the changeling she was, what would have happened to the little family, without such 're-polarisation'?

Arundle answered, when Tibor confronted her with such question, that she wasn't prepared to deal with hypothetical musings, but would certainly employ all her existential knowledge.

"Chasing Miseriors is certainly a most important task of ours. While you certainly always run risks, when doing, but we did our best, didn't we?"

Tibor couldn't object. "Besides" Arundle went on "Changelings remain changelings. As soon as one sets foot on earthen grounds it becomes converted. The satanic legions out there are therefore limited in their range of action. Should Malicious Marduk really look for having the final say, then he had to do this on a heavenly battle ground i.e. on the final field of honour. There he had to deal with those Arch-angels, who had means in the back-hand, you wouldn't dream of."

"Sounds good to me" Tibor answered and went on: "the novelette turned out to be not at all that bad."

"Exactly" Arundle went on: "Before things vanish in heavenly dusk, unreachable, I would appreciate if we managed to trap those satanic legions somehow. We have to find a way to ground them, without letting them know. Because I don't believe that they would change sides voluntarily."

"Don't say that" Tibor objected "Think of Anonymous and the power of love. When he had to admit, that life without love is not worth while, he changed sides right away. Today he is one of the most reliable disciples – not only because of the remarkable carrier of his, though."

"If such grounding worked, Malicious Marduk would lose all his power for once and had to start all anew." Arundle had a wholly new perspective in mind. "Good old Earth gets a new task, if it works..."

"What do you have in mind?" the Advisor wanted to know, who certainly cocked up while following the flow of talks, by entering the scene secretly and unforeseen. At the same time South-Michel erected his oversized dwarf's-head out of the underground and did likewise.

The outlook of having that bitter goblet of war pass by, alerted both of

them utmost, and had them bury their quarrels to a certain extend for the time being.

“At best we managed to bring heaven down to earth. Would do earth good and the battle was won before the war started anyway likewise, though. The question is what consequences would derive thereof, for heaven and of course also for the earth. It’s kind of an old dream of mankind, though. Question is, whether man is ripe by now for that..”

“Ripeness is a matter of perspective, I’d reckon” the Advisor swayed his head thoughtfully, while South-Michel nodded eagerly: “They’re certainly ripe, while immortality is closer than ever. What else has to happen?”

“What about the way of life, nutrition and all that, and the disastrous handling of nature. They are miles away from the target. Such Pandemia didn’t fall from heaven, though, if I may say so. Troubles are home-made, no doubt about that.” – was the Advisor’s reply.

“And that’s not just metaphoric?” Tibor wanted to know. “Bringing heaven to earth and all that..”

South-Michel and the Advisor looked at each other, the one grinned wittily, while the other smiled mildly. ”By law is nothing yet regulated” the Advisor answered. What that meant they now noticed by the efforts of withdrawing in part the novelette, the LCT-commission had to deal with.

24. Hans Henny Henne’s Second Descend to Earth

“What would the other option be?” the Advisor asked Arundle – “let heaven remain where it is, for the time being” he added just like that.

“I did think quite earthen on betrayal and ambush” Arundle agreed. “We do, as if earth wasn’t earth, but a heavenly battle-field. And when those legions of evil march on, they become re-polarised. It’ll work so fast, faster than any chief-devil can react.”

“And how should that work?”

“Hans Henny Henne has construed a mal-factorial declination for the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, so no vehicle, be it by air or on water is able to recognize the location, where it is, but somewhere else. Its like a fata

Morgana though, got me?” she looked around triumphantly then went on “If we manage to handle the whole earth like our island, and have it moved elsewhere – that is in fact misguide to proper location by simulating another ground, which should then certainly be a heavenly one, we should be able to cheat them all. But Hans Henny Henne had to return to earth once more, as he is the only one who can handle such tricky stuff – the propulsion of that enigma crypto-clearance or what ever – as I said, we couldn’t do without him.”

The Advisor was excited. He hadn’t reckoned that things had developed that far already, and so was South-Michel. Digging in the underground was his thing, that was clear. Even on the Isle of Wisdom tooth there was that secret tunnel, nobody was allowed to enter. While deep inside a secret machinery was humming, that produced the energy for the secret umbrella by which the island became invisible, and also disappeared from the radar screens, to pop up elsewhere.

If that deal would work, the Advisor was saved. So he hoped that Hans Henny Henne would manage to clear things the way he just learned, and lead the legions of the dark side astray. But first of all the trap had to be built. How did he now feel ashamed for his bad feelings towards South-Michel, who surely managed well with his pragmatic approach, no doubt about that.

To have heaven come down on earth, it was far too early. Everybody might see now. All the more so, as one of God’s angels had once pushed forward already, leaving behind the impression of an unnecessary yokel’s sacrifice, while later much effort derived in order to compensate and generate sense in the aftermath. While mankind didn’t progress adequately, but somewhat in slow motion, while eager spirits hustled like mad. By that the difference between reality and desire became deeper and bigger, instead of less.

Such a bath in the plenitude, no matter how small and limited such was, made you feel much better, the Advisor and South-Michel confirmed to each other. They had their little conversation at the party Arundle arranged for her little grand-daughter after the ‘Re-Polarisation’ was fruitfully completed.

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Hans Henny Henne productively descended down to earth. This time with some noise on a falling star, as he demanded. He also decided on the time. He circled around the globe several times in a red suit and with a red hood on his head, as well as with a white dwarf’s beard, who disguised him

completely. But that was none of his business, he didn't mind to becoming recognized.

Behind his falling star-vehicle hid a bottomless sack, from which he got as many presents as he liked to through them into the chimneys on earth. Unfortunately some caught fire. But where there were no chimneys – and that was often so – more often than he had thought, he threw the presents on the village square or into front-yards. But from up he had more fun. He fulfilled by that a childhood's dream of his.

Finally he landed close to the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, strategically seen. Over there Christmas was in summer with nice temperatures. Besides South-Michel and the dwarves were prepared to rescue him. For this time they had to do their very best, and have the deepest and widest tunnel ever installed.

Hans Henny Henne started right away with the construction. The task was clear and the SLOMES-Corporation arranged for the tools and the facilities near-by. His long-term comrade and co-producer, Judith Kornblum, being the Chief of Board, was in command of the necessary resources, an important precondition, without which their plan would certainly fail.

Thus the dwarves tinkered as they were used to do, assisted by the latest series of artifacts from the SLOMES-Corporation: i.e. self-induced drillers doing their best to proceed the task, while up on the surface wide-ranging plans were just made, as the object that had to disappear, was no less but the whole earth. Even with the very latest achievements, this task was surely something almost too gigantic, and so was the quantity of energy required.

The Advisor was told accordingly. He guaranteed the energy by raising a solar storm “But not the kind of fall-out as you produce, when skin and lungs get ruined, though” he replied.

The nuclear disasters were one of the reasons why the commission wasn't convinced of Mankind's ripeness. While the cheating, as was intended right now, was sanctioned by the highest authority, accompanied by the somewhat syllabic reasoning, that there is nothing without cause, no matter whether there is someone who finds out.

As if such had been questioned. While the cheating as such was the crucial point. If even heaven started with that, where would that end?

“My advise is that you familiarize yourself with the ‘modus operandum’” (operational mode) was the Advisor's reply, when Arundle insisted. As if she became slyer by such advice. For now she remained quiet, instead of insisting on a proper answer, as would have been better, the near future proved.

Time ran out. War couldn't be kept pending any longer. The legions of darkness hurried by from all spheres and galaxies to the virtual meeting points, where they kept hiding in the dark matter, unnoticed by the enlightened side of creation, but no less real.

While heaven couldn't be localized either, not in the positive sense of the visible galaxies, but was more like the secret Nanoverse and that Uncertainty Principle, whereas each thing conveys its anti-thing, at any likely location or time. – “Who ever tries to visualize such, risks his or her sanity, so you better leave.”

Cheating here, was hardest, and required enormous knowledge and loads of material perspective. That was why all relied on South-Michel, who became somewhat timid with all that pressure of expectation on him. Would he be able to cope? He would have liked to hide in the Advisor's shade for now.

Could the Nanoverse help? Judith Kornblum seemed convinced, that they could make it. She understood the functioning principle of the SLOMES, as far as it could be known. Therefore she looked forward and saw the impossible happen. The calculations of the quantity of energy that was required however, took her breath as well.

“Can't work” said her husband Peter Adams, the expert, when looking over the calculations. But comments of that kind weren't liked neither by Judith nor by Hans Henny Henne.

“Energy is unlimited the Advisor promised” they told themselves and their critics.

Such quarrels filled the tunnels and floors between the plant and the secret chamber. Busy beings hummed up and down, and back and forth on fast gliders or outdated lorries. None of the scientists worried or doubted the success, while being aware of the immense challenge they faced.

The Brotherhood of Infernalía might have felt that way, who once even managed to disturb the balance of the globe, Arundle told Billy-Joe, when they assisted at best they could the hectic inventors. In a way the Brotherhood came closer somehow. Arundle wasn't sure what she should think about that.

The Arch-angels came one by one with bad news. Out there something was building up. They could feel it, they said, and even taste it, so they reported. Olfactorial penetration of rotten matter and of sulphur offended nose and eyes. With special devices they managed to look into the dark matter, where things looked rather dark. How else should dark matter look like?

So the eager scientists – and with them all the Repetitors meanwhile – jointly faced the threat, but didn't doubt their counter-action.

“We do, what we can” Hans Henny Henne told his colleagues of the commission, who also gathered like all the others, being somehow concerned with the earthen affairs.

“They feel attracted by us, like moths by the light.” the Advisor referred to the assembling area of the legions. They must have had good reasons for doing it right here in this part of the universe.

“They feel us, no doubt about that” Anonymous agreed, who didn't want to be seen as Emperor here with all the entourage. He wanted to be, what his name said – a n o n y m o u s –

As soon as everything was ready and prepared Hans Henny Henne, the senior and Emeritus, signalled a final okay. Would good old sun be with them? For days excessive activity had been noticed. Once in a while strong beams flashed out into naught. No one had to worry about the quantity of energy, as long as they managed to fetch and channel it.

The Advisor had kept word. That was a good omen. Hans Henny Henne did the count down. His voice raucous and hoarse - then he pulled the lever. And deep down under – in far distance – his machinery began to work.

A fast unfolding umbrella popped up from underneath and beamed straight up. And where its shade fell, the ground vanished, like an Alka Selzer in a glass of water, but without bubbles.

Further and further nothingness grew. The night wasn't half over, when half of the globe was gone. And at dusk all globe was gone. Never had a night been so empty.

Where once the blue planet had been shimmering and shining, emptiness was yawning as far as the eye reached. The scientists on earth weren't able any more to see anything. Therefore those who had no magic means, were transferred by a shuttle.

The commission met at the virtual centre of the universe and all galaxies, to have a look on the great view of the earth's annihilation.

“And now we close the sack” a voice was heard – that made everybody listen. Where the earth had just been, now the virtual centre of all galaxies and universes appeared, and expanded to become the appropriate battle field for the final siege. From all sides the legions of the light marched by. The Arch-angels swayed their inflamed swords, the heavenly brass-band accompanied with snazzy tunes, while from no-where the legions of darkness slipped locust-like out of the dusk of the dark matter all over and

darkened the scene. The virtuel home kept still sinking, and covered the surface of the earth, which couldn't be seen however, although it hadn't moved, but was here and there at the same time, or vice versa either now-here or no-where as demanded by the Uncertainty Principle.

When the dark forces touched the ground to prepare for battle, old mother earth grabbed them and pampered the angry warriors with her big love, so they couldn't resist. Sooner or later, even the petty-officers got caught, except for some exterristic hard-liners under the command of Malicious Marduk, but gave in when surrounded by a band of angels swaying their inflamed swords threateningly.

The battle was done, before it started. The freed children of man wondered, when they found themselves at home, while the virtuel centre gave way and left.

Hans Henny Henne pushed another button, before he also said good-bye again. Judith waved with tears in her eyes. When would they meet again?

And the good old earth wheeled, as if nothing had happened right there, where she always wheels. The sun was just rising over the Southern hemisphere. A nice day full of sun welcomed the home-comers, with gentle rays. There were tens of thousands, who came home, though. It would take some time to have them sorted and brought back to their families, if at all. For the time being, they gathered for a grand open air festival and were happy, as can be.

25.Heavenly Swindle

“Listen to me, friends”. Arundle began “I would like to tell you a story, a very old one indeed, and an interesting one as well.

When the Israelite prophet Elia struggled with those Baal-priests, and his opponent Queen Isabel, (some two thousand years ago) - the holy spirit came over him and inspired him with a clever solution for his problem. How could he demonstrate, that his cause was the right one?

In order to find out, he suggested a kind of betting sacrifice. The sacrifice that became accepted, would be right, while the sacrifice that was refused, would be wrong.

Prophet Elia was alone, the Baal priests were not. They got prepared in no time, then jumped in dozens around the altar, which was loaded with excellent beef, and tried to convince their God.

Elia was all alone and had a hard job preparing everything, but finally made it, while those Baal-priests were ready for a long time. So he started late with the ceremony.

Wet wood hardly burns. That was why Elia poured some buckets full of water over the altar layed with piles of wood and the meat. He did that to demonstrate, that he had no chance to ever enlight his pile. Not even a flash from heaven would have helped.

The Baal-priests were looking for such a miracle. But no flash came from above.

While on the other side something happened. Small flames ignited, seemingly without cause and soon the wet wood stood in bright flames. The flesh was burnt down to the bones in no time.

That was the sign for the warriors in the back-hand, who jumped forward, sword in hand and killed the pagans one by one, and smashed their God to pieces all the same.

When Queen Isabel learnt of that, she became terribly upset, and Elia fled into the desert, where he repented the deed.

How did Elia manage?" Arundle asked and looked around into stunned faces, but no-one said a word.

"Well, I'll tell you. His God showed him the secrets of certain stones, which become hot in the hand or even ignite when stored with wet stuff. That was why he took such a long time preparing his sacrifice. He had to find such stones. He obviously did. The miracle worked. His sacrifice was accepted.

The Baal-priests had no idea of what was going on, had they known that the water was the key, they'd surely objected, but they didn't."

Arundle stopped talking. She looked around into open faces, whether they had an idea, what she intended.

"These days we know what kind of stones such are, thanks to modern chemistry."

"Oh yes, I know what you're talking of. That's Phosphor, am I right?"

Corinia put in, who was one of the crew again. “You find phosphor in more or less small lumps sometimes on the surface. Phosphor can endure in the dry Palestinian landscape for years, without any effect.”

Arundle told her story while the Repetitors met once more to rehearse the proceedings just passed and to understand the whole matter somewhat better – i.e. the eschatological battle, that couldn’t happen without opponents.

With her tale Arundle wanted to back up the swindle, that had been arranged with heaven.

The question was, whether heaven was allowed to employ such means. Were you allowed to work with tricks, and utilize technological knowledge, your opponent lacked? That was indeed the question.

Had those Baal-priests been as familiar as Elia had been with nature, they would have found out soon, and their sacrifice would have burnt likewise. Their quarrel would have ended peacefully, which would have been not the worst. Because Elia then hadn’t been guilty of mass-murder, and Jezebel wouldn’t have chased him through the desert. While his God’s supremacy had to be proved otherwise, by a burning bush or by heavy rainfall of mana, or the like.

As to Arundle, Elia’s deal had been righteous to the point, when his warriors came out of the ambush to kill the Baal-priests jointly.

Had he been content with the moral victory of his cause, things would have been fine. But as it was, he ruined everything.

“But lets stay in the presence. Nobody was murdered, not with fire and sword. –“ Arundle went on.

“Well” – Billy-Joe interrupted “such an re-polarisation is also a serious matter. Whether we like it or not.”

“Right” Tibor agreed “something became erased, no doubt about that.”

“We might find out of the dilemma this way” Dorothea put in: “You might know I’m no hypocrite, though. I can’t become familiar with the view of an old man sitting on his throne up there in heaven. To me its absurd and ridiculous. How can a spirit sit or enjoy covering with a golden hood on his non-existent head?”

“You’re right, alright...” the majority agreed, Dorothea hadn’t expected otherwise.

“We aren’t allowed to make ourselves a picture of HIM” Arundle tried the ease.

“still there are hundreds of pictures. People seem to need that...” Dorothea opposed. “But lets go back to our case, if we are allowed to call those events a case. We are not yet through with it, I’d reckon...”

Nodding everywhere –

“Allowed is what helps...” Billy-Joe said, just like that.

“Yes, that’s the hardest position, but with that nobody can make it, because it all too soon strikes back, and the devil salutes.” Grisella put in – and went on:

“From here it’s not far to the other position, Rousseau was confronted with, when the revolution turned the most evil way, and out came what was hiding under the surface.”

“Very right, such refers to him ... ‘thou may force the ignorants to be free’-“ Arundle remembered. Billy-Joe agreed: “My brother you don’t want to be – I chop your head, just wait and see...”

“Might have been valid with Elia, while culture was still young, but now with us...?” Arundle asked: “can cheat ever be good?”

“What’s cheating anyway?” Dorothea asked: “I think it’s important to differentiate. Knowledge is no cheat as such, but has to do with intelligence. Is not everything that’s done by human beings planned and thought over first?”

“Elia certainly knew, what he did” Arundle agreed. He acted targeted and success-orientated. The Baal-priests acted headless, one can say. They hoped for a miracle, that didn’t come, as it was against all probability.”

“The well-known flash from bright heaven” Dorothea added.

“But did Elia trust in God?” Billy-Joe looked doubtfully. “If he had trusted him, why did he need such tricks?” Was that the isolationist who spoke out of him?

“He’d been in close communion, though” Arundle put in right away “God offered him such tricks. God showed him the phosphor, first in a dream and then in reality. All he had to do, was finding and picking up those stones. And that was what he did.”

Dorothea agreed: “Hope, God liked his steak, though.”

Most of them thought the remark somehow unfitting. But otherwise...

A definite agreement was not in sight, as could not be expected with such an ambivalent theme.

“Let’s put it that way: When heaven cheats, then it in no fraud, because heaven never acts mean” Arundle tried to mediate, and summerize somehow what had been said. But Dorothea objected: “You are not allowed to turn around such statement.”

“Otherwise it would become a charter. Dictators of all times wished to justify their deeds that way...” Billy-Joe confirmed.

“So they say, but do they mean it?” Dorothea asked.

“Some might do, they talk and go on talking until they and their listeners are convinced” Arundle agreed: “But it’s still not the truth.”

“And is it the same up here?” Dorothea wanted to know.

“Of course not, you see what I mean?” Billy-Joe interrupted.

“There must be a true truth, not the truth people arrange, as it suits them, and as they can preach as long as they become convinced...”

“Are we talking of Adolf Hitler now – or what?” Grisella put in somewhat unmotivated, without raising much attention.

“You mean, we cannot accept when heaven deals with fraud. But how else can you win a just war? What lies behind us, was already an orgy of pacifism. What is there more beautiful as to conquer one’s foe by love instead of smashing his skull? Sounds to me mega correct, though.” Scholasticus put in, somewhat floppy, while the matter to him went astray. What was dealt as fraud, was not even a stratagem, but a cultural progression of the best kind. All the more, it had been announced. At least in part, while the highest chief-darkie, Malicious Marduk, had been exempted, though.

Scholasticus certainly knew what all was about. By means of earthen help the sky had managed to spirit the earth away under a magic hood, and the divine battlefield was put over the invisible earth, when the troops marched on.

“As the legions of darkness didn’t know where they really were, you could regard such lack of knowledge as a fraud”, Scholasticus went on – “If you don’t ask before, and got an answer, why the legions invaded. They did so, because they expected easy prey and an easy victory. While they ran into the open arms of the dear old loving mother earth. But was that so much different then running into the opened arms of heaven? Mother Earth had been hiding, that was true. Had she not been hidden, the darkies wouldn’t have come. So far so good! But what had they accepted instead? –

Well, you all forgot that. Who ever enters the intergalactic virtual centre of all universes and galacies, strives off all negative notions and rotten being, as if he gets rid of his pair of dirty shoes at the entrance, while putting

back on when leaving again, if there is still a way back. And that's not at all certain. Compared to heaven, the earth is still an apprentice in this respect. And if she is able to do that much, how much more is then heaven able to do?

Malicious Marduk miss-judged his opponent fundamentally. That was his biggest mistake. By that he and his troops committed the worst mistake. How could he dare to attack heaven, hoping for the final victory? Here the root of his defeat was found, and not by the stratagem of the earthlings, who wanted their children back. Therefore such stratagem deserved even the devil's respect. Which would be no plain compliment though.

But that was of minor concern for the time being. More important was, what happened to the defeated. Would they tumble in free fall for ever? Without halt, without target, without fun or comfort?

It seemed so. By their attack they didn't raise fun. But had been rejected by clever earthlings, and that was certainly no peanuts, so to speak.

By means of the devil's most favoured Chief of Staff, Generalissimo Malicious Marduk, the dark side had raised all powers and efforts, while in the aftermath it looked as if there hadn't been much. But if you reckoned the pile of sufferings in case of a victory, things looked different. Even heaven would have been shaken. While things seemed to be on the right track, and malice in retreat. Would have been a rude back-stroke otherwise, though." Scholasticus ended his long monologue. he looked around in long faces.

What had come to their minds was too vague and might not fit right here. Arundle was thinking of the power of love and of her father the Trojan who became turned around and had then been writing an epochal work that change the world.

"Yes, love, when true love, is always genuine" she said somewhat tautological, while no-one else said a word. But all agreed now and the waves seemed straightened. Scholasticus made it. The quarrel was done and settled for the moment. One reason might be that neither the Advisor nor South-Michel objected, but left the meeting unexcused.

Both knew how to confuse. One reason for that might be, that they looked at the whole matter of the world from entirely different points of view. The Advisor favoured his 'general perspective' of the Universe, while South-Michel the 'materialist perspective' via Nanoverse. Nothing could withstand the one or other, but couldn't stand each other.

26. Yoshele

There would always be back-strokes. All agreed on that. In heaven as well as on earth. So nobody had to resign or bow their head ashamed. It wasn't even certain, that someone had made a big mistake, neither on the commission's side, nor down here on earth, where the law had to be executed, because it was therefore made.

Still, the law was skipped for once. Or altered to an unacceptable degree, that you hardly saw the original intention anymore. The intention itself disappeared behind a wall of mist. While it was enthusiastically welcomed in the first place, with great thankfulness and pleasure, as a milestone of history, a grand work of historical dimensions, and of singular power and meaning.

The idea that malice had been mastered was stunning enough, but more so the consequences: in future no-one would ever be harmed by sadisms what so ever – what a great idea. By the law all accidents in future were what they were, and nothing else. Misfortune didn't raise malicious glee any more. As per law, nobody made them happen for their own pleasure. Nobody clubbed down his contemporary just for fun, or tortured an animal for excitement.

Such a state had been achieved and was contents of the law, which was almost too nice to be true. Therefore it didn't get far and didn't reach public consciousness. Because there the fear of the Pandemia governed and blocked other impulses.

**

Own grief doesn't make people less egoistic than greed. Still grief is not the same as greed. while similar in consequence, though. Mourners claim understanding and regard, and special attention, and demand empathy, which they tend to lack with others at the same time. So you can say that grief is another form of greed, and in a way, no less ugly and pernicious.

Such form of suffering isn't prostrated everywhere in the same way. And there are different characters as well. Some are less afflicted by grief-related egotism than others. But after all they cry their hurt out into the world as their own singular ache.

There are of course the sensible ones who suffer quietly and in the

hide. But those are only more adroit at handling, and might even be able to obtain that way real sympathy and allocation, for their noble behaviour. While the aim is the same, but the course is different.

There are many ways of gaining pleasure. Pleasure can be pressed into almost anything, as long as it is done with effort or endurance. The aim might be a painful lust. But what lust is ever pure? Is it not almost always accompanied by fear, and be it the fear of the threatening end, as everything has an end?

**

South-Michel arranged for a coffee-tour – as he put it, and as it was his custom it was done with a dainty song. For that he used to refer to themes the participants had in mind. For this time he sang:

“All has an end
But a wurstle has two
a wurstle has two
a wurstle has two”

The small group tuned in and up they went along the ray of time into the dawning morning for now, because they were heading eastbound. The aim remained however secret, so that nobody would find out. While inside he looked forward. He looked forward without bothering the harm, that might show up that way. He was looking forward legally, so to speak. As long as the law wasn't skipped officially, it was still valid.

Well, he wasn't sure. Lucky he, the Advisor didn't show up this time. That would have been it! - As if the Advisor had heard him, he showed up shortly behind the horizon in a cloud of dust, almost like a caravan of camels in the desert, perhaps.

It could only be the Advisor, South-Michel knew at once by intuition. Nobody needed to tell him, and nobody intended to do so.

What had he done without his friend Tibor in such a precarious situation? He couldn't sent the poor bloke back alone, who was plodding along as if dying of thirst, moaning like a maltreated donkey. 'What shall we do with such a wretch?'

“Can’t help it, he must come along” Tibor hived him up on his pony, he guided on the lead instead of riding high up mounted, as no-one else was mounted.

South-Michel argued “Everything he is spoiling, he ruins even the least fun...”

As the singing stopped, the tough grounding grabbed for the wanderers and they couldn’t go on without singing. That was very bad, because in the no-where-land were they were they could only go ahead, because the horizon behind them closed. It didn’t look good, though. Perhaps a sand-storm or one of these dubious time-slips, as they happen when the singing didn’t work, as right now. So it didn’t help but tune in on a gay song – and why not just the same as before? Main thing was the singing. It needn’t be beautiful, though, not even loud, however audible.

“Everything’s an end

Only a wurstle got two

a wurstle got two

a wurstle got two

Even the Advisor tuned in. Perhaps a little shrill and monkish, but loud enough. That stimulated the others and soon they went on. The feet stepped on their own. The pony without rider neighed (was that his part in the singing?) or did it enjoy its freedom?.

And there they were – in the so-called Holy Land somewhere in between the battling empires. A band of wanderers was approaching from ahead – didn’t look wealthy, though, more like Tibetan beggar-monks, except for the full hairstyle under the turbans and kerchiefs.

“Shalom Yoshele” South-Michel shouted somewhat plump and reached out his hand for the leader of the strangers, but couldn’t grab him. South-Michel had forgotten about the esoteric character of his appearance over here.

Somewhat irritated the monks surrounded the strange troop of untouchables from no-where. Such state might be the secret of the time-scale. The further to the end you went, the scale became thinner - all the more, and out came a kind of astral body, as angels use to have.

Without wings, as they were, they weren’t taken for angels though, but for dubious spirits. Which caused Pooty to stretch out his little head of the

pouch on Billy-Joe's chest shouting:

“Do not be afraid”

- and made the time-scale wanderers raise a Homeric laughter. While a few among them knew where this sentence belonged – fitting and unfitting at the same time – but funny both ways.

Indignation came over the desert dwellers and reinforced their suspicion that the strangers were demons. All twentysix women and men looked at Yoshele, who understood right away, and deeply bowed before the Advisor, while turned away from South-Michel, letting him know, that he should move off. He seemed to mix him up with somebody else.

Then he turned to the Advisor and excused himself and said: “Normally we are many more, but now there are dry times and beggary doesn't work well. The others swarm about the country looking for mana and nectar, or for ordinary bread as well, what ever they manage...”

“Ah” the Advisor answered and added telepathetically that Yoshele shouldn't say too much in front of the Philistines in his company. He put his arm around him and whispered: “...aren't no angels, though, you know...”

Yoshele nodded as if he understood. And didn't say anything anymore, but turned to leave. Not without an angry look at South-Michel, followed by all twenty six disciples, who did likewise, but failed in part. They'd work on that, Yoshele excused to the Advisor, when he noticed.

The Advisor was in Yoshele's good books, and was secretly amused for the mix-up that happened to South-Michel. – ‘Shame on him and his silly song, and the plump – “Shalom Yoshele” – he kept on thinking.

“The laugh is always on the losers” came to his mind, somewhat unmotivated.

He took the initiative this time, after South-Michel had been refused, and tuned in on an own song, that went like that:

“The laugh is always – tap tap

On the loser – tap tap

On the loser – on the loser

On the lo-o-ser...”

His song might have been a little less likely, but by grades more artistic, and that was good for the return-trip. If they wanted to do it before

the storm, they had to hurry. The sand was whipping badly and breathing was no fun, when the wind fetched the air from mouth and nose. That was why the singing was much thinner. But they managed just in time. Yoshele and his disciples had disappeared a while ago in a huge cloud of dust.

‘You can’t compare Yoshele with Poo Tzi and Walt Yo’ Billy-Joe thought, ‘but still’ – Pooty agreed whole-heartedly.

South-Michel was fond of dusty sites, no matter where he went. The set-up was all the same, Pooty agreed and so did Billy-Joe.

Their common weight came back and soon they stood where they had started, and shook sand out of their clothes. They hadn’t dreamed, or if they had, then it was a very lively dream, while sand was everywhere.

**

“It’s a pity. I expected more of the visit” South-Michel smiled somewhat upset, when Tibor addressed him like that.

“Why does he always interfere?” – he asked pointing his chin at the Advisor - and gave himself the answer right away. “It’s all his fault. Yoshele’s devilish mix-up clearly goes on his account. I’m sure of that” he said. “Was I all wrong - addressing him the way I did?”

“Who knows...” Tibor tried to ease him, while he couldn’t think of anything else.

All participants of South-Michel’s tour parted. Marching through the desert had been exhausting – almost like a kind of a jet-lag, so Arundle felt. They’d been marching half ways around the globe. Well yes - somehow displaced in a space-time continuum – still – the sand had been real, and still was real, even over here now.

“We should try again one day” Tibor said as he was entering the helicopter for Susamee’s Island, where he was at home by now more than ever since Emasus and Omirah, the most beautiful dwarf ever, stayed with them. For her Tibor had re-arranged his little subsoil kingdom by moving to a side wing. There he lived with Tika, who was back from the underworld after a long struggle. She was still limited in a way, but from outside she was in good shape, all damage was repaired. But the inner shortcomings weren’t so easy to be spotted.

While being alone as a widower, Tibor had almost forgotten how Tika ticked. And she didn’t know either, back on earth. Her rebirthing had been a

real one, and her former life still wavered behind a veil, almost unnoticeable and certainly untouchable.

Their matrimonial life had been no pure harmony, in that there was a change now. Perhaps Tika had become more spontaneous or more impulsive, and enjoyed the pure life just like that. After all, she still was a Shamaness and one of the best kind ever; being in command of powers other people couldn't dream of. So Tibor had at least two good reasons for looking forward of coming home.

**

Their number was at least ten thousand. Compared to the billions of inhabitants on earth, this was a very small number, while their fate made the difference to the rest of the world, and their interrelation was all too obvious. They became de-polarized, as soon as they set foot on the ground.

There they stood, disturbed and left alone and didn't know what happened to them. Having just been murderous warriors, they now became timid orphans, without orientation. They didn't know their parents or remembered them hardly, not necessarily because a lot of time had passed, since they ran away, but because their relationship had been badly distorted ever since.

All of them grew up in the isolation of space. No-one had ever seen anything else but a starship or space garden patch or devastated planets. If you met human beings then in space suits. While most contacts were with artifacts of all kind, which you could mishandle at best you could, and that was not very much. So the poor parents and the small number of pets in some cases were the only beings they could maltreat.

After a long time of trouble-making, misunderstandings and outbreaks of the most malicious violence a dramatic flight was put on the stage. Right in front of the door, so to speak, stood Malicious Marduk awaiting impatiently. He put the refugees to the army, gave them a weapon and had them train fighting. They still couldn't do, whatever they liked – for this had been the reason for the flight – but they were together with others of the same kind. There was no way back anyway. Instead there was a joint target: the final battle. For that they trained and spared their wrath. Until the day arrived. From all sides the troopers marched towards the band of angels guarding heavens gates with their inflamed swords.

With the first contact they gave way. The gates were smashed, the angels fled. victory was theirs.

Somewhere in the depth hidden under a double cloak a lever was pulled or pushed. It was like a flash of lightning, though. Hatred became love. Eyes were opened and the past history stood up in an instant. Yawning mothers waved, weeping fathers prayed, pets suffered and the subject collapsed.

Weapons flew aside, and what other armour there was. The raging warriors they had been, didn't exist any more. Ashamed youngsters could be seen sitting with heads in the lap crying. Angels kept wandering through the rows spending relief and giving first aid.

It took a good while though. The re-polarized then began to talk to each other, and wanted to find out what had happened and who could explain.

Their stories were much alike they soon found out. Some even made plans how things should go on, after such healthy shock. Would they get rid of that horrible uniform and the camp, even worse? And what about their parents, their former homes up there closer to the stars?

While the arrangements were re-settled, first parents arrived, who were looking for their children. And it took no hour until the first couple of thousands had been found and had left.

Those who wanted to remain on earth were offered schooling or other training. The School of Inbetween opened their doors for the qualified and Susamee gathered the young women in good hope.

For the time being the de-polarized could live in Laptopia, where meanwhile only artifacts remained. Thus they were together, but weren't packed in a camp. They could plan and organize their future without pressure.

Parents and other relatives passed by. Long no seen friends met. Some youngsters had left their homes while still under teen. For them the shock was hardest, and so was to their parents or grand-parents, who'd come to pick them up. (While some parents were on a Mars-mission and couldn't be here right in time.)

Those parents who got back a good-natured, decent little being were happier as can be, and so were their children, begging for forgiveness in tears, when they were closed in open arms and caring piety. All grief had an end.

**

Elvira came often downtown. She felt the need to do so – strolling through the lanes, and knowing about all those de-polarized around, who shared the same fate. They all headed for a new start in life.

She wasn't alone any more and that gave her strength. Inside she felt turned upside down, while a new unknown world was around her. She felt as if she was a dry sponge, eager to fill with what asked for entry, tempting with unknown pleasures.

All such bad imaginations had become exchanged. But spared cruelties, being no less exiting. What had been on the negative scale was now mirrored the other way round – a new no-where-land waiting for her.

So she went about amidst shiny eyes and open hearts. Seldom enough you met someone who was still busy in overcoming former deeds. Not all passed without consequences, but there were tracks of disaster and heavy loads you wouldn't get rid of just like that. A lot of repair work had to be done, though. Reparation was the key to forgiveness, although hardly done, while the effort counted.

At the end of such a road of pain (*via dolerosa*) a mild face might be smiling. And an angel might be waving piety for each and everyone became guilty. That was life, so they assured. - Nobody was exempted one way or the other.

Elvira felt freer by now. She could go on and face life again, or was it for the first time? She had been almost a child. She felt like a child sometimes, anyway. And when she did, she thanked her parents for all the love, and gave them back the love, she was feeling.

She could visit her grand-parents only in her dreams, who had returned to Christiania, where the voyage of their joint lives came to an end and the final port.

They could feel when Elvira knocked at the gate in dream-time and asked for entry. When they awoke in the morning full of yearning, they wished nothing more than to embrace their own flesh and blood, which was easy enough to undertake these days.

With the help of Edmond Elvira wrote down what she had experienced. Her booklet stimulated many followers. But couldn't be topped, and was a real best-seller.

Thus money was no question and Mynona took her Sam more often than he liked on a trip with one of those speedy stratocruizers. Sam still

hated flying, and the faster the planes became the more he hated them. Well, hatred is a big word. He might only dislike flying. But that was already enough. At least it was for Mnona, who was very different. She liked flying. For her flying was like the dancing with the winds.

For a globe-trotter Sam's disgust was somewhat unfitting. But what can you do? The secret of his longing for the wide world might be found in such a silent dismay. Similar to Admiral Nelson who disliked the sea-faring all his life and still became one of the greatest heroes at sea. The secret of his success might have been found in his overcoming of his physical weakness.

Sam was no Nelson. He certainly would have rejected to be one anyway. Such a hero of war was none of his business, all that bloodshed and you name it. Trafalgar to - Trafalgar fro. But he had to manage with those far distances, they had to overcome on their voyage without defined end.

Since Elouise had left them for that gardening job in space, both of them saw no need to remain in Christiania any more. But never gave up such reference, no matter how far abroad they went.

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There was no friendship between the two pairs of grandparents. They were too different. But some kind of acceptance, a kind of respect for another way of being. They were too far away from each other age-wise as well. Sam and Mynona never got entirely rid of the mid-western attitude, the way they spoke and even more important – the way they thought - not always but often enough when least expected. They didn't realize themselves, though.

Sam only needed to open his mouth when Billy-Joe would have liked to stuff his ears. Sam on the other hand felt a deep-seated racism tickling in Billy-Joe's presence, and that was even worse. Arundle still suspected Mynona to be the mole after all these years and after such a long time of absence from the Isle of Wisdom-tooth – “might be a sleeper, though...” she murmured, so only Billy-Joe could understand.

That was why the family-meetings turned out to be rather cool. And changed only as soon as one of the grand-parents had left, which everybody then enjoyed, without admitting, of course. The more so, when Elvira became older and used to the new state of being. Her enthusiasm for her new role as a writer and the new life on earth became used, and thanks to her special gifts, she was predestined for the School of Inbetween. Her bright sharp wits made her to outnumber others and often enough she felt bored,

when the person she was communicating couldn't follow her, as was the case with poor old Sam, who had badly suffered some time ago and hadn't yet been cured, or might not be able to regain his former capabilities.

She pitied him but didn't accept him. By that she came after her grandma Arundle.

27.Revelation

The task of the LCT-Commission was not an easy one. But no-one spoke of desolations any more soon, while the first experiences with the altered law had been a disaster. The text and the reality of that law seldom enough matched. What could be done? On the one hand you could try to take things for granted, and stick to the word, while on the other hand you could also try to understand and to judge the way the law was meant, which was by no means the same. The other difficulty was that you had practically no serious fines against offenders, because the law didn't allow any such satisfaction.

The law clearly forbade any execution of power, and any form of enjoyment or satisfaction deriving thereof. And that might already be the biggest mistake. There were no means available to succeed with the law. Who ever tried to do so, risked to become an offender as well.

There were practically no means available for pushing it through. You would have to punish the enjoyment of punishing. No strict answer was found on that. That was why some people thought that the law was not the paper worth it was written on.

But that was only one side. The other was, that life would be betrayed by a main drive, which couldn't be replaced otherwise. The makers of the law had underestimated such drive to a great extent. Arundle felt reminded of the break-down of the Soviet Union at the end of the twenties century, because the drive of gaining property had been underestimated, while striving for power alone wouldn't compensate, although such greed was followed with the greatest passion.

There might be a cross reference between the prohibition of private

property and the law as it was in question now, by prohibiting any form of joy deriving from suppression,

In communist China such vital problem of communism had been recognized. The Chinese solved the problem by letting capitalist desires prevail, as a motor for the benefit of the people. Critics meant to see in here incompatible contradictions. But facts spoke for themselves. The Chinese economy boomed incredibly already in the twenty-first century and overrode in the following decades all other nations, while nationalism lost attraction.

But back to the question of the character of national intervention: Was this just an interpretation or the directed offence by the authorities?

No definite answer could be found for China in this. That was why no definite solution would be found for this law, so the LCT-commission concluded.

What did that mean? Should the LCT-commission also work with such incompatible contradictions like the Chinese? It looked that way. Bettering novelettes were not in sight. No divine parliament met to discuss alternatives. As it looked, the law would prevail, only the disposition and interpretation was in question.

You'd have to differentiate between the motives in future, which moved people in general and the authorities in charge. To a certain extend the individuals had to decide for themselves whether they committed or offended that law. With one little difference, - would they find enough followers and supporters for their interpretation?

While people still couldn't read in each others souls, except for when they fell in love to each other. And this push might be sufficient for Mother Earth to go on for the centuries to come, and vaccinate the human beings accordingly. The legions of the dark side had been caught for once anyway, and that was a promising entry into the new times.

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Arundle wanted to know if it was possible to wander along the time-scale once more. For that she addressed to Tibor, who was deeply connected with South-Michel. Without the latter they wouldn't get far, Arundle reckoned. For Palestine a different melody was recommendable, though, as the one they sang the other day, and she wondered whether they had clearly understood the right way in lining up.

The trend might turn to the evergreens, while the Advisor hadn't been

able to answer with the purest profoundness. Instead of wondering in vain, she reckoned it far better to start off with South-Michel in the first place – if he'd agree.

South-Michel agreed but under one precondition, that the Advisor would either join them or quit right from the start, and would refrain from nasty comments as far as the person of South-Michel was concerned.

Neither Arundle nor Tibor or Billy-Joe had an idea of how to hinder the Advisor in joining them. Well, they could cancel the whole affair as soon as he showed up, Arundle suggested. But South-Michel didn't see it so relaxed.

“Who's on the trail, can't return just like that, as the fine gentleman seems to reckon” he said without reasoning any further. From the magic bow you didn't hear anything, and from the magic stone either, as if the Advisor and South-Michel had taken over their parts as notorious quarrelers.

As there were high expectations with regard of archeology Florinna wanted to join this time and so did her sister Corinia, who would have liked to see how Yoschele managed to go on the water. Whether he enabled his feet to shock-freeze the waters – that was the one variation, while the other was to lighten himself to the extend of a spider, so the tension of the surface would carry him just alike.

Both explanations didn't please the mystagogues, because they were too profane. So it was of advantage that mystagogues were scarcely sewn on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, with one exception and that was Moshus Mogoleya, but he was by now somewhat outdated. With some exceptions: Tika enjoyed mystics and so did Susamee, who often wandered about frightening Conversiors when being in the converted mode. She hadn't yet left her little empire, despite all her announcements. At least Tika was still in close contact, the more so, as she had returned from the underworld for a second chance.

Down there she had learnt to enjoy nakedness and felt a strong notion of adjusting likewise over here as well. In that she was supported by her former Mistress.

“Inf front of the children you do feel ashamed, don't you?” She didn't know were to look, while Tibor touched her naked back to ease her when he said fare well.

“There's nobody aound” he said and headed for the glider port. The vessel was gone anyway, besides it was faster that way, while the troop was waiting.

South-Michel was all in favour of the sisters Hare, because he favoured

the materialist view. He seemed to have consolidated his position and had the Advisor pushed into the esoteric corner, the latter of course dismayed. Nobody wants to be put into a drawer.

However firmly rooted they both were not over here and the iron facts of existence - for that they either had too good a perspective. "I hope the honorable Gentleman respects our humble objections" South-Michel declared somewhat sophisticated and had the magic bow to tune in on a joint song, and when they realized that nothing sound came to their minds they employed the magic stone, who certainly was of help by introducing a didgeridoo as were common among the Aborigines, while nobody would ever understand how he managed to do. The trumpet became long and longer and Billy-Joe was predestined to blow it. He certainly did so, and not only did, but really enjoyed.

South-Michel put the thing on his shoulder and asked Billy-Joe to step right behind him, by that he would be able to let him know the words and tunes easier. - Off they went! South-Michel tuned in on a wordless singing that fitted with the sounds of Billy-Joe. The others did their best to be heard, while putting foot before foot, one after the other and the horn blew like the trumpet of Jericho - less beautiful, but loud - certainly a matter of taste.

The desert resounded of the tunes and the ragged band of Yoshele's disciples felt the earth quaking, when the visitors approached with their mighty horn.

No Advisor could be seen this time. Nobody who rose false impressions instead of diminishing them. But Yoshele was not among his people any more. His time had come. That was why the visitors cheered up the mourners and raised their courage.

Such a wonder was just right for them. They were programmed on miracles and needed them like a thirsty camel needed water.

Their Yoshele couldn't be returned by South-Michel - not the whole one, though. That was why he gave them what was left behind.

"Better such than nothing" they resounded and all their despair was gone.

Yoshele didn't feel so strange - they were in a way of his nature - that meant, they weighed almost nothing, and didn't like to be touched either. Therefore he parted with great ado and asked South-Michel this time very politely, whether he could come with them, as they obviously came not from here. While this site had become rather awkward, and he pointed to the wounds all over his body outside in the sun - his flesh already somewhat smelly though, and was happy to have received such nice replacement. "It feels light, and its comfortable to wear."

“Isn’t it?” South-Michel agreed, who seemed to understand him, while the others didn’t quite know what his talk was all about, because they had no idea of an astral body of theirs, they were out here in the desert, after all.

This place you wouldn’t get so easily, while he had explained that to them so often that he was by now fed up.

“Let’s pretend to be really dumb” he said in a mocking air, when Florinna turned to her sister for advice. But Corinia was somewhat disappointed. Nothing but sand all over and no water what so ever. She had hoped to dive into the Red or the Dead Sea and had made arrangements the like, which turned by now out to be superfluous.

“Can we take him with us, just like that?” the magic bow gazed somewhat nervous over to the magic stone and back to South-Michel. But the latter just shrugged. He seemed not to mind. The magic bow almost missed the tuff Advisor with his general perspective. What’s it good, when that is the outcome? We just can’t take such a Yoshele with us. That might confuse everything. He is like a load of dynamite, though.”

“We could certainly use him” Arundle answered without being asked and Billy-Joe blew into the horn. Tibor remembered a Shanty from the good old days of Zinfandor Leblanc, who’d have been Captain of the first Last Bounty, and that went like that:

Blow the Man down Bullies

Blow the Man down

O, ho blow the Man down

O blow the Man down

In some Liverpool Town

Give me some Time

To blow the Man down.

Thus the travellers rocked arms linked – Billy-Joe on the left and South-Michel on the right, while Yoshele was in the middle - two steps up front and one step back - homeward bound. Everybody became more concrete with every step, while Yoshele didn’t, who behaved somewhat clumsy and obviously didn’t like to be touched in such a vulgar manner. Thus they slurped along the time-scale the other way.

They all wondered why Yoshele didn’t become firmer like the others,

but remained what he was: almost naked as if he belonged to the naked faction on Susamee's island.

“First we'll find some clothes for him” South-Michel suggested. But this turned out to be not so easy, the clothes wouldn't fit to his body. At last they found some kind of delicate veil which built-in.

“Better then nothing” the ladies reckoned, mainly for the children and tried to take off that ugly crown of thorns but didn't manage, so they arranged some flowers on top, which made Yoshele look quite handsome.

Sleep and nutrition he didn't need but a task. All over again he stressed on the fact that he was not of this world, but they all knew already. For him it seemed to be of the utmost relevance, that nobody ever forgot this fact.

The Repetitors wished to have him on their side, but when the heavenly CGT-commission heard that, they claimed him for themselves. However Yoshele insisted that such a commission wouldn't suit him. Things weren't yet that far. This world came first.

At that time he didn't know what the commission was about. It had been founded to bring new order into the life on earth and advance it to a higher level.

He didn't know either, that he committed an important support on the course of the world. Thus the Repetitors familiarized him with what was going on in that CGT-commission. They would come down once in a while in order to strengthen the earthen matters, which had fallen short in the past.

“Yoshele is going to strengthen our earthen wing” the Advisor gently commented. South-Michel had no seat in the commission, which annoyed him secretly. In his wrath he dug himself subsoil where the dwarves lived. He flashed and thundered down there and stirred up the merfolk, who didn't know what guilt they had laden on their heads and shoulders.

“An idol is also a man” he excused himself when asked by Tibor therefore, whom Corinia bothered in the name of Prime Minister Boetie, who was by now the longest governing Prime-Minister of Australis ever, which was no sign of a functioning democracy, besides she was the first anyway, after the revolution.

“By human measures we can't be judged down here” she argued, when critique came up whenever she was interviewed. Meanwhile the covers had become rather thin – at least in one direction. Down there they knew much better what was going on up there then vice versa. Hardly any one had an idea of the merfolk, while secrecy was a must. “That's self-protection” the Mistress of the School of Inbetween announced.

Therefore Yoshele fitted much better into the commission than into the team of Repetitors, all the more because the latter had fulfilled their tasks so far. This was how a part of the members saw it. Others around Arundle saw it differently. For them their task went hand in hand with the commission's. They understood the amended law as an answer to the arranged future, as had to be fulfilled, because it had been experienced alike in their past. No commission could alter, no matter how clever they were. When such future had been experienced in the past, then the future had to become exactly the like.

“Therefore” Arundle argued “future never appears only global but also in detail. And that makes the difference, no matter how important single characteristics of the future fit with each other. While as to my knowledge a novelletta of the law like the present one never occurred in the past,” she went on. But met harsh oppositon. “Yoshele had come only because of that. Otherwise he could certainly have stayed in the past. But no, he wanted to be with us, here and now with the Repetitors of the future. That seemed to him the relevant task.”

“If my coming makes any sense, it is that I can influence the future. And that’s what I’m going to do” he said and he spread his astral body as wide as he could in front of the assembly. The flowers in his crown of thorns vibrated of irritation. Was he cold under the thin veil?

Dorothea pushed her sister secretly. but then remembered that South-Michel himself had recomended and arranged for such gear. Everything else had turned out to be too heavy.

“After all – he’s able to walk on water” she declared. “The surface tension of water allows water spiders and very view insects to walk on water. We might have it to do with some kind of insect” – “Or with a spider” – Corinia put in, who liked the idea. “Well, yes, weight-wise” Arundle added, as if anyone had forgotten!

So Yoshele was in both parties – with one leg on earth and with the other in heaven. (If that is possible at all. Clocks in heaven work much different than on earth. In fact, time is of minor relevance up there.) They all had all time in the world up there, because they didn’t have any. A rather difficult paradox to handle. Similar to the Uncertainty principle or the quadrature of the circle. Something that’s excluding itself while still existing.

Yoshele had his ‘Sermon on the Mount’ in mind, so the novelletta of the law suited him very well. As soon as the ‘re-polarisation’ of Mother Earth was tackled, and she was no longer the firm grounds for Satan’s hordes, she would turn to paradise right away. That was all he wanted, and was meant in his announcement.

The reason for watering the law had to do with the dynamics which were needed to improve and better the world. Mankind required the dark drives. Only such were the necessary motives for them. There were others as well, but such were of minor importance. The seduction of salvation faded and gave way to the joys of evil lust.

So far – so bad! – Offenders and the juridical representatives of the law worked hand in hand, since that silent rebuke of the latest novelletta had become true, strangely enough, though. Although such opponents hardly ever realized, while they silently worked on the withdrawal of the latest novelletta, without much awareness.

Yoshele now wanted to speak tacheles with them and spread his clear light, because he had been unable to manage at home, though. There, slaves still carried society's work-load without any technical support on their meager shoulders. That was why the jump into the future did him very well.

How stunned was he when he realized how far mankind had come by now. What could all be achieved already and all the comfort deriving there of. Certainly there was a dark side as well. There was that devellish pandemia – some called it the punishing lash of God, others saw in it the indicator of the necessary conversion and a new start for each and every individual: “You’ve got to change; you live all wrong; truly, truly I say to you...” – and then he began a truly Johannan sermon. Yoshele was in his element – preaching was his cup of tea. And soon he was to be seen on every channel and in all media and even in the SLOMES programmes.

That was the kind of support the Repetitors hoped for. At last the battle against that pandemia speeded up. While Yoshele's words opened the hearts everywhere, and the healing went on likewise. The healthier the people became, the more important the novelletta occurred, because there was a big difference whether you lived in a world where the evil attracted and promised great joy, or in a world where empathy and love did likewise.

“Can we agree on limiting the advertising in this respect” Arch-Angel Gabriel (the most independant Arch-Angel) suggested in one of the following meetings of the LCT-commission.

“Right your are, I bear in mind the time, when the tobacco-advertising was limited first and then all forbidden.” Such measure reduced the smokers by some fifty percent” – Anonymous remembered.

“Fifty percent is not enough” Hans Henny Henne commented who tended to hit the nail on the head.

“Well, for the start?!” the Advisor objected.

“Would be just a start, and anyway an accompanying measure”

Anonymous confirmed.

Yoshele stunned about the way things worked in that LCT-Commission. All that without referring to the salvation of the souls. Not with one single word, though. And he realized how hopeless their struggle had then been. Only when you went to the roots, you had a chance. And the chance you had, when all whereabouts fitted, and that seemed to be the case here and now, other than with that Roman Empire, he had to deal with.

He all too well remembered his torturers and the joy they felt, when torturing him. Compared to that, change was all too obvious by now. The pathological character of such behaviour was publicly discussed. The pendulum might turn the other way, by blaming sadism and other forms of violence as diseases of the soul, just like plague and measles for the body. Which might turn out to be too easy in a way.

One thing the LCT-Commission had learnt from the debate and that was the senselessness of penalties provided by law. But how else could you enforce a law? There had to be good reasons for keeping to the law.

“Presenting the law in the form of a commandment might have been wiser, though” Anonymous therefore suggested. He felt stimulated by the latest level of the development.

“For that we need a clarification of terms first” Hans Henny Henne suggested, who couldn’t refrain from correcting his friend.

“You are right” the latter murmured, although he didn’t quite understand what his friend was after.

The Advisor on the other hand meant to notice a little uncertainty with his boss, and didn’t want to leave it unanswered. So he explained the difference between a law and a commandment in extenso: “The main difference is – a law forbids and a commandment bids” – he concluded, stressing on forbid and bid, so everybody got him for sure.

While the assembly became fully awake again by such pregnant words, who were almost fallen asleep while being forced to listen to the Advisor’s lengthy sermon.

“Basically everyone in here would agree, but the question must be allowed, how such a bid should be put. Besides it had to be lifted up into the range of the ten commandments, perhaps in exchange, while some in there are in fact no commandments but laws, and such had to be taken over to the law-side, then.”

“Had been extracted to have them prevail”.

“Right – among some four hundred such a law loses contour and

weight”.

“Thou shalt not steal – for example – is more important than – Thou shalt not boil the kidden in its mother’s milk...”

“I doubt whether it’s more important” Anonymous put in.

“A commandment depend on the NOT” – the Advisor carried on. “Where ever the NOT appears, we have to do with a law, while a law without penalty advice.”

“Well, you wouldn’t find such in laws of nature.”

“You didn’t need that in here. Who ever offends a law of nature realizes it immediately and pays with his life. Best example that everybody understands right away is the law of gravitation, whereas entities attract each other by the factor g , while the smaller one is definitely disadvantaged, so to speak.”

“All who tried with their own bodies can’t report thereof...” Hans Henny Henne felt at home in this subject.

“I hink we all understood. This point needs no further explanation” the Advisor was afraid of losing the thread. And so it was. Yoshele retreated confused and thanked his creator for the second leg on earth. Had he only known by then what it was like with those Repetitors. They were by no means better off than the LCT-Commission in heaven. Everywhere things were handled somewhat sophisticated, and malice lured behind a red line that was easily stepped over.

Intelligence was often a matter of cognition. Suggestions which suited to one person as intelligent solutions, tortured others as mean stinges, while lust depended on the view of the witness, depending on what sort of character he was.

Was it all the same, all over? The whole pursuit for happiness had to be reconsidered very basically, while the free fall was something clear and unquestionable.

Yoshele intended to speak about the theme somewhere else. He hoped for a better understanding there. Perhaps he was bound not closely enough to the earth, and couldn’ find his ultimate position. As others experienced before him.

“It’s a long way though, to harmonize both sides, to have things work earth-wise and pan-paradisiac everywhere” – the Repetitors brought forward somewhat self-assured, when Yoshele joined their meeting. They pretended to have the full over-all perspective in general and in specific, and would certainly not accept an either or point of view.

With his attempt for a theme like the pursuit of happiness, Yoshele pressed through wide opened doors, so to speak. All Repetitors of the Future in general, but first of all Grisella and Arundle stood in bright flames for the subject right away. They explained to Yoshele how the church had in his name maltreated sinners and pagans. In vain he objected that he wasn't really engaged in the ecclesiastical affairs of the church, i.e. the churches of the first and the second separation. He was nevertheless affected, when he realized his responsibility.

The talk of the blood had come from his mouth. The way he expressed himself had been misunderstood right from the start, and led to the worst mis-interpretations. However things might have taken the same course if he had expressed himself more clearly.

Somewhat helpless he referred therefore to his famous 'Sermon on the Mount'. Wherein things had been clarified and straightened out without doubt. But because of such clarity the sermon had been pushed aside and had been locked up, because it didn't fit into the frame his followers objected.

"They all arrange things as they need – right you are" he agreed vaguely.

"How can you fence in the exegesis? Who ever has an idea on that may publish it right away" he went on.

"You only ask such because you know that there is no proper answer" South-Michel objected.

"I wonder whether things had become clearer if I had written myself" Yoshele went on unimpressed.

Shaking heads all around indicated that such option seemed not really likely.

"That won't help..." South-Michel tried to mediate. He wanted to save Yoshele from a culture shock. To much hailed down on him unfiltered. While all knew how much had changed in the last two thousand years.

"Have a look around the world. Let show you what's going on and if you still enjoy writing, then do it like Anonymous did."

Just for fun, Arundle took him with her in one of those strato-cruisers, to help him get an impression for progress. They flew up North to the intergalactic Northern Space Station, because Elvira pushed to find traces of her parents back home in old Christiania. And Elouise didn't want to stay back, nor did Edmond.

Billy-Joe showed Mynona and Sam his Australian home, that was why he was not with them. But he would follow soon when Mynona and Sam

learnt where their grand-daughter was heading.

Arundle spared generously the magic bow. And because the latter didn't know her travel plans, he agreed. That was why he moved together with the human beings through steppe and desert sand.

Whether his presence would have changed things? could well be! The journey with Yoshele turned out to be more strenuous than expected. Yoshele was a kind of megalomaniac and that was why he always had the last word. His engagement in the heavenly affairs allowed such. No matter what the subject was.

He turned down everything that didn't come from his side and turned down the tamed forces of mankind or even strengthened on the old catholic mode. By that he didn't shine up in a glorious light. More so, when he suspected the stewardesses to imitate angels. But were in fact artifacts of the latest humanized type. The travellers enjoyed and - 'made flying more attractive' so the advertisement said.

Where-ever he showed up he expected to gather crowds in order to listen to him. And he was very disappointed, when they didn't. Sometimes he became really mad.

Arundle arranged an Aramaeic laptop he could trust, while he seemed to be afraid of writing. That was why nobody understood him, while he had only to speak, but that he could only do in front of a numerous audience. "...twenty and more" he said. Arundle replied somewhat bewildered – "I thought twelve would suffice."

A fierce look out of little black eyes was the answer.

In such a Strato-cruizer there were certainly more than twenty passengers – two thousand would come closer to reality, but they didn't care about the tiny thin man under the veil, who was flickering over the screen and hacked into the programmes unwanted.

In vain Arundle tried to convince him that there were in fact billions of spectators all over the world receiving his message. But Yoshele insisted on eye-contact and meant to be a master of mass-suggestion, which only functioned with eye-contact, he argued.

His travel-mates had a hard time with such a haughty busybody, who always wanted to run the show.

Elvira seemed to be the only one who had the nerve to cope with him, while she was familiar with evil spirits. She said to her family-members that they shouldn't misunderstand him purposely, only for being so great – the greatest in fact – filled with the Holy Spirit.

He should be seen on the same level as the Advisor, or even South-Michel in a way.

Elvira planned a new book and clung to the lips of the master therefore, whose words were like precious pearls, full of wisdom. Yes – Yoshele divided the people – either they adored or ignored him.

Gifted as Elvira was she put his sayings into marvellous words and came about with the deepest sense ever. Perhaps things were as she said: Yoshele was not as great a speaker as he reckoned. That might be his tragedy, because what he had to say was surely worth being heard.

“You’ve got to have a voice for that, with fair training. Not all of us have the voice of an opera-singer, though.”

Yoshele’s voice lacked of volume and capacity. Arundle even thought him unmusical. Otherwise he would have fetched a harp or lute as others did to present his hymns adequately, like his times demanded. But in front of Elvira or of her son Edmond and his wife Elouise, Arundle restrained herself. She didn’t want to stress the family-ties any further.

28.(North-) South-Michel

Elouise was mighty proud of such a daughter and showed her all around the places in Christiania, where she was at home by now. Many of the old friends and comrades had remained. Since that heroic battle against the Pandemia, Christiania blossomed, and had become the new Jerusalem of the recent salvation movement. So Yoshele was very right here. Fortunately Elvira was able to show him not only around but also to explain and spot the meaningful sites.

“I realized at once” he quickly responded, probably a little late though. But Elvira pretended to have not noticed. She loved Yoshele for his sermons and parables and for his very being. Yes – Yoshele split people: either they adored or ignored him. His disciples loved him and his opponents hated him.

From underway Elvira mailed the first chapters of her new book to her

mentor Grisella, who wrote back right away while staying behind on the Isle of Wisdom tooth.

The publisher was on board already. “There’s something in the bush, so to speak. little best-seller-author” Grisella mailed back: “This time we do the big deal... might even end up right next to Anonymous.”

Support like this did her well, but she also was self-assured enough to realize that she deserved it. Her reference to Yoshele had been very wise, though. All the more she wondered why Arundle and her parents remained so cool, who also met Yoshele in person. They probably didn’t feel quite up to the mark.

Arundle would have denied, if she had been asked. She saw Yoshele on the same level with the Advisor. So she was used to strange habits, when dealing with the latter, more or less. That might be it. Yoshele didn’t practise equality enough, because he not yet knew who he dealt with.

For him all humans were equal, no matter whether this was true or not. Arundle would have liked to be equal and so would Yoshele, but they didn’t know how. Equality was not easy to be achieved.

‘Equal all mankind was born, but everywhere they lie in chains.’ - As soon as you were in the world, inequality began. Thus it was strange with the human beings, though. And those who really wanted to be equal, were least. Arundle knew that and struggled hard with such fate. Without her friends and without Billy-Joe, she would have ended up like Yoshele or even like the Advisor, who both suffered from solitude. Yoshele might be all different with his original mates – and if not with all of them, at least with the innerst circle.

Arundle would have liked to meet the mysterious Maria-Magdalena in person. “Show me your friends, and I tell you, who you are” – she said to her grand-child just before she met South-Michel, who was hanging about in Christiania together with Billy-Joe, how ever they managed to be here. Something was just changing, she reckoned, or a Northern counter-pole came up, while there had to be some reason in fixing on the South.

Up here South-Michel called himself North-Michel. The reason therefore was all too obvious. Were there also dwarves and nixes up here? Melesandria over there was Northern enough, though, while the dwarves were estimated in the Scottish highlands and in the mines of Wales.

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Arundle wanted to get the whereabouts of Yoshele straightened out right now and here, as it was her attitude. South-North-Michel didn't agree in the first place. But then he gave in when he learnt that Yoshele wanted to go back. "It's the last time" he stressed, while feeling drawn by passion, the Christianians noticed. And all who felt that way noticed something blossoming inside, that hadn't been before.

You needn't bother and look for the Southern trail, because there was the Northern one. Such a time-scale was somewhat strange, though. In order to get ahead, you had to move backwards, which was by no means less strenuous than moving forward in the glutinous sand.

Yoshele had to prove himself as a singer for the first time. And Elvira was ashamed somehow in advance, while she was his most adoring devotee over here. But it didn't turn out to be all that bad. Yoshele was singing rather low, but not as bad as she had feared.

"What a pity" Elvira thought – "he could have made something also voice-wise. Well, after all he was also just a human being and couldn't transform everything what can be achieved by Man. Everybody has to fix his priorities. That makes him" – so she thought "so human."

Her Grand-ma might therefore object his strivings. She was full of life-experience, while such a young lad came by and explained her the proper route. That was why she stepped back, but wouldn't push him aside for that, as others did.

Yoshele's descend served another purpose, and she was going to learn soon. For the time being they tinkered alongside the time-scale rather insecure backwards. No-one was allowed to look back but concentrate on what had been – a pressure which wasn't easy to cope.

Most difficult it was to sing backwards. South-(North-)Michel assisted therefore. He had to do, because he was the only one who knew how to do, by reversing his song. An ancient magnetophone device, as they used to be common centuries ago with the criminal squads of the police.

He carried such a device on his back, as big and as bulky as it was, and tried to slurp in the tunes, by imitating what was heard by the loud-speakers. Yoshele didn't cause trouble by doing so, and was concentrating at best he could, when he stepped into emptiness. Lucky him, they all were roped together, while his contours hardened the further they returned.

Nobody ever found out which song they sang. Although this had been the leading question of the tour. Who ever solved the task would have won a free ticket. Similar to those of Anonymous and Hans Henny Henne's or Mrs. Waldschmitt alias Henne. The woman with the two husbands, as the Arch-Angels whispered when they met with their inflamed swords. (Those who

are busy in the highest service cannot bother with such bagatelles.)

Such free ticket was by no means just. Who ever won it, only checked his memories to find out. It worked fine this time, as nobody found out. That might be one of those beastly little stinges of heaven, they stumbled over last time already, the few Repetitors wondered, who joined the party this time in private mission.

Yoshele pretended that he knew the answer and smiled his overbearing smile, which – in the eyes of Elvira – was the sweetest and most adorable smile that a human being could smile, or ever had smiled. Had Yoshele been just an ‘Only-Human’ of real flesh and blood, Edmond would have certainly had good reasons for his fatherly jealousy. But as it was he stuck to the somewhat unthankful role of Joseph, which was in a way advantageous in the long run. He knew that from Billy-Joe, who once had taken over such a role.

The slurping mantra suddenly stopped. Under the soles the ground cracked and crashed. Certainly no sand this time, but solid concrete! Where they now allowed to turn around? Arundle asked herself, and not only she, while Elvira longed to see Yoshele’s smile again that she had to imagine, knowing him in her back. So she did like her grand-ma, who had to look on her back, while looking on Yoshele’s. All turned around by now. Why not! - They had arrived. That was no advantage for Elvira, though who slipped into the role of the heaven’s bride, like Edmond once did in the Prince’s.

That would pass, he eased himself and Elouise, his wife, who wasn’t familiar with such aspirations. “That’s the fatherly inheritance” he murmured ill at ease. He still was ashamed of his Hamlet-part. But without he wouldn’t have met Elouise in the first place, and never had searched in the North. By that everything had its good in it.

So he told himself and tried to convince Elouise as well to leave Elvira alone. Arundle had not to be stopped. She realized all by herself. Yes, she was a great woman – a kind of super-mother! Whether Yoshele had a similar view of his father?

How was his relation like? Reflecting that, would be worth while, and as well talking things over – at best with Arundle herself!

The clacking noise stopped and so did the slurping of the music. (North-)South-Michel closed his magnetophone device. The little band of time-travellers found themselves inside a spacy house. To the flat roof lead a staircase, they climbed up. Up there the table was set. There was bread and wine, as well as some goat-cheese, and stripes of dried meat or fish.

Yoshele tuned up even more, back home among his followers. Maria kissed him tenderly, that hurt Elvira, while she told herself that such ache

didn't suit her. ('O ache, let go' – is easily said, but ache seldom complies.)

The table was long and those who set at the ends felt soon disclosed. That was why each grabbed for a bite and turned inside for listening. A microphone would have done it. (North-)South-Michel fumbled about his magnetophone device, whether he could extract the microphones, but he didn't manage.

But his good intentions counted, because Yoshele's voice turned louder with every word. They perled preciously from his sweet lips – unheard words! Elvira became all fussy. This was the Master she had imagined. This was how it could have been. How else should the five thousand have been able to understand him, she had recently read about?

Here in his very element he appeared all different, even the doubters noticed. Elvira liked what she saw and now she could also see the true Maria Magdalena, or imagined to see her after all. For his very young mother she wasn't old enough, and for a wife she seemed too old. But that didn't mean much in those days, while each Oedipus came along to marry his mother. They either didn't bother birthdays, or they didn't mind age. Perhaps it was so or other.

Arundle joined her. The time-travellers stood aside, they were not used to be sitting on those cushions, except the yogis among them, but they didn't settle for solidarity. So they stood about in their fancy dress. Yoshele might have felt that way under the veil. They now realized what it was like to be different.

Instead of talking out of turn, as Yoshele had done, they became silent and timid. So they raised pity, as far as anyone noticed at all, because all were listening to Yoshele's words. There was a mighty big difference between here and there. On earth you could cry as loud as you wanted, while listening was some kind of side-effect. Because listening was not a faculty of the contemporaries any more for a long time as yet. That had to do with the media and the permanent showering with advertising.

While change was under way since the days when the little prince refused television, and the future was passing over into the past, in order to meet in presence.

The alteration of media habits was part of the general cleansing programme that went hand in hand with the battle against the pandemia, as such was one of the causes, and was therefore taken very serious. That was why Yoshele fitted well into the picture with his mighty words. Substance of his message was the return from alienation or as he put it in his own words: "Repent and believe in ghospel" – this was how he resounded through the media, and that was why people closed their ears and didn't want to hear the

like any more.

A new language would have been all important. But there was nothing, because Yoshele couldn't converse, but spoke as his tongue commanded and that was kind of trashy after two thousand years.

Up here however in his common surrounding the same words sounded all different. That was caused by the milieu and by the oriental flair, Arundle persumed. Because she was by now far more attracted and understood Elvira for the first time somewhat better, why she adored her Master. She might have felt the same when she was young. But now she meant to know most of what Yoshele uttered.

But now she did listen. And for now she heard rather other things. She felt as if a lever had switched in her brain. She understood at once and saw in the proper way what she never saw and heard, what she never understood, because we do not see or hear with our eyes or with our ears but in our mind.

Arundle remembered their efforts for the right way of seeing way back on the Isle of Wisdom tooth in the old days. And now just the same happened to her ears – at least such view was offered. While it was not all that simple to get out of the trap. What was different here? What did she understand now over here that she had not understood over there - while Elvira had been affected?

“Never try to explain farming to a farmer, (or was it Sophokles to a philosopher?) He wouldn't believe and follow you. No matter how solid your concept might be” so Arundle remembered to have once heard. She wasn't aware when or where exactly.

Again she realized that her thoughts were wandering, instead of concentrating on what was said.

“Man can only listen for a quarter of a hour” went through her head. She also remembered vaguely. But noticed that she believed there in.

So she let go and drift what she built up. Such caused tension and didn't lead anywhere. But she realized that she became warm in the heart while her soul became light.

Was that the other way of listening? While the other way of seeing was their's already?

As she looked around, she saw an aura all around Yoshele's contours and his words flooded like delicious mana right into her soul, so that she didn't know where to turn of joy.

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(Norht-)South-Michel gathered his flock and rushed for departure. It became also high time for Yoshele. The party was over, his time had come, where he went he would only be half welcome and a huge pile of work was waiting. All that soul-trash that was gathered in two and a quarter thousand years.

Mankind had headed deeper and deeper into the swamp and bushels of hair stuck out – man were pulling themselves out.

Billy-Joe blew into the didgeridoo which (North-)South-Michel shouldered. Thus it was Billy-Joe this time who took the unthankful first place. Layin the trace was heaviest. You had to find the right trail.

The magnetophone device seemed to be out of order. It might have suffered from the extraction of the microphones.

Arundle couldn't find Elvira, who was looking for her concept, without which she didn't want to leave. Until Arundle realized that she had thrown it away purposely, so she could stay. Yoshele's diciples picked up the leaves on her request, except for the front page. So Elvira had to part as well.

A last sight of yearning on Yoshele, as she thought, but he would join them anyway. In her desperation she didn't notice what horrible scenes she left behind. Hair was pulled and clothes torn apart, sobbing loud and weeping low and what other modes of mourning there were.

Thus Yoshele were last at the time-scale. His low voice vanished with the slurping in of the tunes, and it was as if he packed on his shoulders what wavered behind him.

“Yes, they are hopeless cases. If they only knew what lay ahead” -Tears of pity came into Yoshele's eyes. He saw the dark medieval age coming up, followed by the even darker inquisition which made him break out into desperate sobbing. His desperation grew with the centuries, with all those programs. For God's chosen people the worst was still ahead.

“Good things take time” the Advisor comforted, who accompanied the fare well. While new times lay right ahead. He was full of good will, but he could have known better. Yoshele understood, and as he did, he saw South-Michel with other eyes. The general perspective of the Advisor was by no means perfect.

29. Yoshele's Return

Tongues of fire licked over the Mourners' heads who stayed behind and all began to talk right away. Nobody listened and nobody understood even his own words. That had to be changed right away, and so everybody listened at least to his next, for the start. No matter whether he spoke Medish, or Persian, or Aramaic, Greek or Latin. The Advisor wanted it this way this time.

There was not much to understand, because all were filled up likewise, and those who were not filled up, didn't realize. But that's the way it is, someone stays always outside or pretends to do so.

Meanwhile they stepped backwards – back into the future. Billy-Joe gave his best and blew what his lips could give, because the magnetophone device played very low, and had it not been right in front of his ear, he would have heard it as low as the other Repetitors.

Thus the melody passed unheard and squeezed, and (North)South-Michel took grave care, whether they would be able to arrive that way, without turning around, which nobody dared.

Something was missing. He didn't know what it was. The clapping under the heels, - yes, that was it. For a while there was no clacking any more. But that was when Billy-Joe banged against the wall of the helicopter terminal already, right on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth.

This time Yoshele was properly dressed. He had picked up his one-piece gear again – the stupid soldiers threw the dice over – which he had been wearing all his life. Maria Magdalena had bought it for cheap money on the black market. Had anyone known that time how much it would be worth once...

Thus he didn't look all that desperate any more. The horrible crown of thorns was also gone, by the efforts of Maria, who had had a clever hand in that. Elvira felt a sting of envy. She certainly would have liked to try herself. So she identified with those ancient helpers and felt somehow relieved as well.

“You still remember that we started off in Christiania?” Elvira asked

when she noticed where they had arrived.

South-Michel was happy again without that appendix (North-) The double function was not his favourite cup of tea. But Yoshele would have liked to return to the Northern pulse of life. Therefore he suggested to return thereto. While all seemed to agree in that and raised no objections whatsoever.

Arundle booked conventional tickets for the party and off they went right to the Intergalactic Southern – and then to the Northern Space Station. From there a shuttle brought them further on to Christiania, which had an own terminal by now, because of all that fame. Experts came from all over the world for advice and to see with own eyes how life was here, and should be the like everywhere.

The pandemia was not overcome all over the world and the long term consequences would be noticeable for decades. But things were on the move. The wave of progress could be felt everywhere. And Yoshele's programme suited perfectly well by discouraging the last tycoons and their primitive way of pecuniary corruption. The second secret disease, which was much harder to tackle so it sometimes seemed. Who suffered from that disease, didn't suffer in fact, just the opposite, but felt great and could hardly be convinced, while Yoshele had something to offer.

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Right in the Strato-Cruizer Yoshele started his first sermon. He worked without concept so not even the director, or the Repetitors' team knew what came next - you had to be aware of everything. This time Yoshele didn't mind the few spectators near him. There weren't so few anyway. His call ran ahead of him and the airline regarded it as an honour to offer him a free first class ticket, which he rejected on Arundle's advice.

“With cheese you catch mice” was a saying Pooty told Billy-Joe, who gave him a tender slap and asked him not to be so witty. The days as VIP he had enjoyed. Now he meant to warn everybody, while he didn't experience anything bad.

Corruption was one of the worst whips since the beginning. The Repetitors wondered why Yoshele pretended to have no idea, or didn't understand the situation over here. Perhaps he thought the Strato-Cruizers-Services were like currents in the oceans or like winter-rain, you could utilize without harm or consequences. Or Arundle omitted to grant him time enough to reject, just as he rejected Satan who lied shamelessly to seduce

him in the desert. Besides, the Repetitors were there to have an eye on him. They were acquainted with the media circus and with opposing interests. All pretended to strive for the truth, and still everybody thought true was, what he liked best or what suited even better, for what ever reasons.

In order not to be taken as lobbyists for the SLOMES Corporation, the Repetitors had to take good care, for they were connected with this company. Had they to expell Judith and Dorothea for that? Judith had only been associated to a minor extend, right from the start, because she hadn't been involved in that future project.

After all they could refer to transcendental wittnesses: Judith to Hans Henny Henne, and Dorothea to Anonymous, whose positions expelled them from any suspicion.

Arundle referred in that to the Advisor. If at all, she'd be his lobbyist, she assured and had one dementi followed by the next flickering over the public screens.

The SLOMES-Corporation was meanwhile in charge of most media, therefore her approach could certainly succeed. And the deeper the conciousness of a higher guideline settled in the brains and hearts of the millions, the more doubtful their opponents became, who lacked such media-power. Thus it seemed to be a vicious circle, you hardly could escape. While for now with Yoshele the final breakthrough of the truth seemed possible. No matter how many false traces were layed.

After all – success would prove the righteous cause, so the Repetitors reckoned. But how could you measure success? When was it enough? Such world-wide programmes didn't proceed everywhere the same. Minor rejections had to be considered, or were they already indicators of failure?

The press published what they liked and so did the yellow press, as they once did, some decades ago to the harm of the Isle of Wisdom-tooth. When reporters didn't find the thrilling story, then they invented it for the sensation's sake. That was all they had in mind. What did such reporters mind reality? What did they care about righteousness? As long as they managed to uncover and hit the hub of the world for once?

Could they even be connected with the lust of evil? Were they the modern devils who sneaked in unnoticed to ruin the law and consequently the revised pace of the world? Were they unnoticed offenders of the law, that had so many troubles, that even Yoshele came to interfere?

What now was due to come true, had been prepared for a long time, the Repetitors reckoned. South-Michel didn't march to the Holy Land with them just for nothing. For sure not backwards and for a second time, in order to win Yoshele, and cause all that grief among his diciples, so the visitors from

the future realized. Despite of all the trouble, Yoshele joined them right away, and participated in everything they suggested. He certainly did that on purpose.

Egotism and self-centredness might be worse the evil lust which drew merits from the grief of others. by supressing other, the straight walk was won. When the oppressed suffered the ungood heaven of ungood joy opened up on top. The awareness of damage lead to the joy of the unconcerned.

Was there a bridge to the liaers and false-speakers, the word-twisters and sense-changers? Where was the thin border-line behind which no way lead back, where impetus became machinations – and was no longer able to bring forward but to destruct?

Yoshele sought for a new and appropriate language. He knew those who talked of secession were misunderstood. Secession didn't mean any longer to get lost in the world, but to get rid of certain aspects therein.

Such a language didn't fall from heaven or came from the past, but had to be formed anew, and had to be born under aches, in order to penetrate the world, and bring forward what never was before.

While the old trouble still existed and might be even grown. Caused by the Pandemia the people lost their brains. They returned to a child-like dependence, and were no longer masters of their deeds, while the artifacts had taken over.

For them Yoshele invented a kind of 'massl-talk', that sounded as if he spoke with horses or dogs in their mode. Sometimes he even twittered like birds. Stunning enough such talk was well accepted and lead to a morbid grin here and then, and a search for real words set in. Sometimes Yoshele's sermon – somewhere in an asylum – caused a riot similar to a swarm of wild bees. Not only by the noise they made, but also by running away. and thus the inmates escaped their artifact-guardians to hum about in parks and gardens, and to do, what they enjoyed most.

For Yoshele that was not just a recourse into prelinguality, but also a pause on the way to the new freedom. Yoshele didn't let anyone down, and nobody was uncoupled, while the brave new world attracted very much, however always somehow overshadowed by the old.

He was a kind of ferment, though, coming about not with sword and shield so to speak, but virtual and omni-present, thanks to the Corporation. For now he didn't want to do all by himself and carry the world on his shoulders, suffering for the sins of mankind, but as a nucleus of resurrection, and supported by the team of Repetitors, who once did a deep look into the grounds of future times; until such times arrived; to be then reproduced and rectified by such brave soldiers of love, who were fighting the final battle on

fake grounds with divine weapons and a wider outlook than the representatives of the evil side ever procured. That was in short the reason for Yoshele's return.

30. The Trace of Secret

Thus the principle of hope prevailed and the Repetitors supported Yoshele at best they could, while they would have liked to know what he was hiding. Nobody doubted his plan. Some one who is so decisive and turns all others to do likewise, certainly knew which trace he followed.

“The main thing is the theory in any case. When you have a proper theory, you can deal with, and force all others to do likewise, then you have almost won” – Scholasticous said, somewhat highbrow.

“...Would be bad when the theory doesn't serve the purpose properly” Grisella put in. She was thinking of the outcome of the Russian Revolution, nobody had prognosticized.

“That's all known over and over again, but people don't learn...” Arundle put in.

“All those cracked revolutions, when it says afterwards: ‘Times hadn't been ripe yet or Man isn't made for freedom’ -.” Florinna added.

“Most of the times it isn't about the time or the people and their conditions of life, but about the theory which turns out to be a great disaster and all wrong - right from the start” Corinia supported her sister, and overdid pretty much, Florinna thought, but didn't say.

“And if such theory had been right, by the passing times alone, it was not what it had been in the beginning” Judith was thinking of the Nano-verse when she was joining the meeting.

“That's refreshing with Yoshele. He doesn't show up with such stuff” Arundle said just like that.

“Still he seems to know which way the cat jumps” Billy-Joe now tuned in.

“Does he hide anything?” Grisella asked.

“It’s the way he sees things, that’s it. He reminds me of those self-programming Laptops, who instantly write new programmes, they then follow” – Tibor suggested but found little support, only Arundle answered: “he’s got no fixed theory, I understand, that’s what you want to say”.

“That’s what I mean” Tibor justified himself: “Flexibility is needed – rewriting the programme instantly, and then stick to the outcome. Only a huge server can do such”.

“Or a divine brain” Arundle supported.

“Acting when everything is considered, everything is calculated, everything is planned, while there is still only a more or less likeliness of approaching the wishful outcome” Florinna swarmed.

“Well nobody knows, I’m afraid, not even Yoshele himself” her sister eased her.

“And when such a Yoshele acts, even as a strategist, then it looks as if he didn’t have a plan” interrupted Scholasticous, who was broken up by Grisella likewise right away:

“I think he hasn’t, because I reckon him so fast, that he doesn’t realize himself, how he’s surfing through suggestions and possibilities”.

“The big servers might be more reliable in that meanwhile, I’d presume” Judith remarked. Nobody contradicted.

“Should we offer Yoshele access?” Judith went on and looked around. But then she recalled that weird lobbyism and she dropped the subject. Perhaps she saw things by far too pragmatic.

“You’re right that would be regarded as lobbyism, as if the SLOMES Corporation wanted to gain credits”, Scholasticous agreed.

“That’s what he wants. Can’t be otherwise” – his wife added with a gentle smile. ‘Her smile is still amazing ever since’ Scholasticous thought and smiled back tenderly.

“Has he a plan or no?” Arundle insisted. “I think that’s important”.

Nobody answered. They all looked bewildered. Seen from that angle the whole world was but a gathering of failures and misdeeds – no good could be expected.

At that very moment one of Yoshele’s parables was transmitted. They all listened: *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...Mt,13,31*

Would it make sense to insist on further explanation? For the time being Arundle recommended to the Repetitors to read the bible, in order to explore the master's ideas. The appropriate chapters were easy to find. So it was done.

When they met again, Elvira had found out about the childhood. Another major topic of the master. And as it was her concern, she had read further, and while doing so, all what happened lately came to her mind. The final battle on the hidden battlefield, when she and her misguided mates set foot on the grounds and were immediately transformed. Surely the most stunning experience in her short life.

The importance of childhood was evident, and the grounding on earth might be the proper trace, the Repetitors agreed. Had there been the necessity for evidence, it was certainly found by bringing Elvira home, the way she became. And certainly all other space children, saving them all from the devil's claws.

Yes, childhood was the clue of change the Repetitors found out, and should never be given up completely, that was another of Yoshele's teachings.

The Repetitors had kept their childish minds – without exception. That might be the secret of the Isle of Wisdom-tooth – Arundle didn't want to exclude any-one, not even creepy Moshus Mogolya, the old miser. All of them somehow remained children inside, and that was what formed their relationships. It was as if they hadn't done the last step to become grown-up – as if they pushed the point of no return ahead before them, while it indicated decay at the same time – physical as well as mental, and in the soul.

They were like good wine that became older and riper but never too old or over-ripe for long decades.

Yes, of good whiskey it is said that it can ripe for ever, just as Hans Henny Henne, – as old and divine as he had meanwhile become – while still a child somehow.

It might be caused by the colours or the other way of seeing. Well - Yoshele had it with the ears, and there was certainly something in it. While things also were growing in the School of Inbetween in this respect. But a basic course about the other way of hearing was not yet set up, though. Nobody had yet checked out here – might be a challenge for further generations.

The School of Inbetween stuck to its name. That might be the most fascinating characteristics, because the name remained the programme ever since. Where to did that 'Inbetween' refer? Was it meant physical? Or did it

refer to the time? And who was dwelling in that 'Inbetween'? Did it comply with the kingdom of heaven Yoshele referred to, and caused the Repetitors to study the bible in their old days?

For Arundle it seemed as if she met an old acquaintance, she hadn't seen for a long time and became acquainted with for the first time while hadn't known her properly in the old days. What she realized was the fact that she had never really looked properly. She didn't even see the secret, she admitted. While it was waving about her right now massive and peremptory. And she felt the heat of divine flames. She seemed to burn, as if a flame would enter her self. She wanted to refuse, - afraid as she was, but didn't. Instead she opened up and let it be: From outside the shine and from inside inflamed curiosity.

Could she win Yoshele for that? Among their circle there was no-one, who was in command of the other way of hearing. If there was someone it was a natural talent without any training.

But Yoshele not even played an instrument, or did he, and nobody knew? Was music for him so obvious and natural that he never spoke about it? None of his disciples ever said a word on that. They might have wandered all those two years singing through the lands.

A mighty voice Yoshele must have had, though. After all he spoke in front of big crowds, and nowhere it was reported that people didn't listen or understand. Quite the opposite, heart and soul had they been when he told his parables and sermons. Voice-wise he must have been a great talent, though.

"I give you an example, You know about that famous sermon of his, when he spoke in front of the five thousand? I'd say that wouldn't work, technically seen" Scholasticus figured – "In a boat on a lake you cannot reach five thousand people lowered on the banks just by natural voice. Not even an opera-singer – well, perhaps an opera-singer could do by singing."

Nobody objected. Things like that weren't on the focus, so it seemed. Nothing written could be found on that anyway.

Such questions came up, but Judith protected the master at best she could, and held a protective hand over him. She cared that nobody came too close. He even lived with the Kornblums. "Here he gets cosher food, and can rely on that." she proudly announced, happy for not having changed customs over the years. Nobody was forced to cosher food, but when the holydays came and some rest as well then the housewives didn't refrain from the proper preparation, as it should be.

Yoshele ate almost nothing. But the fact of having him sitting at the table, and smelled what was served, was often enough already. Judith felt

like a real Jewish mummy. She spread her imaginary wings to protect Yoshele under. And as busy he otherwise was, as soon as he came through the door of the Kornblums home he felt safe and at home like in Abrahams lap. They were living in a very big nice house, though.

Thus Arundle's idea to win Yoshele for a basic training course in the art of proper hearing met a wall of denial. Not even telling her message she was allowed.

"He's got to save the world" she was told. "He might not even understand your problem".

But the Repetitors didn't give up, that is – Arundle didn't and came about with her intention in all variations again and again until the Advisor himself became alert and was in favour.

Yoshele's trip into the future hadn't been done without the okay from the highest level, just the opposite. Since that novelletta of the law and the decisive weakening of the dark side there was an increased need for action.

All heaven spoke of ripeness meanwhile where doubts had for so long endured. All of a sudden things couldn't precede fast enough. Mercy swamped over the impeached earth, almost too much so it sometimes seemed. In a hurry some failures became straightened, and what had gone in thousands of years, came back just like that and right away.

And that because the measures began to work, since that Pandemia declined and understanding grew. Soon you could hardly differentiate between cosher and biodynamic food. And thus it worked everywhere. Without the bad joy deriving from evil deeds the true and pure good joy blossomed. Without all those millions of little mean stings the big sting also stopped, whereto the little ones accumulated, without being noticed.

As soon as the climate of mistrust was overcome, there was no barrier left. The Repetitors for once ran behind the future, which speeded up so suddenly.

But Arundle wouldn't give up. They had had there difficulties with the other way of seeing right from the start, and still had, as there were so few by now, while she was convinced that much more was slumbering in the hide. But the rough winds of reality shaped the raw diamonds round in time, had made them win the mediocre grey.

The School of Inbetween had steered against such trend, at best as possible and had the one or other gift discovered and saved.

The other way of listening had also to do with the childhood, Arundle

was convinced of that. and nobody objected. But Judith couldn't accept to have such a new discipline be install right now when everything went helter skelter anyway and you hardly could take a breath. And all that with the cosmic alien from afar, who shone up like a star in the darkness, as a solitary mover of the world. Judith was a convinced believer though, like so many others meanwhile.

That was why she didn't mind how he managed to satisfy five thousand listeners without microphone. All of a sudden she realized how grown up she was. She shook her head unnoticable about those dummies, all of them, she didn't exclude any of those self-appointed Repetitors of the Future.

Yoshele also shook his head but to ease her smilingly not to be overbearing. "Telepathy has no mother-tongue" he said just like that. As if evrything was said by that. Judith blushed and called Arundle, when she couldn't reach Dorothea, her first choice.

"Does this make sense to you?" she asked, after she had told her what Yoshele answered to her affront.

"- Didn't make sense to me, though."

She was lucky because Arundle understood right away and surprised herself by that. They didn't have telepathy on their account, which seemed to be the solution:

"Mass-suggestion and telepathy, that is it, thus he reached the five tousand, that's why he want to preach before present people and refrain from medial distribution, because so much is being lost that way. So we were not all that far from 'the other way of hearing' back home on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth, we just named it otherwise." Arundle went on happier.

Judith was uncertain, whether she could believe Arundle. Her explanations seemed sound and simple and not easy to reject. 'The other way of listening' had just had another name back on the Isle of Wismdom-tooth, while there never had been a basic course established.

The students practised the like in their free time, as a private gag. All knew but nobody wanted to go too far, the deeper they explored the world of thoughts of each other, which was somewhat delicate with teenagers anyway.

With Yoshele things might be different, because - He was it who wanted to be understood. He wanted to give his spectators access to his thoughts. He was the communicator, not the other way round, while this also happened. The one or other he looked deep into his or her mind when healing. He might notice there more than the individual could stand, deep on the ground of the soul. He realized soemthing there, the consciousness

couldn't stand, just like a soul-doctor, as was coming some thousand years later.

Did Yoshele employ something in advance, or had times been riper then it seemed, some decades later?

Slavery and arbitrariness spoke a different language. The times to come - then - were not fairytale-like, the Repetitors knew when looking backwards.

The question was, why Yoshele decided to step in and appear right at the time when he actually did, with his highbrow expectations of that kingdom of his.

There were many who doubted whether the times had been ripe then. And therefore the descendents were truly waiting up to the present time for the true candidate.

That was why Yoshele had good chances to be accepted by his folks by now. In Judith Kornblum he won an eager follower in the first place.

**

They called themselves changelings, and when they adressed that way to each other, they couldn't stop laughing. They appeared much younger then they were and somewhat unripe, though. The reason for that might be that they were missing an important part of their childhood, where the peer-group would have been important.. Besides, they were ashamed of their ugly deeds and misbehaviour, which hadn't been their fault, as a matter of fact, still they had somehow to do with such ugly marks, which were still staining their innocent souls. The devil had them ridden then to be as nasty as they had been.

That was why they had to pick up a lot. In their isolation they had not only tortured adults, but also other children, who weren't better off. They had been able to see that, but they had been far too bitter to follow the meager empathetic trace felt vaguely somewhere. Adult injections weren't accepted, - no way!

Mothers took part in the complot. They secretly recalled the wherabouts of fertilisation with soft horror and knew by instinct that the deepest musings weren't meant for strange ears. They cared for the stay abroad, or even arranged for a Mars mission.

At the age of twelve to fourteen it was about time to follow the drums of war. They didn't know how the call reached them, but one day they hit the

road. Most stole their father's glider and off they went to the nearest asteroid where a camp was stationed.

There they couldn't find a clear thought because of all that drill and indoctrination. And before they realized they stuck in a bullet-proof suit and marched towards Angles Land with a strato-blazer at hand and a field pack on the back. There was no misunderstanding. In deadly mission the dark Lord intended their sacrifice.

"My dear children-soldiers" he proudly addressed them. They didn't know better and would have gone for him to hell.

Well, things didn't run that far. Because when they touched the ground on earth, they became re-polarized. Right through their feet they felt a hot wave of undescrivable love flooding up their bodies right up to their hearts and further on to their heads.

All hatred was gone and reversed. Where wrath had been, inner peace appeared. They swore their leaders off, who tried to force them into battle – those who were still sitting in their gliders without ground-contact – for the perspective's sake.

First one, then two, and three and more - and all threw away their weapons and their militia gear and marched as a gay singing band towards the settlements you could see under the horizon. From all sides they came running. Some with flowers in the hair – mostly girls – who blossomed at once wondrously though.

**

Thus their life on earth began. With the memories the shame came. All understood, they needed help. Who can stand the memory of a beast, that was somewhere inside?

That was why they had to be informed first of all, of what happened to them. That took time in some cases, or even failed, while suicide attempts happened.

The Repetitors arranged for a camp at the former resort of Laptopia. The false Churingas were pleased to give way and disappeared subsoil giving room for tens of thousands.

Any helping hand was welcome. Dorothea and Arundle raised an emergency call, that was soon heard. Judith sent the mobile hospital with a psychiatric department from the SLOMES-Corporation together with a band of well-educated Severins and Severines, who relieved the stressed

Repetitors to a certain extent.

They proudly presented their successes. Indeed, none of their clients committed suicide any further. They were all children and had to repeat childhood. They had to learn how to play and all that, what had to be discovered when children start off their lives. Schooling was also a wide field of action, while most of what they acquired outside before had been trash and was of no use for life.

**

By and by parents showed up from afar. The merry message of salvation of their children reached them far away in space. Some would see their children after years or even decades, because they were on Mars- or on Spearhead-missions to even further targets.

In fact parents were some kind of a problem. By showing up they often caused fits of memories with negative consequences. You had to be very careful though. Nobody had bad intentions, while many fathers were rather bitter. They had also been betrayed for some years of their lives, and couldn't quite understand what the earth had done to their little monsters. Thus their disappearance hadn't only raised fear and sorrows, but also secret joy, that was turned now again the other way.

A bad conscience is a bad adviser though when you try to build up a new relationship with your own flesh and blood. Too deep the inner wounds still burnt in the soul, you couldn't see from outside, but hurt – nevertheless; by all means.

Dealing with Yoshele and his secret of life tuned in on the children arbitrarily. Here in the resort they were found in tens of thousands one by one, while perhaps a little old. But so it was. There was no better childhood for them. They had to manage with what they had.

After the children and the blamed mothers, the fathers also accused themselves of grave mistakes. They had resigned when they should have withstood. Their fate out there could have been altered right away at any time, had they not been so weak.

Such parental memories were of advantage for the children. They were in no hurry to grow up – just opposite. Grown-up life was by no means advantageous and inviting.

So they arranged where they happened to end up – a kind of paradise though. They experienced what it meant to be human. A wide land opened

before them and attracted and promised the joy of true life. Inside they felt powers growing, combining them in social interdependence.

Unexpected mercy had thrown them into paradise. With their first steps on Mother Earth the hot rays of unlimited love affected them, as was always done most likely, but was answered here consciously. As they were advanced enough, they noticed what happened to them, while they still remained children.

31.The Repetitors of the Future

South-Michel faced a riddle. It had to do with the experience of the victory over the powers of darkness. While Mother Earth made of raging wolves good lambs. But why did the Trolls hit the bush then? In the depths and abysses they might have been even better-natured and more peaceful though, and growing up pampered by love. But that, they obviously didn't do.

Was it a matter of genes? Was there a little devil hidden in each dwarf, who had to be fenced in carefully? When coming of age, there was peace and the voice of consciousness took over. While grown up dwarves were also moody. But trustworthy they were and true and honest, while often affected by envy, stinginess and arrogance.

“The earth might be just one part, while light is the other” so the Advisor made himself known. South-Michel cocked up, because the Advisor had come in a hurry just for that, to help his terrestrial Alter ego, which South-Michel in fact was.

“Trolls lack of light” he pointed out:

“Give them light -

Make them bright”-

he rhymed in the mode of the Time-Scale-Wanderers, as if he wanted to stirr them up again.

South-Michel was only half satisfied with such an advice. ‘Often the simplest explanations are the best’ he reckoned while excusing. “From both you need sufficiently enough” he went on when South-Michel wanted to point on the plentitude of light in space.

“All the more, when it is not really cosher, as is the case right here” he

added and stuffed any criticism by that, as had been his intention anyway. It was high time to get South-Michel down off his high horse. A little modesty would do him good, so the LCT-Comission lately decided. And the Advisor didn't see any reason why he shouldn't stick to such decision.

Yoshele was aware in a way to a certain extend. But he was too busy to keep everything in mind as a mediator between the worlds, and felt torn apart somehow, though.

It couldn't be helped the dwarves had also to move. They had to make something out of the fantastic chance of a stretched puperty. Potentially in each dwarf was hidden an aspirant of heaven, provided that the information which circled on that topic was sound. But that was kind of obvious. For sure you needed light. Much light from the very start, instead of being banned into the deepest depth Trolls (young dwarves) were bound for light. "Dayly at least four hours" the Advisor added and looked somewhat earnest. South-Michel felt awkward somehow. Because he knew reality.

"That's also good for your other clientel" South-Michel knew who the Advisor focussed with that.

There to – how should he manage teaching them?

"And what about secrecy" he objected lowly. Because he knew how clever the youth was. When you didn't fix them at once or even ban, as happens to Trolls. For they were known for all that nonsense and pranks, while in fact were striving for light. In the water things were much alike. Where-ever there was a chance, they were there. One single sun-beam could be enough, because they had such a thin skin and very delicate eyes, but that was good, because where they lived, little light arrived.

Half an hour of daylight a day was certainly enough for them, but that it should be for sure, ten minutes more were also alright though. Such quantities were granted on the outer missions near the surface, but that was more a matter for experienced blokes and not for the younger nixes. Besides, such jobs were top secret and rather unpopular. But times were changing down here as well. Meanwhile the world might be advanced enough. But such hadn't yet arrived down under. Discovery by so-called 'surfacers' was still worst.

Seen from above the oceans improved. Fish recovered and the fishermen fished trash and plastic for good cash instead of fish, though. Wide resorts and reservations covered the coastal zones not only, but also whole ocean-segments, wherein sealife dwelled untouchable and widely untouched. Plastic-trash was there more than enough for the fishermen's fleet lasting for decades.

Old Adrian Humperdijk, former assistant Headmaster and close friend

of the merfolk, supplied the governments of the world with the latest maps showing the enlarging free zones. Thus the routes for the sea-traffic became more precise, similar to highways, while of course much wider still.

Corinia's institute was experimenting with artificial icebergs, and were on a good way, while the threatening ghosts of drowned land was written in haunty letters all over coastal areas.

Energy for the project derived from the increasing storms, accompanying the increasing temperature. By 2300 the UNCC reckoned to reverse the progress, by an induced decline.

Compared to such mighty challenges, the trouble with the stretched puberty of dwarves and nixes would have looked somewhat timid, though. Had they not been part of a general effort, which based on a decisive victory of Mankind and Yoshele's resurrection.

The victory of the kids, their grounding and recovery was but a sample, just a trace to be followed furthermore. Such victory had to be achieved again and again, while the law and its novellettas were of help. A 'New Man' grounded on earth had to stand up everywhere. That was it, otherwise reversion into barbarism was threatening on and on. and all measures of saving the world were of minor necessity.

Yoshele gathered his diciples once more. Pioneers were without question the Repetitors of the Future, who went back in time and picked him up in his weakest hour. Thanks to their understanding and assistance, he was able to get heard and was understood. His words didn't fall on stoney ground or faded in the desert, where there was nobody who listened.

"Time is ripe" so the angels' choirs were rejoicing – hopefully though!- "Hope dies last".

The hopeful sprouts vanished one by one or couldn't be seen. Like a racing horse Yoshele had been waiting until the Repetitors of the Future came up with the vision of a truely just society by turning upside down the world from head to feet. Not without advice, but still ...

Somehow they got started. Slowly the monster-vessel speeded up, and those on the bridge had only a vague idea of the proper route, while they had an inspiration of the target, but of the ways thereto they had but a scheme. Not because they pretended but because they picked up and took over what was due. By that they were not far from the self-induced horse-headed violin. The difference was that they produced no marvellous tunes but series of corrections in sequence.

**

South-Michel felt humiliated by the Advisor's continuous advice. He was fed up with all those endless meetings. On the other hand a lot was in the bush – history speeded up, so you couldn't step aside and let things be the way they were because of such a selfish spirit, no matter how holy it was. But that would surely change – South-Michel was looking forward on that.

He recalled the tinnitus by which he brought his opponent out of balance, and so he did remember the bloody nose as well, that he got as an answer. That was kind of weird in the region they were at home, though. South-Michel didn't feel like reflecting whether secret joy was all he could get out of this. Yoshele might overlook important facts. His telepathetic aspirations might lead him nowhere, while it once used to compensate a failure. By now you reached millions via diverse channels. All you needed was a clever clue to make the audience tune in on you.

The miracles in the desert Moishe once performed, seemed more sound. The Zunami for example came right in time and was certainly more spectacular than to change water in wine, that was then suspected of fake anyway. While Moishe's deeds proved the validity of basic laws in nature.

South-Michel wanted to have a closer look, and was looking for some of those Repetitors to come with him on another march back along the Time-Scale. Yoshele was too busy he said, while in fact he couldn't see much sense in such a trip at first. Then changed his mind when taking into account all the mistakes and shortcomings being written down on his behalf.

Good old Paul stood in his name with the back to the wall right from the start of what later was called 'The Church', when wild hordes pressed into the Roman Empire and participated by free will or by crude force in the new faith. Pig-heads they were, often threatened by famine. They ate what they got hold of.

South-Michel was looking for a general review. Therefore a trip back on the Time-Scale seemed obvious enough. For that he had arranged for a nice short singing with clear reference, as he reckoned:

“Light from above

Does help enough”

South-Michel had the very general sense of light in mind. He certainly was aware of the double meaning, while the Advisor had been thinking of of the invisible Inner Light first of all. Whereas South-Michel referred to the profane sunlight and the vital necessity of the latter for all life.

By that wide range of interests they managed to attract the whole mishpoke again. Even Yoshele and Judith joined. So they soon were a

numerous troop. Just like children they were looking forward, to be singing silly verses and marching backwards. They were not allowed to turn their heads. That was why some trained their third eye to look through the back-head, but forgot that the whole brain was inbetween. So they had to fail of course.

The ground was stoney first this time, but muddy later and then very dry and sandy at last, indicating the desert. They were allowed to look on the ground now. Besides, some had taken off their shoes and went barefoot, shoes around their necks. Others followed. In the end they were all barefoot.

Thus they went on. South-Michel up front, followed by a huge troop, more than ever. Their images seemed to be fading while marching along the Time-Scale. Only Yoshele became more concret with every step he took, while it was the other way round with the others, only South-Michel remained the same. Shortly before they reached their target the Advisor joined them.

South-Michel and the Advisor - being both emanations of the same spirit - their quarrels were kind of artificial, though.

The latter couldn't refrain from teasing the first, who was a weak character and tended to lose his nerve. Unlike Yoshele, who knew what it meant to be at home in two worlds, he was torn apart more than once. Seen from outside it was the childish quarrel about the better perspective.

When they were aloud to turn around again, they felt surrounded by grim warriors with bloody swords in hands. Moishe was busy melting the golden calf, he wanted to store in the Ark of the Covenant as a base for the future temple treasure. But the bloody masacre would fall back heavy on him though. He wouldn't even see the promised land. As if he enjoed the slaughtering.

South-Michel, the Advisor and Yoshele were the only ones who became really real. They gathered their flock against the infuriated men like hens do with chickens.

Instead of the masacre, South-Michel would have liked to show his followers the Zunami in the Red Sea, when Moishe managed to lead his people dry footed from one side to the other. Yes, Moishe knew how to survive in the desert. He found water where even camels failed. Billy-Joe felt reminded of his friend Walter and the old Shaman of the Churingas. But the Sinai was not the Australian outback.

The Advisor would have liked to turn around right away, but South-Michel prevailed, and Yoshele was torn apart once more. On the one hand he wanted to leave right away, on the other he was fascinated by Moishe when he managed to tame the flashes by means of his iron stick.

Hostile gazes they noticed in any case. South-Michel felt unable to motivate his flock to carry on any further backwards, so he turned around before they missed the proper entry to the Time-Scale and had to wander about for fourty years as well. That was why they immediately tuned in on their song.

Last gazes were exchanged with the grim warriors, their laughter resounded in the pilgrims ears, for them they looked strange in their garment, while their singing was of minor quality though. But it helped to move their heavy feet in sand and mud, still barefooted though..

Florinna moaned and stuck to her sister, because she didn't get a chance to do archeological studies. Not even the smallest piece of pottery she had beens allowed to pick up.

The wanderers put their shoes back on before their feet turned all bloody. They didn't mind the substance of the ground any more, as long as they underwent the move-back towards their home. They all suffered somehow. Grisella still felt the nasty looks she got for her remark. Only Judith Kornblum experienced differently while she kissed the grounds and Moische's clothes. As a politician she was used to grand gestures, and overlooked the dubious role he took by blaming brave Aaron and the Levites, and disappeared again for the commandments.

Meanwhile the pilgrims touched familiar grounds. South-Michel and Arundle congratulated each other for managing such a heavy load at last. The Advisor had disappeared already, He'd been with them only 'privatim' as he put it, and annoyed South-Michel by that, who would have liked to land on him another Tinnitus at best.

He didn't want to let him get away with all that, he swore. He wouldn't swallow his anger any more or transform into cultural benefits, for he didn't know which. But he surely would find out.

32. The Discalceati* of Santa Cruz

One result of the excursion was a new grounding and evaluation of the Discalceati (*the barefooted) of all ages, none the least the present ones, as there were still a few and more then was known right here on the Isle of Wisdom-tooth. They were known in South-America and they seemed to threaten the constructive efforts all over as favoured by former Manageress of the SLOMES-Corporation, Judith Kornblum, now Chairwoman of the Worl-Control-Commission (WCC) of the UN.

The Discalceati mistrusted all such efforts. For them endeavours of that kind belonged to a long tradition of governmental repression, and that was why, such measures were rejected most.

The SLOMES in combination with the Severin and Severine projects were devil's deeds for the barefooted purists. They didn't want to become old artificially, and meditation was also possible for them without technical support. They liked physical labour and could hardly get enough. Arundle felt reminded of the dwarves in their worst state before the exodus.

Their life they arranged by the motto:

All is in vain

without pain

A lot had to be done. Tibor found out about the state of being by mystical intervention, and exchanged spiritually about grounding and habitual feeling.

Therefore support was granted when fighting Pandemia in Punta Arenas and Santa Cruz in the cold zone below the fortyfifth Meridian of the South. Helpers from the North were accepted and the Severin-programme was no longer regarded as devil's stuff, all the more because it based on other measures and the alteration of nutrition in specific, and a general change in habits.

Thus the latest bastions of the Pandemia were tackled – deep down in the furthest South. And the monks put in theirs.

The pupils of the School of Inbetween by then favoured barefootedness, though. And the aged Methusalems wondered why they didn't find such an easy solution when fighting alienation. The more so, because Billy-Joe possessed all necessary prepositions, and he was not alone in that. Still barefootedness never made it, not even down there at the beach, because of those sharp-edged shells – as was said.

Susamee had been ridiculed for her nakedness. Nobody ever saw the challenge. Susamee had been quiet, but not happy with her contemporaries. The matter should have been brought up together with the search for the 'Cardinal Mistake' of Mankind, so she reckoned, but in vain.

South-Michel would have been excited. A nicer result of his efforts he could hardly expect. So he didn't mind the little disappointments he had to stand, as was brought to his ears from different sides in the aftermath.

The excursion of the many remained subject for a long time. And those, who didn't participate, wept tears of sadness. As good as they could they visited their Somnior-colleagues or the Animatiors, who did the trip, but

movie actors intervened and true images of Moishe or his warriors couldn't be achieved.

South-Michel had to answer many requests. He could have done the same trip any day, but that was too much for him. Besides, the track became wider and wider the more pilgrims there marched, barefooted or not, was almost the same.

And what did such invasive flow mean to the local tribes-men? Such tourists were soon not allowed any more within the sight of the ordinary folks but were limited to a small in-group, and were used for enforcing the strength only. The contacts were arranged in solitude afar, up on the mountains, though. Moishe and his brothers were in desperate need of divine help with their stubborn fellow-men and the awkward conditions of a living in the desert.

More than one tip Moishe became and fastened his power by that, and met the defined limits of future intervention. While jealous tongues might have spoken of interventions into the course of history in the aftermath. Which was of course not allowed. Nothing was allowed to be changed – no word of the narrative, everything had to remain as once set and said. While times had been miraculously enough. And so it was not all that difficult to put in details. There was the lightening conductor for example. The story tells of deadly flames from heaven, but in the vicinity of Moishe's iron snake, people were safe.

The guiding light at night certainly was the polar star – the brightest and steadiest, and no hint was necessary in that.

Or the little cloud which showed the Israelites the way, was no problem either. South-Michel rented a drone from the disinfecting squad and had it drop frequent spots of hot air into the sky. While all the world had by then turned over to bio-dynamic agriculture and disinfection was out.

The wanderers fixed the parts of the device on the way and started the drone just before the first contact. For the proper route they employed a navigational tool, some of them had already implanted.

South-Michel's manipulative operation was disadvantageous in a way, for his cloud couldn't be seen daily, but that might be of minor importance, as long as Moishe could refer to such miraculous sign. And that was what he did whenever the cloud could be seen in the sky.

(The script doesn't say that it was seen daily.) Miraculous were many other happenings as well. Which were handled by other heavenly sources.

Yoshele's miracles were even more miraculous, while Moishe's were sound and grounded. Walking on the water or changing water into wine

could well be regarded as trickery. When asked for the character of his miracles, Yoshele got angry and blamed the questioner of ignorance. If he not stepped aside to his famous “*He who has ears to hear, let him hear*” – as he liked to do while such word could also be extended to the eyes.

Except for the experience of walking barefoot and the discovery of the Discalceati monks, the increased wandering back on the Time-Scale was of minor use, so South-Michel reckoned.

There had always been bare-footed individuals or social groups, but had seldom been in the mondial focus. The more so when such subjects rejected progress. So it was Tibor – with the help of Tuzla and Patagonia – who altered such course, and made the ‘Discalceati of Santa Cruz’ the backbone of the local Pandemia-fighters-squad down South.

Their task was other than serving the diseased and disabled. Such duties were taken over by Severins and Severines. By then with a lot of experience and with tender fingers, better than the most emphatic bare-footed could perform. After years of troublesome service and with so little success, even the most pious turned bigoted.

Under Tibor’s influence the Discalceati recalled their substantial Franciscan inheritance. They developed adjusted methods of growing crop. They even got fair results where no-one ever saw a chance at all. The Artifacts were of help here as well, and were busy - just like outside on the space gardens – day and night. When sun abandoned for some time, - which occasionally happened – the Artifacts also generated artificial light of a fair quality. For that they employed the steady winds around Cape Horn and Good Hope.

Next important to the production of sound food was education and adaptation. The monks organized for social housing for the disabled, who learnt step by step - with the help of their artifacts – to take over all necessary duties for a normal life. Laymen and laywomen cloisters, as well as mixed ones, and also worldly habitats soon popped up by thousands. Celibacy was no insinuation any more. The grounding was extended. The individuals stood with both feet firm on the grounds of Mother Earth’s good influence. - South-Michel enjoyed such outlook.

After all, everything was a matter of perspective. The dwarves in the darkness of the earth were acquainted with death. They didn’t shy away from preparing for the return by metamorphosis or other incarnations. Therefore they sometimes were mixed up with gravediggers.

The barefooted in their earthbound affection were much alike the dwarves of Patagonia. And had the way not been so far, the dwarves would have joined the monks from all over the world, when they stepped out into

the limelight of the world-stage. But they shied away from the long journey on the surface, no matter whether by water or by air. So they relied on the thin strains of communication and participated from afar.

As a matter of fact those Patagonian dwarves were very small. One reason could be the insufficient nutrition and the poor light. Since they regularly were in contact with the Discalceati, their standard of living raised. For that the monks were overwhelmed with gold and silver by the thankful dwarves.

The taller the dwarves became, the easier the relationship with the monks turned out to be. The order splitted several times when so many dwarves entered and founded new cloisters. Thus they shortened the order by length but increased it by number. For their affection for the underground the ‘True Discalceati’ – as the little ones addressed themselves – settled wide parts of their cloister in the underground. While on the surface you could only see some poor huts.

Thus, things went on for years. And had started earlier then the world public noticed. That was why the order was regarded as questionable. The mother-church in Rome had a critical eye on them. But then a Discalceati conquered the Holy Stool in the early twentyfirst century. Who then tried to reform the church in the sense of the Discalceati. This trial woke up Yoshele and his band of angels, while the time became ripe for the resurrection, vaguely subscribed in the scripture, though.

Yoshele by then understood himself somewhat better, and his dark talks of the Kingdom of Heaven became clearer now. More definite than in the beginning on contemporary earth anyway.

Roving about and healing once in a while from physical and mental diseases, and stunning people by clever sermons was but a drop in the bucket. His target came closer step by step, though; but was still miles away. A lot had to be done. Much water had to flow down the Nile, or the Jordan, or any other river, before the goal was achieved.

33.Thanatos

“What’s it good for an individual when mankind reach their goal one day? – If mankind is succeeding. That’s still the question.” Arundle raise that point. The Repetitors were seated in the round for the monthly meeting. They didn’t mind meanwhile who was with them. Each and every one was welcome, while the task was fulfilled and the secret about the mystery of any

future prognosis was lifted.

“Yes, what good is it for the individual when mankind reach their final goal, while overwhelmed by misery?” Arundle repeated, then went on: “The sense of such a question seems obvious to me, after long centuries of the darkest ban and moral barbarism. How should we imagine the participation in the promised land for individuals? To me it is like in team-sports. Only the whole team can win. No matter whether the individual succeeds or even fails. Any player becomes champion with the winning team. It’s all a matter of the team.”

“Unfortunately real life is not like tournament” Billy-Joe put in – “and that’s kind of good though” Elvira added triumphantly. Her mother stroke her hair. Arundle felt confirmed and at ease.

“Such parables always suffer and are meant to clarify. You shouldn’t take too serious” she went on thoughtfully.

All she’d wanted to say was that the effort was always worth while. And that the effort was bargain enough. The target was more than anticipated, because it was hidden in the effort as meant in the saying “the road is the target”. No matter whether it looked bad for the time being and dark clouds overshadowed the future. True quality would surely prevail. And each stage was followed by another one, or something very different. When all legs were mastered and the target was reached and all tournaments were won – well, that would be like in the league. After a short break the new season would start again.

Arundle noticed that her thoughts didn’t please her, so she was happy when the Advisor showed up, because South-Michel was not able to answer. Her questions she didn’t utter aloud, she didn’t want to wake up sleeping dogs, while things were on a good way, so it looked, as far as her perspective allowed.

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The discovery of the Discalceati (barefooted) and their connection with the Patagonian dwarves pleased South-Michel very much. He also appreciated their taking over of the orders, while ignoring the Roman-catholic guidelines under the Pope’s favourable influence. Did the Advisor show up for that?

Was anything wrong down there? You could certainly blame the barefooted of ignorance. But they might have had to deal with a stubborn

sort of individuals, who didn't want to be saved.

South-Michel knew that the Discalceati (barefooted) were no Christians (who were grounded and enjoyed bare-footedness nevertheless), but were miles away from such autonomy and liberty, being of very different off-spring. But South-Michel didn't want to accept, and that was why he wanted to become enlightened by the Advisor.

But the Advisor didn't have the Discalceati or Franciscanians and the like in mind, but were looking for trouble, so it seemed to South-Michel. The reason for that he soon found out. It was once more the difference between the general and the materialist perspective. When it came to such difference neither the Advisor nor South-Michel were willing to give way. South-Michel would have liked to knock the Advisor on the nose, in order to show him the difference to the Tinnitus after a box on the ear.

While he was still wondering, he felt a heavy slap on the ear. He withstood the notion of grabbing his ear, but landed in return an immediate straight with his left on the Advisor's nose. He could hear the cartilage creak and saw the light blood squirt.

Thus the frontiers switched. He felt a bad ringing in the ear that drove him almost crazy, but didn't refrain him from helping his opponent. The bleeding had to be stopped. He got two napkins and rolled them to spills which he carefully fit into the nostrils, while blood was still pounding. He couldn't remember to have his opponent ever been so close. He felt piety the more so when he remembered his own ache, as if it had been yesterday. He felt the ache hammering between his eyes. He could feel the swell as it grew and while it did you could feel relieve.

The exchange this time was total, insofar as not only the injuries were switched but also the location. The Repetitors stood by helpless, and looked bewildered. That was a mess. Elvira weeped for excitement and her mother tried in vain to comfort her. With her past Elvira couldn't stand such outbreaks of violence. Who's just escaped from the swamp of the inexplicable, was hit by such an incident worst. Almost like the collision of two stratocruizers – i.e. an accident nobody could imagine. Very unlikely though, but not out of the world. Quite like those nuclear accidents of the old days, mostly caused by Human disability.

By now things were different because the human factor was cancelled, while artifacts had taken over the control functions. Neither negligence nor human aggression could cause any such accidents any more.

Right now South-Michel and the Advisor experienced such a reversion into the old days of life's origin. But nobody among the Repetitors dared to have a word on that with the two, not even Arundle, who was as yet not

advanced enough. There were many in heaven, who were, though. But where were they now? Who had his mighty word resounded to judge what just had happened? While the two victims laboured with their wounds and pitied each other, now after the shame. Instead of stepping on the brake beforehand! Deep inside the quarrel still prevailed, but was not allowed as yet to show on the surface by now.

“Wouldn’t have happened to artifacts, though” Pooty made himself known once again. He’d been away for a long time in the underground, all alone with the magical stone and Walter’s weak image who showed up each month in the darkness, limited by the reduced physical functions of his host. That was why Pooty became peculiar, while not necessarily more peculiar than the old Shaman on Billy-Joe’s behalf.

Who would like to endure without light and food? A miracle worth an explanation, for sure. By bears was known that they could endure a winter. But a whole year?

“That’s like nothing” Pooty trumped. He was by now almost the same as before.

“In the Australian poison-cabinet many things survive” he added. As if this was an argument.

For Billy-Joe the eruption of aggression on such a height was far more alarming, because it was supposed to be overcome once and for all. He had no doubt about the identity, but reckoned it to be Thanatos - the drive of death. While otherwise things were regulated by law. Which didn’t mean that death had lost all terror. That was why Billy-Joe saw in the outburst of physical violence on such a high level the incarnation of Thanatos himself. The Repetitors were on his side in that.

South-Michel and the Advisor weren’t but nobodies. What was the deeper sense, what the real meaning? Nobody doubted their fight had deeper meaning. Was it a signal for Malicious Marduk to be raising his horrid head once more? Or claimed his absence such outbreaks on sights and situations where they belonged no more? As if all the trash the evil foe had collected when tumbling, was emptied right back into the world?

It might be wise to invite Tika, came to Arundle’s mind. Would Billy-Joe be able to have a convincing word with her? At best she’d also ask Tibor as well in that.

She’d better refrain from any approach herself. - Tika was experienced in the underworld. She might even have met Thanatos in person. So Arundle had a word with Tibor who was just talking with Billy-Joe, and thus she managed to have killed two birds with one stone. They didn’t took time

thinking over her request. South-Michel was also in the boat and didn't mind his tinnitus. He saw a chance of outnumbering the Advisor. But Tika had objections though.

Pooty jumped of excitement in the pouch around Billy-Joe's neck, who just had had a check up with some new spare-parts installed and felt strong as ever. Tibor was also fit and physically up to date - the like. "Somehow men always overdo" Arundle wondered, and even Tika agreed.

"Wasn't all that important" she said with a smile "what Tibor had implanted". Arundle saw it likewise as far as Billy-Joe was concerned. South-Michel didn't mind. He would manage, a few spare-parts more or less wouldn't make the difference. Transmuted they hadn't as yet. For a ride in the chaises they still fitted.

Pooty experienced such a trip for the first time in his life. Well, in fact it wasn't his very first, because he had slept at the previous occasion. The magic stone might have kind of hypnotised him. That was why he was enthused for now. Tibor was also kind of nervous, but didn't show, and so was Billy-Joe. They imagined the holes in their bodies, you couldn't avoid. They felt as if they entered a camp of lepers. Not as visitors intending to help, but with the certainty of being infected.

Now they understood Tika again, and they wondered why they had forgotten about the gnawing anti-matter. The euphoria about the new limbs and spare parts might be the reason for that. Such a renovation affected like a drug. In order to get their feet back on the ground, they assured each other that they were rather safe behind the protective screen, when sticking to the time limits and didn't make excessive moves.

There they were again. The chaise hummed low idling and waved about a foot or so above the wiggly ground. He didn't notice beforehand because of Tika. But now it was all different. They longed for seeing the boss, whose name was Thanatos. They wanted to find out whether he was alright, and that Malicious Marduk didn't do him any wrong. Besides they wanted to find out about his character.

There must be a reason why government was split down here. Was it somehow likely that Malicious Marduk absorbed his comrade on the negative side? But that they would find out with Thanatos himself.

The Travellers asked South-Michel to move on. They feared of losing time. Therefore he directed the vehicle all around, while all were looking out for Thanatos. South-Michel handed out a draft of his image, though, keeping them busy.

Pooty conquered the very top up front, where he had the best all round view. But South-Michel was almost sure that Thanatos wouldn't walk around

just like that. He either sat on his throne or he was closed up in a dungeon.

South-Michel couldn't imagine anything else. Instead of Thanatos Malicious Marduk would be sitting on the throne. As the latter was known for his a thousand faces, he would hardly be recognized, and could easily disguise as Thanatos. That was why it was so important to find the real Thanatos in the dungeon – if he actually was imprisoned, while it was impossible to get him out of the world for good. Nobody could do that, not even Malicious Marduk.

- That would be it - to have death eliminated – thus nobody would pass on any more from now on. To South-Michel such an idea seemed so funny that he busted out in laughter. Billy-Joe and Tibor in his company couldn't imagine either. Only Pooty thought the idea of eliminating death a great proposal. And he asked himself if the others lacked of memory meanwhile. Had they not - for many a year - been fighting for the everlasting life? In each form and appearance they had striven hard. And that should all have been in vain?

Arundle had been the spearhead and intimate opponent on their side, though. They couldn't have forgotten all that, could they? You had only the remind them Pooty told himself, and that was what he did. They hadn't as yet seen their voyage under such aspect.

But Pooty was right. The reason why they had come here was to find out about death and whether the swamp was finally drained. After all the leading question was whether the underworld could be altered when you looked at it from a bird's perspective. And that was in fact the leading question in that struggle of the Advisor and South-Michel.

Thanatos' field of action would be much narrower, not only that of Malicious Marduk. While nobody as yet worried about them, how they'd manage to share their reduced obligations. It could well be that nothing was left for Thanatos.

Who of the two would make it? It seemed as if Malicious Marduk had the nose up front, but that could well mean to underestimate the Grim Reaper, whose scythe mowed ever since as long as there was life on earth.

Thanatos didn't have a thousand faces as had Malicious Marduk. Who ever looked him into the face, wouldn't see anything else anymore.

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The trip took time. Scared as they were the two passengers checked to

protective device, while the handle on the screen moved closer towards the red alarm zone with any minute. They had to get out here sooner not later. Only Pooty felt save next to the magic stone, and in the pouch. He might even be right. Still he should take no risk either. If they didn't succeed within the next ten minutes or so, they'd have certainly to leave. 'That was why Tibor tried even harder next to Pooty up front in the cockpit, assisted by the magic stone. Even walls were no obstacle, if they were thin enough.

Might be a side effect of that anti-matter, though, everything seemed to be made of transparent fabric down here. That was why things didn't shape properly in the dim light under the two moons, hardly making things lighter.

South-Michel made a decision. Although he was not affected in person, but blamed his passengers to be soft eggs, and honoured the Possum for being so brave. 'In such a company Billy-Joe had had good chances to prevail his year subsoil', he reckoned, but didn't say.

Pooty was the fitting character, who took risks without moaning, not even when the nose broke.

As he looked up to the low ceiling, a gap was opening and heavenly light burst in. Would he get a glimpse of the Advisor? But he lay in bed for his broken nose, so he thought, when the latter peered like a putty through the gap, and waved the chaise to get by and follow a certain direction.

You could see the magical castle of Thanatos. Pooty saw him through the wall chained up to a gigantic rock, he had to carry with him whenever he moved, while water stood up to his neck. 'He won't be bored, though' Pooty figured and made his report.

South-Michel lowered the chaise's nose down to the ground. Everything had to be done in a hurry now. With their matter they gnawed through the anti-matter of the chains. In no time the poor bastard was free. So they packed him into a protective gear as they didn't know what fabric he was, and lifted him up into the chaise, and off they went. The throne robber Malicious Marduk would also be taken care of certainly, - the Advisor would do, who signalled such preparedness.

Billy-Joe had damaged his fingers when packing up the prisoner and Tibor missed a piece of his right arm, after melting him loose.

So they all had their troubles, be it for the aches or for the freedom. Thanatos wanted to show his thankfulness by kissing his saviours, but they rejected for good reason.

What were they going to do with their freight? "He'd be best cared for in heaven" South-Michel suggested. But when he tried to reach the Advisor, he was not available. "We can't let him free, because of his fabric. He's

subject of the underworld, he could well be in part or whole made of anti-matter...”

“Can’t leave him in the closet either, the more so as he’s hammering against the hood. He longs for freedom obviously...”

South-Michel checked again on the telephone and this time succeeded. The Advisor showed up with a free pass for the comrade, so South-Michel opened the lid and Thanatos jumped out, as happy as can be. He’d already taken off the protective suit, they’d put him on a while ago.

Again he tried to embrace his saviours and to kiss them on the mouth, but they fled because of fear of dying right away. Only the Advisor let him do and so did South-Michel. “Perhaps the kiss of death helps against Tinnitus” he said to himself, while the Advisor’s nose became better right away after the kiss.

South-Michel and the Advisor quickly agreed on what could be done. Thanatos was definitely not allowed in heaven, but had to stay somewhere subsoil. So South-Michel figured what could be done on his behalf. Then nodded – “the dwarves will swallow that” he told himself.

Billy-Joe and first of all Tibor, who was missing half an arm, didn’t want to find out and disappeared into the nearest hospital for repair, where they had to draw a number and were sent away to go and buy something nice or have a coffee. In two hours time they should be back though.

Tibor suffered. “With such aches you do not mind a stroll in the Mall”

“Have a pill, that’s why they are available the nice nurse let him know and handed him a package. She was a Severine of the latest type with a most human attitude.

Somewhat dizzy Tibor went on, but free of aches guided by Billy-Joe who was a little better off.

Arundle had stayed back with Tika, and she quite well knew why. In the end it might have been vanity. Because losing parts of the body wasn’t exactly what was first on their agenda.

In the evening their husbands were like new again. South-Michel had been busy with Thanatos meanwhile and finally got him back into the chaise.

“This is the only way of entering your revised empire” he assured him over and over again. But Thanatos argued that he didn’t want an empire of his own any more. He’d never understood why he had been imprisoned in such a sad place. South-Michel had no suitable answer on that.

34.A Royal Appearance

Thanatos seemed to be a nice fellow, who didn't want to harm anybody, and couldn't understand why people were afraid of him. But he had to stay somewhere, you couldn't just let him loose on mankind. "The spheres had been separated for good reasons, Your Highness" South-Michel intended to please his customer and have him dive back into the underground, where a comfortable residence was waiting, so he said.

From down there he could certainly do his governing job and arrange his messengers, while meanwhile things were a real mess. So South-Michel tried to convince him and raise his conscience. –

Leaving his troop all alone was certainly not fair, so Thanatos reckoned when entering the chaise again.

This time the route was short. Next to the pilot the time passed by just like that. While passing through interesting geological formations or even hidden subsoil lakes or bubbles. Blind monsters appeared before the beamers flash-like - then disappeared again.

Was that really the straight route? Soon Thanatos was lost. But South-Michel went on explaining what was to be seen – just like a tourist guide.

Dwarves didn't settle that deep. They favoured the connection with the surface. Meanwhile they cared for half an hour of sunlight daily for health reasons.

The chaise was now heading into a very elegant drive. An impressive arch rose, you could hardly recognize in the dim light, down here. A phalanx of eager servants flanked the gateway Thanatos was soon stepping up. He felt kind of charmed. "What you are missing after all" he wondered, while on his face was a gentle smile.

He was an attractive appearance, though, all in black and elegant grey. The black wings he kept by folded like a tailcoat. His body stuck in a tight grey shimmering dress of fine woven bat-fuss.

He didn't carry a scythe, and on his shoulder sat no scull either. His fine somewhat strange appearing face was framed by styled grey locks, easing the firm appeal.

A truly Royal appearance, so the serving dwarves reckoned, and were pleased by their first impression, while hoping that he didn't intend to harvest among them for a start.

South-Michel didn't wait whether his passengers turned around for him, but rushed away. The castle with all whereabouts could be explained by others. The dwarves, who built the whole facility would certainly fit better for that. Loads of diamonds and other jewellery had been built in, he had heard, which was taken away from other sites, much to the disappointment of the inhabitants who were concerned.

But who could build up a palace for a governing prince – practically in no time, and have it equipped adequately?

Well – the basic set-up had been available though, while still a lot had to be adjusted. The natural dome was rough and naked, and that was why the little masters stressed on the interior and did their best.

When Tibor came home, he found his place devastated and bare of any ornament. The walls were covered with ugly scars and bruises of all kind, where formally gold and diamonds had been blinking. All his personal property had been searched, and everything of value was gone.

Tika was very upset and felt threatened in her privacy. “We could have talked about everything” Tibor agreed far too generous.

“That's why they dared. You are far too indulgent” she shouted, while he stood by rather confused and didn't know where to look.

While she should have understood, because it was all about her big boss in a way. As far as the underworld was concerned, she felt competent. “My engagement has nothing to do with such palace. Besides it's not his fault. Nobody ordered such a palace. They did it on their own. Its a shame, yes, it is...”

The matter had a positive side. Tibor knew now about the whereabouts of that palace, right below of Susamee's island, he figured that the material hadn't been transported far, neither by air nor by sea. Because on the other side below the Isle of Wisdom-tooth things hadn't changed for the last century.

“The island makes sense” Tibor concluded and was looking forward a bit, as he had an idea. “Imagine, Tika, your island is his residence. That means quite something.”

Tika calmed down. Such ornament wasn't all important any more. But the violation of privacy was still something she'd never accept.

South-Michel signalled understanding and promised to have a serious word with the culprits.

“I'm sure they sent Trolls for that... While nobody told them to rob private homes – for sure not...” he confirmed.

“Can all be settled and repaired” Tibor interjected “I wasn’t robbed after all, and I don’t mind principles that much.”

Tibor knew what he was talking since they had a Troll in their family. Well, Omirah had changed quite a lot since she had become mother. And Emasus had been healed before - some time ago. Their little daughter they had called after her grandmother, and was just about the age of spelling her name. While the birth had been not easy. Finally only a Caesarean cut saved mother and child.

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Those Repetitors were seated in a circle and had a word with South-Michel about Thanatos’ move to the new palace, and how he liked it. It seemed however that the dark business had been taken up again. The agents of death swarmed about the lands almost as ever. They didn’t concentrated on the local area, and spared no expenses but went as far as Greenland. They were noticed far up North as well as in the deep South in the crucial areas, where it was bitter cold. Their harvest was still worth the effort, while the Pandemia was on the retreat and health was on the march.

So far everything seemed to be all right. South-Michel came with some aides who were willing and able to talk about the ‘Gentle Lord’, as they addressed him giggling. He’d be a womaniser and a gay Lothario of the worst kind, they said.

“As long as nobody gets harmed” – Judith put in. But that was exactly the point. The ‘petit mort’ (i.e. the ‘little death’) as the saying went, was his speciality, and didn’t do without victim, but on legendary quality.

The question – neither South-Michel nor any other could answer - was, whether Thanatos could stay. The Advisor didn’t comment on that as yet. “He’ll be taking care of that” South-Michel vaguely said, who seemed to hope that the whole affair would come to a deadly end at last. So he said and bursted out into a childish laughter. Nobody followed him in that. So his laughter died him on the lips. For jokes the time was not prepared.

The women were irritated and the men didn’t see the point South-Michel made.

“Lets change the subject. No more comments on such a slippery theme, please”.

But Arundle was too late. Billy-Joe had picked the subject up in her back, and thought it somewhat fancy though. “Who is mowing with the big

scythe, wouldn't mind the little sickle either..." he said meaningfully.

"We do understand" Arundle interrupted, before he would take off. She saw him pumping like a May beetle and knew by experience that something stunning would follow. So she disturbed him by interfering with a general remark.

"Death as seducer is no rare theme after all. Most mystery cults dealt with the subject..."

"...and certainly in the way as was mentioned here" Tibor put in, who wanted to assist his friend.

"Now it is becoming orgiastic" Grisella said meaningfully and clicked with her tongue as gentlemen use to do when among themselves in the men's parlour or a men's club.

Before the big swing was finally made and the fronts formed South-Michel reported of the castle life but didn't meet much interest.

It was too late though. Grisella knew a lot about the 'Petit Mort'. Where it came from, who Breton and Artaud had been. Many more had written about the subject, so Arundle remembered. Each and everyone had to find out for herself how true such findings were. Falling in love with Thanatos was certainly a major subject for many generations, and still common. But the shy game was hard to detect, while death was always an option.

But Thanatos was not what he stood for. He didn't gamble and didn't bet, and was not after such near-miss situations like the adventurers of all times, who climbed mountains with plain fingers or danced on a rope over the Niagara Falls and so on.

In his new palace subsoil the visiting guest was charmed by a voluptuous site. South-Michel had arranged for that unquestioned, who had guided him down there in the first place. He had to arrange for the playmates, who were easy enough to find. There was no advertising necessary.

Among the Repetitors his report met severe opposition. What he did was a crime, no matter whether the subjects were Nixes or Nymphs or Troll-teenagers, and human laws didn't suit. Adrian Humperdijk, the former assistant Headmaster of the School of Inbetween', tried his best in that. He was after all the presidential adviser in Australis. Corinia also had a word with her friend Boetie, the Prime Minister. But South-Michel had the clergy on his side. So nothing changed. Nobody could stop the teens from changing the sides.

Thanatos was a great womanizer and a charming seducer. Had he been of

this world, he would have been raised into the Olymp like Don Juan or Casanova. South-Michel's task was an easy one though. He had only to arrange for the transport and for the appropriate habitual adjustments necessary, and certainly for the protective care.

For the Repetitors it seemed as if South-Michel was lifting his mask and showed his true face. In former times Arundle would have been disgusted, as Judith still was and Grisella and the younger ones the like. But she knew now about the other side as well and a clear black and white painting didn't meet reality any more. Without the whip of evil, condemnation was not so easy any more.

Did Thanatos indulge in evil lust? Did he limit and reduce the development of the chosen? Nobody expected a clear answer from them, as fogged in as they were. Drugs were certainly involved too.

Thanatos handed freely out the 'Petit Mort'. For himself he didn't miss anything, or became less. By that he took part in life, which becomes more by itself, while death is the other way round. A contradiction, Thanatos was unable to explain.

Those orgiastically provoked 'Petits morts' carried such contradiction with them. Those who were able to let things be, were granted by a fulfillment of the utmost kind (the clientele was mainly female) insofar as they exceeded all boundaries. In the summit death and life mingled. Becoming and fading became an act of creation. Thus the mortal was guided on eternal trace and became involved in the last mystery of being.

Not for long but incomprehensible enough, because forgetting set in right away, and nobody was able or willing to speak about what had been seen and felt or happened. While such inner sight could be seen only with the inner eye, which wasn't yet experienced enough, but might as well be interrelated with the 'other way of seeing' as was practised in the School of Inbetween, so Arundle figured who had come to such an end at last.

Yoshele followed another string, but was heading for the same result. As to him, re-birthing stood at the beginning of a new life, and was accompanied by the dying of the 'old Adam'. - 'Kind of abstract, though' Arundle reckoned. And favoured in a way the 'Petit Mort' all the more, because you realized death as an ecstatic experience, by cheating when you stayed alive.

Thanatos now appeared as a kind of playboy. But that was certainly not enough. Had they answered the question whether his new facilities met his taste? Would he stay and do his job? The Repetitors couldn't come to a conclusion. South-Michel was still busy with his tinnitus and somehow out of order and the Advisor continued to be absent.

“That means, they do not know up there, whether they should intervene or not” Arundle mused then went on “Malicious Marduk drove him out of the underworld, that is why he asked for asylum, and was granted a preliminary stay with us. He is now waiting for a final okay.”

“But we seem to dislike his behaviour, so I understand, am I right?” Grisella asked.

“Disgust, you mean...” Judith agreed. We are more alarmed or disturbed, because we feel that something is wrong”.

“...or shouldn’t be at all...” Corinia interrupted.

“because we can’t understand or accept what happens to the poor girls” Florina added.

“...or we impute things, which might not apply” Corinia put in. She knew better about the agreement of the South-Michel-priests with Thanatos. By that, the young women weren’t asked at all. Their stay in Thanatos’ palace was part of the priestess-training. And wasn’t really favoured by all of them.

“Thanatos exploits his position and puts in his age-old experience. What he does, has little to do with his obligations, I’d say.” Corinia went on.

“Am I mistaken when I say that such training also contains the annual mystery-feast?” Grisella wanted to know.

“Yes, indeed. It’s their way of coming of age down there. I’ve never taken part, because strangers aren’t allowed, but what I know – it’s kind of free without limits, though.” Corinia admitted.

“Is Thanatos involved as well?” Grisella insisted.

“As I said, I never had the chance to experience in person...” Corinia paused then went on –“It’s not unlikely though. He would fit well into the frame I presume.”

“He’d certainly be not the only one who’s able to achieve such a result, then, would he?” Arundle asked without expecting an answer.

35. The Methusalems

It had been Dorothea who raised the idea. Years ago when she reckoned it a great loss for mankind, if her husband would die. Well, his death didn't come then as a matter of fact. The idea as such however fascinated him. It pampered his vanity and raised him into the adequate light, where he enjoyed to be.

But what about all the others who were normal? Who didn't look back on a table of honours? But on a colourful, or even boring life, that dripped away? And nothing but lost time came out, when looked at from a critical point of view, with a certain idea of life.

The conclusion was soon at hand that such a life didn't deserve extra years. Quite the opposite - you would deduct here, and add there, where it was worth while. Mankind would be served. But as soon as you saw it that way, you realized how queer the outcome was, and you better not mused any further, as criteria for a worth while living were hardly to be found.

Justice was somehow involved, no doubt about that. And equality as well. Even the most high-brow knew. Their position couldn't be defended, no matter how hard they tried, when the mask of the worthy was torn off their face and the ugly mug of selfish arrogance appeared.

The Methusalems of the Isle of Wisdom-tooth very well realized where they were involved. But in order to prove how equal they felt, and how they rejected all privileges, they should have committed suicide by jumping off the highest cliff of their island.

They certainly knew that the race against the time was lost right from the start. Man would continue to die, long before their granted lot was filled. Be it for carelessness or – and that was the true scandal – by pure distress.

Meanwhile their own lives endured. Those of them who had been in the hands of death – for what reasons ever – had returned as they pleased, so it seemed.

Thus they had to swallow the bitter pill. They were privileged and belonged to the elite without being elitist. And year by year which they were lining up, their guilt was growing and spoilt their joy of life.

Their grief overshadowed their assemblies like a poisonous cloud. Repetitors - as they called themselves - they weren't any more for a long time.

Usufructuaries they were, no doubt about that, and couldn't be helped. The more they mused and talked the worse their inner pain became, they had to carry each by themselves. They knew the growing pile they underwent with the years. They were witty enough to understand that it couldn't work in the long run. In vain they pushed aside the unsolvable, it returned mightier

and more threatening, the harder they tried. What was not solved during daytime came back - enforced - in nightmares.

Sensible they were. Sensible as can be. The number of years only packed little tissue on top. Their souls were like raw eggs or tender veils of jelly-fish, getting hurt by the tiniest irritations.

As long as their task endured, they could tell themselves that they were irreplaceable. Nobody overlooked the future. They were the only ones who came from the specific past. They knew how to arrange what was to come, because it was part of their own past. That was why they knew their task. They did it as long as there was no unknown future any more, because time had picked up.

Yes, the magic years became picked up, and were formerly inspected by means of magic - of a magic bow who once escaped his time. Only a little girl could handle, but risked to strand just anyway. And whose success enabled then a magic stone from Uluru, whose magic power unleashed by doubling only - by that strange pair consisting of an educated giant kangaroo and a witty possum.

That was all yesterday's stuff, and lay buried and closed behind them. The past could not be shaken, no matter whether it was doubled, as it was in fact.

Many a heroic deed they had fulfilled. The victory over Malicious Marduk became only possible by the repetition of the future in the presence. Only because they shifted the switches the right way then in the (past) future, the victory over the evil foe had had a chance. You couldn't get rid of him though, but his position was weakened considerably. And that had stunning consequences for human life on earth, when the final battle was fought, and the Saviour came once more.

Such deed alone asked for respect and acceptance. But was that enough to claim an ever lasting life? Were those Repetitors allowed to allege all those privileges, most people still not even dreamt of? Well, as time goes by, things may change to the better – what an outlook, tough.

Yes, that was their task. And they realized how the years helped them, and what it meant, not to start with nil all over again, and try to catch up with the pile of knowledge gathered in a short life before being enabled to top up your bits and pieces.

Seen from that angle, mankind was still in need of them.

The negotiations with Thanatos stood shortly before the end. They referred to his habitat and his main business on earth. While the Repetitors gave way as far as his palace was concerned, they now expected his

generosity when it came to his central business.

But who would have dared to think of such a chance for the living in the old days?

That was why the Repetitors felt more save by now, as far as their usefulness was concerned, and so they asked themselves whether their value and their privileges balanced somehow. The more so as you could see people all over the world with tendencies of picking up with them, who would certainly succeed sooner or later, while the big swing was due all over and everywhere.

‘So lets close by now’. The Repetitors looked at each other questioningly.

A far sight into the future at present had been done. ‘Do we know now more of what mankind’s heading for? We, who have worked hard on it?’ It was Arundle who was still wondering, when she was understood without spoken words – not precisely – but somehow. ‘It all depends on where you land... – or when – don’t you forget ...’