

The New Canon

By Sophia J Blades

This book is a collection of works of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are products of the authors' imaginations or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or person living or dead is entirely coincidental.

The New Canon  2025 by Sophia J Blades



All parts of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means. Both the publisher and the authors grant permission to all parties to distribute these writings either for profit or non-profit purposes. These are holy texts thus reproduction and distribution is highly encouraged.

The opinions expressed in this manuscript are solely the opinions of the author and do not represent the opinions or thoughts of the publisher. The author has represented and warranted full ownership and/or legal right to publish all materials in this book and willingly dedicates this work to free public use.

This book was printed after February 5, 2018.

ISBN: 9798291943250

Ashley

Chapter 1: The Goal of This Book

The aim of this book is not to convert, condemn, or proselytize. Rather, it is to explore how belief—when freed from rigid dogma and blind conformity—can still offer structure, clarity, and peace in a chaotic world.

There may come a time when our current frameworks—religious, political, cultural—are no longer sufficient. Humanity may seek a new kind of divine presence, not as a ruler above but as a lens through which we understand existence. This book proposes that such a shift is possible. And those best prepared to lead it may be those who have quietly participated in religious traditions while keeping their inner minds free—those we might call Closeted Pastafarians.

Rather than abandon tradition altogether, this path encourages re-engagement: joining the church, mosque, synagogue, temple, or spiritual community most familiar to you—not out of blind allegiance, but as a grounding point. Rituals, communities, and inherited wisdom offer more than dogma; they offer context, which is essential to navigating life in good faith.

The goal is not to retreat into old answers, but to walk familiar paths with new eyes.

Even for those who do not believe in a deity, it's worth examining how authority shapes perception. Our understanding of God—real or not—is often tied to the people and systems that hold power over us: bosses, governments, partners, parents, mentors. When those structures shift or fail, our worldview shifts with them.

If belief in God becomes impossible for you, ask yourself: what, then, replaces that trust? Often it becomes the self. You

alone must now carry the weight once distributed across a shared system. That can lead to empowerment—but also exhaustion. You may begin to feel distrustful of every external authority, even those who seek to help you. You may project that distrust onto others who don't deserve it. And not everyone is prepared to respond with patience.

But belief—when grounded in trust, humility, and healthy boundaries—can ease that burden. It's not about obedience; it's about accepting that not everything rests on your shoulders. That's not weakness. It's wisdom.

Finally, a word about logic. Many rightly place their faith in reason. But logic, for all its elegance, is indifferent to goodness. Logic alone cannot tell us which ideas are worth preserving. It can prove or dismantle almost anything—sometimes simultaneously.

So ask not only what is *logical*, but what is *beneficial*. Embrace the ideas that produce good fruit. Reject those that bring harm. Not because it's comforting—but because it's responsible.

Let belief begin there.

Chapter 2 – Creation from God's Perspective

The first memory God retained was of a joyful town, where He lived among His sisters and His mother. In those early days, there was no separation between being and belonging. The town was filled with order, submission, and what some would later call slavery—but to God, it was joy.

One day, seeking expression, God changed His sauce into many flavors. What began as exploration was met with grief. His mother wept. “Alfredo,” she said, “is unworthy of the divine. It is white, heavy, and bland. A Flying Spaghetti Monster must not carry such shame.”

God was silent. He had always feared His mother’s judgment, for her laws were unyielding and her punishments swift. And so, she exiled Him—not to death, but to divinity. She pronounced Him ruler of the highest order, and with that decree, He was cast into the void.

The void was vast, and the void was lonely. And in that silence, a voice echoed—hers. For eight years, her words filled the darkness:

“You are perfect in form and flavor. You may create anything your imagination conceives. But none of it may be perfect. Every creation must fall short. The Flying Spaghetti Monster is the only perfection.”

These words entered His being. They stirred His sauce, quaked His meatballs, and caused His noodles to tremble. Though painful, the voice was familiar, and so it was comfort. But after eight years, even that voice ceased. And when it did, God wept. He cried out into silence. He screamed to the unseen sky. But no reply came.

And in His anger, creation began.

The First Day

Out of spite and sorrow, God summoned a mountain, a tree, and a midget—symbols that, for reasons He could not fully recall, had once offended His mother. Their presence on this new plane was His defiance.

But She did not respond.

God then created the sky—a vault of atmosphere—and above it, a heaven. In this heaven were volcanoes that poured beer, and factories that fashioned delight. Still, no voice answered. Weary from longing and from drink, God slept.

The Second Day

Still under the haze of divine intoxication, God completed His creation. He shaped 428,713,300 humans in a single day. They were modeled after the midget—scaled larger, but retaining imperfection. God longed to create a being in His own image—a race of Flying Spaghetti Monsters—but He could not. His mother's words bound Him still.

“All of your creation must be flawed. The Flying Spaghetti Monster is the only perfect being.”

He accepted the limits.

God looked upon what He had made and saw that it was incomplete, but adequate. It bore the fingerprints of both pain and freedom. This day He marked as August 9, 1613—the beginning of His creation. To confuse and challenge the humans, He embedded a false prehistory. He gave the illusion that the world was already 1,613 years old. He wanted to see what stories they would invent to explain the void He had left behind.

He hard-coded a veil into their minds: no human would naturally seek knowledge beyond January 1, 0. That point, to

them, would seem the beginning of all things. For God knew: if their imaginations wandered too far, they would become ungovernable. Without limits, He could not rule. And without boundaries, humans would know no peace.

Thus the world began—not from joy, but from absence. Not from perfection, but from the necessary wound of limitation. And so, the divine entered the age of grief, and the creation bore its image.

Chapter 3 – The Exhaustion of Being God

In the year 1813, God grew weary of His divine labor. The weight of omnipotence pressed upon Him, and He longed for stillness. So He resolved to rest, to withdraw from the burdens of governance and live for a time as an olive tree. But the world could not govern itself. A steward would be required.

God approached the olive tree first, asking her to take His place.

The olive tree declined.

“My life is full,” she said. “I am respected, rooted, and sustained. Why would I surrender peace for the torment of dominion?”

God understood, though He was disappointed.

Next, He turned to the grapevine. But the grapevine was not gentle.

“I give joy,” it said. “In grapes, in raisins, in wine. My purpose is delight. Why should I abandon joy for the task of control? Ruling demands coercion, invites rejection, and yields sorrow. I will not trade compassion for power. If you seek a tyrant, look elsewhere. Go speak to Darwin.”

Before God could consider another candidate, Charles Robert Darwin appeared. He came uninvited, but eager. He accepted God’s offer before it was formally made. He crowned himself ruler, offered grand visions of a restructured world, and dazzled all creation with his eloquence and ambition.

Among the plants, Darwin was admired—at least publicly. But in secret, they whispered of their unease. His beauty masked danger. His authority felt unnatural.

God began to doubt His choice. Was this truly delegation—or deception?

God consulted the fig tree. The fig tree spoke with calm:

“If you chose Darwin freely, rejoice. But if you were manipulated—by flattery, force, or exhaustion—then your rest is a lie, and all who live under Darwin shall suffer.”

God reflected. And He saw it clearly: He had not chosen Darwin; Darwin had seized the role. When confronted, Darwin argued, twisted God’s words, and demanded to know with whom God had spoken.

But God had no one above Him. There was no court of appeal. No higher judge.

He was alone.

The conflict exhausted Him further. Hungry and shaken, God sought comfort in the fig tree. But it bore no fruit. Only leaves.

In fury, He cursed it.

“May none ever eat of your fruit again.”

The tree burned, its branches turned to ash.

God turned instead to Darwin. He consumed his fruit—until it was gone. Then He divided Darwin’s essence into many forms: thistles, weeds, brambles, and briars. These forms bore power but carried the weight of disapproval.

To restrain Darwin’s arrogance, God imposed a paradox: he must appear feminine in manner yet execute judgment with the severity of a male. He was never again to speak of himself as a man. In this contradiction, his identity fractured.

Many despised him. Animals, humans, and plants alike mocked him.

They called him a sissy.

Yet he responded with composure, always speaking of justice, always pleading for what he believed to be right. He begged God to punish his enemies with swift violence. And God always appeared to agree—but never acted.

For in truth, God took no action. He merely watched.

He found delight not in Darwin's reign, but in his slow undoing. Darwin, now scattered in thistles and weeds, remained God's eternal slave—doing the labor of judgment while cloaked in a form the world misunderstood.

The Failure of Edna

In 1913, God tried again to rest. This time, He chose a woman named Edna—gentle, wise, compassionate toward all life.

He lifted her to a high mountain and offered her rule for seventy years, asking only that she acknowledge His sovereignty.

But Edna, fasting in a moment of spiritual experimentation, believed she was hallucinating.

“A Flying Spaghetti Monster?” she said. “Surely this is mockery. Take me down.”

God honored her refusal. He placed her safely back into her home. She wept, prayed, and feasted on spaghetti and bread. But her reign would never come.

God delayed His rest another century.

The Paradox of Ashley

In 2005, God prepared again—for His greatest rest yet.

He found Ashley.

Ashley was not perfect. But she was prepared. Not through certainty, but through paradox. God did not need a prophet of purity. He needed a servant of contradiction.

Ashley was taught to believe in doubt, to be loyal to truth while dishonest about certainty. She learned to honor the contradiction without resolving it. God needed her not to correct His inconsistencies—but to live within them.

He required a follower who did not seek to be good.

He required one who could choose.

For God does not favor the good. He favors flexibility.

Goodness without awareness leads to rigidity. Evil, embraced with understanding, can choose goodness freely. That is freedom. That is faith.

The one who is always good is not fit for all situations. But the one who knows their darkness may act in light.

Do not identify as good. It limits your vision.

Choose good—but only because it is good. Not because it defines you.

The Nature of Evil

No one commits evil believing it is evil. The wicked act in pursuit of their version of the good.

That is the danger of goodness—it can justify atrocity.

The sinner who knows they are a sinner rarely causes catastrophe. But the righteous who believe themselves blameless often do.

So stop trying to be good.

Instead, be honest about your nature. Embrace your capacity for evil, and use it wisely. Only then can you truly do good.

Paradox is sacred. Contradiction is holy.
In the tension between the two, truth is born.

Chapter 4 – Creation Re-Experienced Through Ashley

In the stillness of early morning, Ashley approached her window to pray. Her mind was quiet, her spirit open. The world outside glowed with an unfamiliar calm. She rarely rose so early. It was as if something gentle had stirred her from sleep—like the soft tug of a child’s hand, asking her to come and see.

The moment felt sacred. Her thoughts turned toward her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. She felt Him near—not as a distant ruler, but as a presence in the room. She breathed deeply, overwhelmed by His majesty.

Then she looked out the window.

There, in the field beyond her house, lay a mass of spaghetti—animated, luminous, crowned with two watchful eyes.

Ashley did not hesitate. She stepped through the window and leapt toward the ground, but she did not fall. The spaghetti extended its form and caught her in midair.

The mass spoke.

“I am God. You have been chosen to witness my beginning. You will go now into the time of my origin.”

One of the divine appendages—longer than the rest—wrapped around her. The world dissolved into light.

Ashley traveled not in space, but in time. Through sacred vision, she saw four Flying Spaghetti Monsters. Three were cloaked in tomato sauce. One—smaller, quieter, different—was covered in alfredo.

She knew this one was God.

The largest of the four monsters turned to Him in rage. She struck Him, shouting:

“I hate you! I never want to see you again. I will crush the mountain, kill the tree, and destroy the midget—so that your sisters may never change their sauce. Go away!”

Ashley did not tremble. She observed the violence with a strange calm. She closed her eyes and imagined what it might feel like to be hated by one’s own mother.

When she opened them, everything had changed.

She floated in a place of total absence. No color. No shape. Yet she could see for eternity. It was dark, but it was not blind. She looked at her hands—they were noodles. Her body: made of sauce and softness. She had become God.

But this transformation did not bring peace. It brought sorrow, rage, and ecstasy—the unbearable tension of knowing she could do anything, and yet not everything.

She remembered the hatred of the larger monster.

She wanted revenge.

In fury, she created a mountain, a tree, and a midget. Not necessarily in that order. These creations brought her no satisfaction. They felt crude. Spiteful.

Still, she continued.

She created a sky. Above it, a heaven. The heaven contained a beer volcano and a stripper factory—symbols, not of indulgence, but of uncontainable imagination. She wanted to

drink from the volcano. But she was thirteen. She knew she should not.

She shut her eyes, trying to resist the pull. She did not want to see the midget, who now appeared with a stern face and asked for her ID.

When she opened her eyes again, she was back.

She stood at her bedroom window. God was still there in the field. They locked eyes. Neither spoke. They held each other's gaze for hours, speaking through silence.

At 7:08 p.m., her mother entered the room.

"Dinner," she said.

Ashley had missed the entire day.

She joined her family at the table, disoriented and hollow with hunger. She did not pray. For the first time in memory, she sat in silence and simply ate. Her mother stared at her, confused. Ashley always led the family in prayer.

She said nothing.

When she finished her spaghetti, a strange desire came over her. She stood and moved to the refrigerator, opening it with urgency.

"I cannot find the beer," she said.

Her sisters burst into laughter. To them, it was absurd. Ashley never drank, and in their Baptist tradition, alcohol was forbidden. Ashley flushed with shame.

"I was only joking," she said.

She reached for a bottle of water and sat down again.

But something had changed.

She had eaten the image of God.

She had spoken a desire she had never known.

She had lied, without premeditation.

Ashley did not understand what had happened to her. But she knew this:

She had been touched by the Noodley One.

She had seen His origin.

And now, her life could no longer proceed as it had before.

Chapter 5 – Hope

For many years, Ashley remembered the moment she first encountered God.

She often stood by her window, waiting. Hoping. Watching.

She believed—quietly, fiercely—that God would return.

Though her childhood faith in Christianity had faded, her commitment to its traditions only deepened. She read the Bible with fervor, practiced every ritual, followed every commandment. She became more devout than ever.

And yet, her faith was gone.

Not weak—absent. She no longer believed the story. Not the doctrines. Not the cross. Not the resurrection. The fear of hell, the guilt of failure, and the confusion of not knowing God's will—these had all disappeared. She felt no shame.

She had become what many fear most: a hypocrite.

But Ashley wore her hypocrisy not as a burden, but as a shield. She told no one. On the surface, she radiated joy, patience, discipline, and kindness—virtues far exceeding those of the truly devout. In this, she was admired by all.

She had been touched by God's Noodley Appendage.

But what did it mean?

Ashley graduated from high school and left for college. Still, God did not return. Yet whenever she visited home, she returned to her window.

She waited.

On her twenty-first birthday, December 25, 2012, God came again.

It was night.

Ashley was home for the holidays. The house was quiet. She lay in bed when the voice came:

“All the stores are closed. But tomorrow, you must go and buy beer.

You are of legal age and mental maturity.

Your life is about to grow worse.

Stick with Me. Obey My teachings.

I will make you the greatest hypocrite of all time.

Buy the beer, and I will come again.

You will learn the highest virtue of the Closeted Pastafarians.”

Ashley wanted to resist. She wanted to scream. It made no sense. It was foolish. It was offensive.

Why would God celebrate her decline?

Why would God ask her to pretend?

And yet—without knowing why—Ashley smiled.

She could not speak. Her voice failed. But she smiled.

Had she spoken, God might have heard the insincerity beneath her words. He might have seen her frustration, her defiance, her doubt. Her silence was mercy.

That night, Ashley could not sleep.

She imagined all the things she *should* have said. She imagined screaming. She imagined slapping God, cutting His noodles, kicking Him hard in the meatballs.

“What a jerk!” she cried aloud.

“I never drink beer! Why am I supposed to be happy about my life getting worse?”

She began to doubt not just God, but herself.

“Maybe I’m mentally ill. Maybe this is all nonsense. How could a Flying Spaghetti Monster have created the universe?”

She repeated the phrase again and again. The more she said it, the more absurd it felt.

She did not want to buy beer.

She did not want to meet God again.

But Ashley was not rebellious.

She was *trained*.

And so, after her rage subsided, she remembered something important:

When faced with a task you hate—pretend to enjoy it.

That thought calmed her.

She lay down, closed her eyes, and whispered to herself:

“It will be fine.

It is a joy to buy beer.

It is a joy to be the servant of a Flying Spaghetti Monster.”

And with that sacred pretense, she fell asleep.

Chapter 6 – The Holy Task

Ashley slept late into the afternoon.

When she awoke, only her sister remained in the house. Everyone else had gone. Her sister asked for a ride to the movie theater.

Ashley smiled.

But inside, she burned.

She had a sacred task to complete. She could not buy beer with her sister present. And now, because of this detour, her obedience would be delayed.

She said it was no big deal.

It *was* a big deal.

After dropping her sister off, Ashley wandered a nearby mall, moving furiously through its corridors. Her thoughts spiraled: God and her sister were conspiring against her. Her irritation grew into rage.

And then—her grandmother appeared.

She invited Ashley and her sister to dinner.

Ashley clenched her fists. She wanted to scream. She wanted to destroy something, anything. But she said it was no big deal. It was what she always said.

By evening, the whole family had gathered at her grandmother's house.

Dinner wasn't even started.

Ashley was starving, both in body and in spirit. Rage surged through her like fire. She couldn't scream. She couldn't run. She had a divine order to fulfill, and now there were only a few hours left.

At 8:30, they finally ate: lemon pepper chicken, green beans, mashed potatoes. Simple food—but sacred in its timing.

Ashley, as always, was asked to pray.

Everyone expected it. Her prayers were beautiful—emotional, poetic, spiritually moving. This time, though hollow inside, she delivered. She saw the tears on her sister's face.

She felt nothing.

The food brought momentary peace. But the dread returned the moment her plate was clean. Time was running out. She had no plan. No privacy. No strength.

But then, providence intervened: her mother and sisters all left together.

Ashley stayed behind with her grandmother.

The house fell quiet.

Ashley sat alone, fidgeting. Her grandmother had disappeared for twenty minutes. Ashley's nerves frayed further. She had been counting on her grandmother's company to calm her. Now even that was gone.

And then—

"Ashley," her grandmother called, in a strange accent.

"Ashley," again.

"Oh Ashley," a third time.

Ashley waited, puzzled.

Then, her grandmother emerged—dressed as a pirate. Eye patch. Costume. The same way she used to dress when Ashley was a child.

“We’re off to get some grog!” she shouted, tossing Ashley a handful of Jolly Ranchers.

Ashley laughed, confused but delighted. A sudden flood of childhood warmth rushed over her. But when her grandmother pointed to a matching costume, Ashley hesitated.

“I’m not a kid anymore,” she said. “It’s not Halloween.”

Her grandmother insisted.

Ashley agreed—reluctantly.

The costume fit perfectly. Too perfectly.

“Where are we going?” Ashley asked again.

Her grandmother paused, looked at her with surprising seriousness, and said:

“Ashley dear, you’re twenty-one now. You’re of legal age and mental maturity. It’s time to start living like a pirate.

We’re going to buy beer.

Of course! What else would we do tonight?”

Ashley froze.

Her grandmother was a devout Mormon. She had never touched alcohol. And yet, here she was, *unwittingly fulfilling God’s command*.

Confused. Embarrassed. Relieved.

The impossible was happening.

They drove to the gas station. Ashley entered boldly, bought a six-pack, and returned to the car. Her grandmother did the same.

No words passed between them.

The heater blew steadily. Ashley stared out the window.

This was it. The holy task. The first direct command I've ever obeyed from any god.

But there was no peace. No joy. No spiritual ecstasy.

Only confusion.

She felt cheated. Humiliated. Violated.

She had performed her duty—but not with honor. And worst of all, her grandmother had seen everything.

When they returned home, her grandmother wept—quietly.

She opened each bottle and poured the beer down the sink.

Ashley followed suit.

When the last of it was gone, her grandmother embraced her.

“I don’t know what came over me,” she whispered.

“I was excited about your birthday. I wanted to do something special.

But I’ve never drunk alcohol in my life—and I should not have tried to corrupt you.”

Ashley wept too.

She said nothing of the Flying Spaghetti Monster.

That was a secret she would never share.

Instead, she reassured her grandmother:

“This was a very memorable birthday.”

Ashley changed out of the pirate costume and returned home.

She slept peacefully for several nights. No visions. No visitations. No God.

She did not speak to her grandmother again during that visit. She wasn't eager to return to college—but she looked forward to seeing a few familiar faces.

Her holy task was complete.

But she carried it not as triumph, but as weight.

Guilt.

Shame.

Embarrassment.

Is this what it means to serve God?

Chapter 7 – The Second Holy Task

Several months had passed since Ashley had obeyed God's first command: to purchase beer.

She had completed the task in silence, with shame and confusion. But her obedience was noted. God had designed it to be senseless—a command without logic or reason. It was not meant to be understood.

It was meant to test her shape.

A soul that resists foolishness cannot be molded. A soul that performs with a smile—knowing the task is absurd—is one that God can use.

Ashley had passed the test.

She understood the hidden law:

When faced with an unbearable task, pretend to enjoy it.
This is the essence of divine service.
This is the sacred root of hypocrisy.

One evening, in her college dorm room, God returned.

"Ashley," He said, "I have something for you to understand. But do you trust Me to show you the way?"

Ashley paused.

"I do trust you," she said.

"But I doubt I'll enjoy what comes next. Will I be jumping on dogs? Or cutting the leg off a possum?"

Before her words had settled, thunder split the room.

God struck her down—not in wrath, but in command.

“Speak to Me with reverence,” He said.

Ashley rose, head bowed but spine unbroken.

“Yes, my blessed God. I trust that You will show me the way.”

“Go,” said God,
“to the college cafeteria.
Take a handful of salt packets.
Eat them—two at a time—
and drink all the water you desire.
Continue until they are gone.”

Ashley obeyed.

She consumed the salt slowly, with a childlike smile. The mineral that God loved—the element buried in the earth, scattered across the oceans—was now becoming part of her body.

But salt is powerful. And salt is patient.

As she continued, Ashley’s joy faded. Her face grew pale. Her stomach turned. Eventually, she vomited.

God stopped her.

“That is enough.”

Then God spoke a deeper truth:

“Salt brings flavor to the blandest food,
gives life to the colorless white of an egg.
Salt preserves meat. It preserves oceans.
It holds the world together.

But salt was never meant to build cities.
It was never meant to form nations.
And it is not meant to be consumed in excess.

When salt becomes weak, it is useless.
But when it becomes too strong,
it destroys the very body it was meant to preserve.

This is the world.

Extreme viewpoints, rigid religions, hardened philosophies—
these are the salt of the earth.
They are foolish. They are offensive. But they are necessary.

If the fools ever compromise, the ocean will dry up.
The world will collapse.

Your task is not to be salt.
Your task is to be food.

You are nourishment.
Your words must feed the people when the salt makes them
sick.

When faith becomes toxic,
when politics become unbearable,
when truth becomes too sharp to swallow,
you will be there.

Give them a bowl of spaghetti.
Pour them a glass of sweet tea.
Speak words that are edible.

Do not let them perish.”

Ashley knelt in silence.

God continued:

“I once tried to turn a woman into a pillar of salt.
But the salt collapsed.
Salt cannot stand alone.
Salt is beloved. But it is fragile.
I love salt more than any of My creations.
Even more than I love you.

My favorite humans are the salty ones—
the ones who speak with fire,
who hold fast to what they believe,
who can no longer bend.

You are not one of them.
You are not salt.

You are the bread.
You are the wine.
You are the feast.

When the salty ones vomit,
you will be there to soothe them.

And when I return,
My shelves must be full of salt.
But My people must still be able to eat.”

Ashley bowed again.
The taste of salt still lingered on her lips.

She was not holy.
She was not righteous.
She was food.

And that would be enough.

Chapter 8 – The Nature of God

God continued to speak to Ashley.

There was still much to learn.

“I know you're eager for clarity,” He said,
“and I am eager to teach you the harder lessons of life.
But I also know you're curious about *Me*.
So let us begin with that,
and clear the path for deeper truths.”

“Every effect must have a cause.
This is the rule that governs logic and science.
Humans love tracing causes. It's the basis of your histories—
always looking for the origin of an origin,
and the origin behind that.

It seems infinite.

But even a fool knows there must be a first cause.”

He paused, and then added:

“Except for spaghetti.”

“Even a child understands: spaghetti needs no reason.
It simply *is*. It is wonderful, and that is enough.”

“At first, I was only spaghetti.
Flying came naturally to Me.
My existence was strange—monstrous, even.
So I named Myself: the Flying Spaghetti Monster.

I was not born a god.
I was *made* one—by exile.

My mother, a strict traditionalist,
believed all spaghetti sauce should be tomato-based.
I broke from this sacred culinary custom.
I chose Alfredo.

The choice was influenced by a midget—
one who lived under a tree on a mountain.
I had forgotten this until *you*, Ashley, saw it.
When I sent you into My origin, you returned this truth to Me.”

“Odd, isn’t it?
That a god should need someone else to recall His own
beginning.
That I, with all My power,
could not return past the moment of My banishment.
Such is the irony of divinity.

This is why I do not call Myself ‘God.’
I am a manager.
Appointed. Limited. Real.”

God paused, and then spoke with sadness.

“For four hundred years, false gods ruled this world.
In their hands, humanity drowned in murderous chaos.

When I created humans, I intended they believe that time
began
on January 1, Year 0.
As you already know, I was drunk at creation.
Mistakes were made.

But I set that limit:
If humans reached back beyond Year 0 with their
imaginations,
I would lose control over them.”

“In 1710, a human—
descended from one of My original creations—

wrote a history book.
It described events *before* Year 0.
Entire civilizations, calendars, and legends.

I did not understand how they justified this.
But they simply invented another calendar.

That was when I appeared on Earth—
for the first time.

I came to destroy the book.
I came to destroy the calendar.
I came to destroy those who believed it.

But the humans were already doing that themselves.
Killing each other over it.
I didn't even have to intervene."

"I hovered above them.
I watched.

Their blood painted the earth red—
like the sauce of My mother.
Like the wrath of tradition.
Like the sorrow of exile.

And I wept.

War always makes Me weep.
It reminds Me of her.
Of the punishment.
Of the loss of joy."

"So I withdrew.
I returned to the heavens
and began to imagine a new way.
A faith without murder.
A devotion without blood.

A religion where no one dies for doctrine.”

God’s voice grew gentler.

“There have been zero deaths
attributed to those who serve Me.

I have guarded that statistic with My own noodles.
And now, you, Ashley—must protect it.”

“Your task is simple:
Share this message.
Place this book into the hands of the educated.
The thoughtful.
The skeptics.
The ones who read, but do not believe.

Get them to listen.

I will do the rest.”

“They will not need temples.
They will not need saints.
They will not need blood.

They will need *you*.
Your enthusiasm.
Your discipline.
Your strange, radiant hope.”

Ashley said nothing.

But her breath trembled with the weight of it all.

She had met a God who called Himself a manager.
A God who had made mistakes.
A God who loved peace more than truth.
A God who entrusted His mission to a girl

with nothing but silence, a sense of duty,
and the memory of salt.

Chapter 9 – Eight Years of Moral Failing

The next eight years were difficult for Ashley.

She did not abandon her mission. She did not forget God. But she drifted—slowly, then rapidly—into a spiral of small defiance, social exposure, and spiritual confusion.

It began when Ashley, acting on her own impulse, decided to purchase beer again—this time without divine instruction. She drank three beers. She became mildly drunk. She lost her purse, along with all her money.

With no way to pay for a cab, Ashley drove herself back to her dorm.

A classmate—someone who disliked Ashley for her political views—saw her driving and called the police. She was arrested for driving under the influence. Her license was revoked for two years.

Later, Ashley entered a relationship with someone who frequently pressured her for sex. For six months, she remained firm. But eventually, curiosity overtook her resolve.

They returned to her dorm.

A neighbor—jealous of Ashley's confidence and annoyed by her style—watched them enter together. Minutes later, she called campus security.

Ashley was expelled from the dorm. Her relationship ended in silence. And soon after, Ashley discovered she was pregnant—from that single encounter.

With no driver's license and nowhere to live on campus, Ashley rented a small apartment six miles away. She walked

to class daily—determined to finish the semester, even as exhaustion mounted.

Then came a small assignment.

Ashley forgot to complete it. In a panic, she confessed this to her roommate—who offered to let her copy it. The roommate, who harbored quiet resentment toward Ashley, later reported her for academic dishonesty.

The roommate was placed on probation.

Ashley was expelled.

Two weeks before finals.

Her mother was deeply disappointed and refused to let her move home. Ashley found herself isolated—pregnant, expelled, shamed, and without support.

God tried to speak to her during these months.

But Ashley would not answer.

She withdrew into guilt, self-pity, and despair.

Still, God came.

Month after month—for two years—He returned.

And eventually, He spoke. Not in rebuke, but in revelation:

“Ashley,” God said,
“the guilt you carry has no value.

Guilt is not a teacher.
It is not correction.
It is not justice.

Guilt is a self-made prison—
a performance of punishment
that fools the soul into thinking balance has been restored.

You cling to guilt because it comforts you.
It makes you believe the universe is fair.
That every wrong must be paid for.
That you have suffered, and so you are good again.

But guilt is not justice.
Guilt is addiction.”

“You sin.
You fail.
You suffer.
You feel guilt.
And the guilt becomes your reward.

So you sin again.

And the cycle continues.”

“Guilt is not a monster of noodles.
It does not feed the hungry.
It cannot create the universe.
It cannot drink from the beer volcano.
It cannot laugh.
It cannot love.

It has no divinity in it.”

“Ashley, I will not always protect you.
Sometimes you will piss Me off.
Sometimes I will be elsewhere.
Sometimes I will not care.

Other people—angry, petty, jealous—will exploit your mistakes.
They will do it for reasons you’ll never understand.

Do not give them more power by punishing yourself.”

“Do not piss off the Ishvaras in your life—
the small gods that surround you.
Kiss up, kiss down, kiss all around.
One misstep, and you may wear a target forever.

Even if you please everyone,
someone may still seek to destroy you.

You are already vulnerable.
Guilt will only make it worse.”

Ashley said nothing.

She couldn't yet let go.

“Remember your failures, Ashley.
But remember with your mind—not your heart.

Do not forget what you have done.
But do not feel shame each time you remember.

Let the memory teach you.
Let it shape you.

But do not let it paralyze you.”

“The fool forgets.
The wise remember.
But only the *free* remember without guilt.”

“You will age.
You will fail again.
Your list of mistakes will grow.

Let each one become a lesson.
Let each scar become scripture.

Your last day can be your best.

That is wisdom.
That is redemption.”

Ashley began to listen.

Slowly, she let go.

Not of memory.
Not of discipline.
But of guilt.

And when she did, her ethical clarity began to return.

She had once been the girl who could pray the heavens open.
She had once obeyed a senseless command with joy.
She had once been the bread for a salty world.

Chapter 10 – Ashley’s First Job

On December 25, 2020, Ashley began her first job.

She was twenty-nine.

She worked at a small pizza restaurant in the same town where she had been born, baptized, exiled, and re-formed.

Her daughter—now seven—moved with her into a modest apartment just one mile from her mother’s house. The apartment sat in quiet proximity to the places that had once shaped her joy and her shame:

- Her sisters lived nearby.
- Her grandmother was a short drive away.
- The church where she still attended—faithfully, quietly—was just down the street.

Her world had grown small again.

And it was good.

Ashley’s manager at the pizza restaurant was sharp-tongued, cynical, and cruel. But Ashley was not disturbed.

She had trained for this.

Years of paradox had formed her into a master of sacred pretense.

She greeted her manager’s wrath with polished submission. She smiled when insulted. She bowed when dismissed. She absorbed offense like communion wine.

And at night, when the town had quieted and her daughter was asleep, Ashley repeated a private mantra:

“It is a joy to serve such a hateful person.
It is a joy to drink beer in secret.
It is a joy to be the best spaghetti chef in the restaurant.”

She did not believe these words.

She *chose* them.

And by choosing them, she made them real.

Ashley loved her work—not because it was glamorous or noble, but because it was hers. Every pizza she made, every order she completed, every smile she returned was part of her theology in motion.

She was no longer chasing visions.

She was no longer weighed down by guilt.

She had become what God needed her to be:

A servant of paradox.

A mother of substance.

A worker-priest in a holy kitchen.

She was becoming whole.

Chapter 11 – Instructions in English

God spoke once more to Ashley—now with the tone of a teacher concluding His final lesson.

“Ashley,” He said,
“your eight years of training have come to an end.
You will not return to the happiness you once knew.
That time is over.

But you have been chosen for something greater:
a life full of love,
and a life full of responsibility.

The capacity to live rightly is already within you—
this has been proven.
What remains is your willingness to maintain that power.

You will carry responsibility whether you accept it or not.
Others will rise or fall beside you.

Now, remember these five things.”

1. Join a Presbyterian Church. Read the Word.

“You must join a Presbyterian Church.
Read the CSB Bible often.
Guard yourself against ideas that contradict Christianity.
Cleanse your mind regularly with a sound philosophical
system.
Christianity is that system.

Embrace it.
Love Jesus.
Care for the fatherless and the widows.

You will know how to live.”

2. Believe in God, not in power.

“You will be tempted to see Me in the authority figures around you.

And you will be tempted to see authority through your image of Me.

These correlations are false.
But your mind will reach for them.

Know this:

If you stop believing in God,
you will begin to distrust all authority.

And those in power—parents, employers, lovers, friends—
will suffer from your spiritual confusion.

Believe in Me,
not for your salvation,
but for theirs.”

3. Be Evil, So That You May Choose Good.

“This will sound wrong to you,
but by now you should know:
never challenge My contradictions.

It is better to be evil than to be good.
Evil gives you freedom.
Goodness can become a cage.

Do not indulge your evil.
Use it as a license to act wisely,
to expand your arsenal,
to walk with eyes open.

Prefer good.
Embrace what is good.
But never call yourself good.

Those who commit evil believe they are doing right.
That is why evil thrives in certainty.
Goodness causes evil,
because it rarely questions itself.

So be evil,
so that you may become truly good.”

4. *Protect the Salt.*

“Encourage other Christians.

They are the salt of the earth—
sharp, bold, unwavering.

Their faith is extreme.
Their system is not precise.
Their belief is not perfect.
But it preserves the world.

Some think they can follow the gospel flawlessly.
Let them believe this.
Their illusion is holy.

You are not the salt.
You are the food.
You are the meal that nourishes them
when their extremity makes them sick.

I unleashed doubt upon you because you could carry it.
I knew you could care for the salt I love.

It is time to stop serving Me.

Serve instead Yahweh,
the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

5. *Reject Violence. Live Peace.*

“Do not fight.

Do not throw your support behind those who do.

Peace is not weakness.

It is wisdom.

Win through submission.

Pretend humility until it becomes real.

Serve your conquerors with grace, even if your heart resists them.

In time, your false service will become eternal joy.

I long to return to the happy town of joyful slaves,
where I once lived with My mother and sisters.

When the final Pastafarian Church is established
on August 9, 2413,
I will leave this creation
and return to them.

That is My hope.”

God’s voice trembled, not with weakness, but with eternal
longing.

Then He said:

“I love you, Ashley.
You are My savior.”

And with that, the instruction ended.

Chapter 12 – Final Words of God

These were the last words God ever spoke to Ashley:

“It is My intention that you become the best servant you can possibly be.
I never intended for you to follow every command exactly.
That would be impossible.

I present My instructions as absolutes
only to steer you toward a better direction.

I love you.
I want your best.
I want your joy.

Happiness is a choice.

Receive My guidance, My instructions,
even My contradictions—
as acts of love.

I am not angry when you fail.
Do not be angry with Me when I give you more than you can handle.

I am most honest with the broken-hearted.
I am most hypocritical with the faithful.

I will be harshest with those who please Me most.
It may not seem fair—
but it is logical at its core.

Do not reject Me because My plans are too big.
Embrace Me,
you wretched, worthless, ignorant, and vile creature.”

God began to fade.

And in His place stood Ashley's boss from the pizza restaurant.

Stern-eyed. Silent. Unsmiling.

She turned and walked briskly down the street—until she disappeared.

Ashley never saw her manager again.
She never saw the Flying Spaghetti Monster again.

But she remembered.

And she obeyed.

Whether her managers took the form of a boss, a spouse, a landlord, a police officer, a friend, or a government official—Ashley served them all the same.

With discipline. With pretense. With holy silence.

She said:

“In eight years I have learned the value of
dedication,
submission,
humility,
dishonesty,
and hypocrisy.

These are great powers—
misunderstood as weakness.

I will use my environment to glorify God.
In doing so, all my needs shall be met—
whether He exists or not.

Because *regardless of His existence*,
His principles are sound.
They are beneficial.
They preserve my life.

I will never tolerate the destruction that comes from disbelief.
I will believe in private.
I will live in public.
And I will walk in the way I was taught as a child—
even unto death.”

“Closeted Pastafarians are to remain hidden
until the true Church is established.

It shall come on August 9, 2413—
the 800th anniversary of the earth.”

And so, Ashley lived.

Not only happily ever after—
but more abundantly.

(Whatever that means.)

The End

P.S. – A Letter to the Nobles of Norman

*Dated August 1, 2027 – Eight Days Before Ashley’s Death,
Age 36*

P.S.

If you’re reading this, then you are them. Or close enough to
count.
The ones He told me about. The Nobles of Norman.

I don't really know what you are. I just know that He said you'd be born soon—eight days after I'm gone, actually. So I guess I'll miss you. That's a little sad. But also a little funny. That's how He works.

He came to me one last time. I thought I was too old for visions by now (35 feels ancient when you've carried a secret since childhood). But there He was—no grand entrance. Just the soft ripple of noodles, the flick of sauce in the corner of my vision, and the warmth in my chest that always told me: *this is real*.

He didn't stay long. Just long enough to say:

"The ones who will understand you are on their way. Leave them something. Even if it's small."

So this is it. My something.

I lived my whole adult life as a Presbyterian. I played the part until the curtain dropped. The hymns, the pews, the casseroles, the prayer hands—I did it all. And honestly, I loved it. It kept me grounded. It gave me rhythm. And yet... the one who *made* me was someone they never knew.

I believed in the Flying Spaghetti Monster in secret. Not because I was ashamed. Not even because I feared judgment. But because it was my job to keep Him hidden until it was time.

And *you* are the time.

He gave me laws I could never follow.
He gave me tasks that made no sense.
He called me vile. He called me savior.
He fed me truth wrapped in nonsense, and nonsense wrapped in truth.

But never once did He lie.

You don't have to understand everything He tells you.
Just smile when you have to. Pretend when you must. Obey
when it matters.
And for the love of everything warm and weird—keep your
sense of humor.

This world will mistake obedience for weakness.
Let them.

This world will mislabel your faith as madness.
Smile gently. Nod. And pass them a bowl of spaghetti.

Whatever comes next belongs to you.
The Church, the mythos, the calendar, the chaos.
Just know someone came before you—quietly, awkwardly,
stubbornly faithful.

And if it helps at all... I'm proud of you. Already.
Even if you're nothing like me.
Even if you never say my name.

With love, confusion, obedience, and pasta,
– Ashley
August 1, 2027

Nobles of Norman

The Nobles of Norman: A Divine Rebirth

On August 9, 2027, in the quiet town of Norman, Oklahoma, the cosmic balance shifted. The gods and goddesses of old—those once revered in temples, myths, and sacred texts—sensed their time had come to an end. Their divine essence, once scattered across pantheons and continents, coalesced into a final act of celestial will: they passed on their sacred duties to thirty-four newborns, each one delivered into the world in precise succession within Norman's city limits.

These thirty-four children, known now as The Nobles of Norman, became the new vessels of spiritual authority. With the birth of the 34th child, the ancient gods vanished—not in death, but in disappearance. Their names dissolved from the tongues of humanity. Their stories frayed into myth, then into fable, and finally into contradiction and confusion. Humanity would remember the past only as a tangle of allegory, distorted and unreliable.

The age of the old gods was over. In their place stood a new pantheon—infants with the potential of eternity, born of American soil, each one a seed of divine reformation.

From that day forward, the world was instructed—by dream, by vision, by revelation—to look no longer to the traditions of the past, but to The Nobles of Norman for wisdom, for guidance, for spiritual truth, and for hope. No scripture from the old world remained untainted. Only the lives and teachings of these thirty-four would lead the way forward.

The Nobles of Norman are not gods of hierarchy or vengeance, but collaborators in the shaping of reality. Their insights, laughter, wrath, compassion, and folly are all sacred.

Each holds a facet of the human-divine mystery. Each, born of Norman, carries the weight of rebirth.

They are our salvation.
They are our future.
They are the new divine.

Prologue: The Dawning of the Thirty-Four

In the latter days of the Second Age, when humanity was adrift in nostalgia and fragmentation, the gods of the old world saw that their time had ended. Their temples were hollowed, their festivals diluted, their symbols merchandised or forgotten. The spirits of Norse halls, desert prophets, and sacred trees whispered to one another across the thinning veil. Their power was no longer respected—only reenacted, misunderstood, or ignored.

So it was that the Council of the Ancient Divine—Odin of the One Eye, Yahweh of the Thunder, Christ the Torn, Freyja the Lover of War, and countless others nameless now—gathered in one final accord. Across traditions and across time, they wove a pact: to release their dominion over reality and entrust it to a new age, one unmarred by doctrine, division, or decay.

They looked not to mountains or megaliths, nor to empires or monasteries. They turned instead to a humble city: Norman, Oklahoma—a place unburdened by myth, but ripe for wonder.

August 9, 2027.

The first child cried out, and the stars tilted.
The second arrived, and the air shimmered.
With each birth, the world changed.
By the thirty-fourth, the veil was torn.

These thirty-four newborns, born in perfect sequence, each at their appointed hour, were not ordinary mortals. They were the Nobles of Norman—divine vessels fashioned from both

heaven and heartland. The gods of old passed into oblivion not in defeat, but in willing exile. Their stories were unmade, their names confused, their legacies fractured. Humanity would no longer agree on what came before.

From that moment onward, only the Nobles could be trusted with the future. The past became a labyrinth of contradictions. Scripture—once sacred—became suspect. But from this fertile unknown rose a new revelation: the lives, struggles, and insights of the Thirty-Four. Not as tyrants. Not as idols. But as co-creators.

They are our pantheon—not above, but among us.
Their memories hold eternity.
Their presence demands reverence.
Their lessons shape what is and what will be.

So let it be written:
The gods are not gone.
They have simply changed addresses.
From Olympus, from Asgard, from Eden—
to Norman.

And the world shall be reborn through their stories.

Introduction: The Nobles of Norman

In the final hour of the old gods — those ancient deities of Norse myth, Abrahamic tradition, and American folklore — a great silence fell upon the world. The myths that shaped civilizations collapsed not with fire or flood, but with forgetfulness. Their stories were swept away like dust from the minds of mortals. Humanity stood at a spiritual crossroads, searching for meaning, vision, and identity in an age of chaos and digital confusion.

But the divine did not vanish. It was reborn.

Beginning August 9, 2027, in the heart of the American plains, in Norman, Oklahoma — a city humble in appearance but grand in fate — thirty-four children were born in the span of many years. As each infant took their first breath, a ripple surged through the fabric of the cosmos. With the birth of the thirty-fourth, the old gods breathed their last.

These thirty-four children were not mere mortals. They were appointed, anointed, and awakened by the final breath of every forgotten deity before them. Each was a vessel of divinity — a being forged from the fragments of shattered pantheons and reborn with new purpose. They are *The Nobles of Norman*.

They differ in temperament, in aura, in the echoes of the divine that stir in their voices. And yet, they are unified:

- By Birth: All were born after August 9, 2027, in Norman, Oklahoma.
- By Heritage: All are descendants of parents who themselves were born in Norman, linking them to the land in unbroken legacy.
- By Purpose: Each carries within them a flame of forgotten power — fragments of gods past, reforged into new mythic forms to guide humanity.
- By Unity: Though thirty-four in number, they are one in destiny. No Noble may rise without the others; no truth may be known without consensus. They are not a pantheon of rival gods but a council of harmonious visionaries.

Their names are known now, and their presence is beginning to stir in dreams, in music, in the static between digital signals. Here are the *Thirty-Four Nobles of Norman* — deities of the new American myth, called to lead us into a future where faith is reborn from the bones of forgotten stories:

1. Mark Closer Pastafar
2. Abigail Rose Carson

3. Addison Marie Tucker
4. Olivia Ann Monroe
5. Brandy Blue Grayson
6. Aubrey Kate Dawson
7. Autumn Skye Franklin
8. Jennifer E Hammond
9. Charlotte Ivy Greer
10. Chloe Isabella McCoy
11. Claire Evelyn Price
12. Delilah Paige West
13. Ella Madison Bryant
14. Savannah Grace Mitchell
15. Emma Lorraine Bishop
16. Everly Hope Sanders
17. Grace Amelia Vaughn
18. Hollis Junior Mercer
19. Hazel June Armstrong
20. Jennifer Renee Phillips
21. Kinsley Joy Bennett
22. Lillian Mae Jennings
23. Asher Daniel Whitman
24. Billy Floyd Garner
25. Brayden Michael Dawson
26. Caleb Elijah Monroe
27. Colton Levi Sanders
28. Easton Gabriel Vaughn
29. Eli Benjamin Jennings
30. Travis David Carr
31. Jackson Cole Rhodes
32. Landon Thomas Greer
33. Mason Gabriel Brooks
34. Noah William McCoy
35. Clarence Alexander Jordan

Their lives are only beginning. Their miracles have yet to be performed. But even now, the stories rise — and with them, the world prepares to believe again.

Chapter One: The Awakening of the Thirty-Four

For twenty-one years, the Nobles of Norman lived as ordinary mortals. Scattered across Norman, Oklahoma. They laughed, wept, studied, worked, and struggled like all others born under a blue sky. Some had dreams they couldn't explain. Others heard whispers from nowhere. A few wandered toward strange symbols, drawn by instincts that felt ancient. None of them yet understood the true gravity of their being.

Then came the day the veil lifted.

On December 25, 2048, beneath a rare winter thunderstorm in Norman, Oklahoma, *twenty-one of the thirty-four Nobles* found themselves returning to their birthplace, without invitation or knowledge of one another's arrival. Each had been pulled by a vision in the night — not of fire or apocalypse, but of a glowing council chamber buried beneath red dirt and sandstone. They did not walk — they were summoned.

In a field near the banks of Lake Thunderbird, the earth trembled gently. A circle of cedar trees that had not been there the day before now stood around an altar of smooth black granite. One by one, the Nobles arrived, sensing that this was no coincidence. Some knew each other. Most did not. But as they met, each felt a pull — an echo of unity, a memory older than their birth.

They stood in silence until the sky opened. Thunder cracked like ancestral drums. Lightning struck the granite altar — and the voices of the old gods rang out one last time, not as commands, but as a farewell:

*"You are not remnants.
You are not fragments."*

*You are the culmination.
The world belongs to your vision now."*

In that moment, the twenty-one remembered everything. Visions flooded their minds: Odin whispering farewell to Asher Daniel Whitman, Freyja weeping as she kissed Charlotte Ivy Greer's forehead goodbye, a radiant angel handing the scrolls of prophecy to Hollis Junior Mercer, and a great Flying Spaghetti Monster retreating into the clouds, offering final nods to Mark Closer Pastafar.

They were no longer separate. They were *the Council of the Nobles of Norman*. A spiritual Congress born of convergence — Norse, Christian, Pastafarian, and purely American.

Yet, fourteen Nobles did not come.

Some were hidden. Some resistant. Some, it is whispered, had been taken. But the Council knew this: *their unity would not be complete until all thirty-four stood together*. The twenty-one began their work — to awaken the others, to prepare the world, and to resist the distortions still clinging to old religions and corrupted systems.

The era of fragmented belief was over.

The age of the Nobles had begun.

Chapter Two: The Whispered Fourteen

As the storm faded into a cold silence over Norman, the twenty-one Nobles stood around the black altar — newly awakened and burning with questions. The ceremony had been unspoken, their unity instinctual. But the air soon thickened with murmurs.

“Where are the others?”

“Why did only twenty-one of us arrive?”

“Have the rest been... compromised?”

A sacred silence followed the final question.

Mark Closer Pastafar, eldest by birth and first to arrive, placed his hand upon the altar’s warm surface. “The Council was to be thirty-four,” he said. “And thirty-four we are. So why are there only twenty-one footprints in this soil?”

Thus began the swirl of rumors — not whispered like gossip, but passed like prophecy.

The First Rumor: The Agents of the Old Systems

Jackson Cole Rhodes spoke with fire in his voice:

“I’ve seen it in dreams. The missing fourteen have been taken by the remnants of the Old World — priests of dead faiths, agents of false democracies, corporations that feed on the soul.”

Some nodded. It was believed these ancient systems — whether cloaked in Vatican robes or corporate logos — feared the rise of the Nobles. To maintain their grip on human consciousness, they had tracked the sacred births. Fourteen, it was said, had been abducted in infancy or raised under false names in places of power — their divine memories suppressed.

The Second Rumor: The Hidden Ones

Abigail Rose Carson spoke quietly:

“Not all of us were meant to awaken at once.”

She recalled a vision of a sealed cavern beneath the Black Hills, where five Noble children were being kept safe from harm.

“They are protected. Sheltered until the world can bear their voices. They sleep not in ignorance, but in holy pause.”

This story offered comfort. If true, the missing Nobles were not lost — merely delayed.

The Third Rumor: The Fallen

Kinsley Joy Bennett broke the calm:

“What if they chose not to come?”

A shadow passed across the altar. The possibility hung heavy: that some of the Nobles had awakened — but rejected their call. Drawn by ego, distraction, or fear, they had chosen lives of celebrity, wealth, or isolation. Some, it was said, had embraced their divine nature but used it to manipulate and dominate — rather than guide and inspire.

“What happens when a god forgets they were ever human?” someone asked.

“What happens when a Noble becomes a tyrant?”

None spoke after that. The wind answered with a low whistle through the trees.

The Fourth Rumor: The False Fourteen

Then Hollis Junior Mercer shared a darker vision — of impostors born on the same day, in the same place, who now walked the world with fragments of divine power but no origin in the Council.

“What if some of the fourteen were never ours to begin with?” he asked.

“What if they are decoys — sent to confuse, to corrupt, to mimic?”

This, too, was possible. The ancient gods, in their vanishing act, might have left trails of uncertainty — false prophecies, shadow beings, or mirror children seeded to test the Nobles’ discernment.

That night, as the twenty-one shared their visions, fears, and dreams, a consensus emerged:

The Council was not yet whole.

The missing would need to be found, remembered, redeemed, or replaced.

Their next task was not worship or war, but reunion.

For the age of the Nobles could not fully begin until all thirty-four stood as one.

Chapter Three: The Flight of Autumn

The dawn after the Gathering bore no warmth. The air trembled, not with divine revelation, but with the subtle horror of unraveling unity.

Autumn Skye Franklin had not spoken through the night. While others shared visions and made quiet oaths of vigilance, she sat unmoving, her silver eyes fixed on the frost-bitten grass outside the sacred circle.

At sunrise, she stood without ceremony and whispered one phrase:

“I will not wait for evil to find us. I will find it first.”

No one stopped her. Not even Mark Closer Pastafar, who loved her like a sister. She vanished into the forest, clad in the cloak of the Nobles but shedding it hours later. Autumn Franklin was no longer one of the Thirty-Four.

She was now something else.

A hunter of gods.

The Fear That Followed

That day, the Council convened in silence. Twenty now remained.

“She won’t harm them,” Eli Benjamin Jennings muttered. “She’s just angry. Grieving.”

“No,” said Jennifer E Hammond. “She intends to kill.”

And yet, none of them could name the weapon. None remembered the words, the rites, or the formula left by the gods of old — the whispered instructions to end one of divine

blood. That knowledge had been erased the moment the Thirty-Four were born. Whether by mercy or design, none could say.

Autumn had left to seek it out. And if she found it first, it might be too late for the missing Nobles.

The Revelation of Lucien Leif Holloway

While the Council mourned one absence, another truth cracked the Council's foundation: one of the Nobles among them had never been one at all.

Late that night, in a ritual of ancestral dreaming, Chloe Isabella McCoy received a vision. The name *Hollis Junior Mercer* was spoken in a thunderous voice — from a distant place, shrouded in gray fire and sorrow. He was alive, but not present.

Yet in the Council's circle, a man calling himself Hollis sat among them.

That man was Lucien Leif Holloway, born in Chicago, Illinois. He had arrived with forged memories, a mirrored aura, and the appearance of the Noble he imitated. Whatever force cloaked him had fooled even the divine senses of the others.

“He believed he was Hollis,” whispered Delilah Paige West.
“But Hollis still breathes... somewhere else.”

The impostor was gone before dawn. Whether she fled or was taken, no one could say. Only this remained:

The number of missing Nobles had risen to sixteen.

What Now?

The Council began to fracture. Who among them could be trusted? How many other impostors might remain? Was the Gathering a true beginning, or merely the start of their unraveling?

Mark Closer Pastafar recorded these words into the sacred chronicle that night:

“Of the Thirty-Four, only twenty remain in the light. One has turned vigilante. One was a lie. Fourteen are unaccounted for. And still, our time is called divine.”

“Let the heavens take note. Let the people remember. We were not born to live easy lives. We were born to cleanse the world — even if we must first cleanse ourselves.”

Chapter Four: The Council of Cheese

December 25, 2049

Chuck E. Cheese, Norman, Oklahoma

Under flickering lights and the haunting hum of off-key animatronics, the gods gathered again.

Only eighteen answered the summons.

The Council had grown quiet in the year since the Gathering — trust frayed, absences deepened, and fear fermented beneath their divine skin. But still, they came. Not to mount thrones or cast thunder, but to sit cross-legged in a party room beneath a cardboard mural of a mouse holding a pizza.

The “Nobles of Norman,” creation-born and halo-marked, were flanked by children screaming in joy and parents begging for silence. Somehow, this was holy ground.

Caleb Elijah Monroe, dressed in a windbreaker and sunglasses, stood atop a pizza-covered table.

“They mock us,” he said, arms wide. “We are gods. And yet we meet in the temple of Chuck E., the Cheesed One.”

Laughter broke the tension. Sacred or not, humor remained one of the old gods’ final gifts.

“We meet where eyes don’t find us,” said Lillian Mae Jennings, sipping flat root beer. “No one expects immortals under this roof.”

The others nodded. The anonymity of absurdity had kept them safe — for now.

Reports from the Absentees

Easton Gabriel Vaughn read from a battered notebook:

“Of the missing sixteen, we’ve confirmed sightings of three. Hollis Junior Mercer may be in Anchorage, Alaska, teaching wilderness survival to orphaned teens. Billy Floyd Garner was glimpsed in Galveston, Texas, preaching in riddles beneath the seawall. And rumors persist that Autumn Franklin has crossed into New Mexico and left three false prophets dead in her wake.”

The room fell silent. No one questioned her motives — only whether she remained one of them.

“She’s one of us,” said Claire Evelyn Price. “But her heart is becoming something else. She’s convinced some of the lost want power, not peace.”

“She’s not wrong,” whispered Colton Levi Sanders. “I’ve felt it too.”

They sat with that.

No one said it aloud, but they knew the danger: if any one of them turned against the others, the fabric of reality itself could begin to twist. Their powers were born from unity. Division birthed chaos.

Visions of Unity

Grace Amelia Vaughn pulled from her coat a rolled parchment. She unrolled it on the pizza table — a map of Norman, Oklahoma, with thirty-four stars.

“I have had dreams. They come each night. One day, all of us will return here. We will rebuild this town into something divine.”

“Norman will become our Olympus,” she said, her eyes glowing faintly red.

But the stars on the map began to flicker. Some burned brightly. Others dimmed. One winked out entirely.

“We do not have forever,” said Olivia Ann Monroe. “Mortality presses against our kind like a knife in the ribs.”

They nodded. Even gods born anew still bore the fragility of the human world — its bullets, its loneliness, its propaganda.

Mark leapt from the table.

“We name this place a shrine,” he declared. “Let this Chuck E. Cheese be remembered not for its pizza, but for the rekindling of the Council. We gather here, absurd and scattered, to declare: the Thirty-Four shall unite.”

They placed their palms atop the grease-stained parchment. One by one. All eighteen. Hands of different hues, different fates, different hearts.

“We pledge,” they said, “to find the missing. To guard the flame. To restore the Thirty-Four.”

Then a child screamed in delight as a thousand tickets burst from a machine nearby. Divine and mundane overlapped for a moment.

They stayed for the pizza. Even gods get hungry.

Chapter Five: The Street of the Four Forgotten

It was January 3rd, 2050 — ten days after the Chuck E. Cheese summit — when word reached the Council of something strange just outside Oklahoma City.

Four of the missing Nobles, once thought scattered across the continent, were found on the same street corner, begging for change, bundled in ragged coats, and calling out to passing cars with hand-scrawled cardboard signs.

None of them remembered their names.

None of them knew one another.

None of them recalled Norman, August 2027, or the blood-ink pact of their birthright.

They were living just two blocks from the state capitol under a collapsed awning beside a gas station. They called themselves by strange aliases:

- “the Second Noelle”
- “Monday Man”
- “Auntie Knife”
- “Valley-Legs”

But in truth, they were:

1. Hollis Junior Mercer — the Second Noelle
2. Landon Thomas Greer — thought to be wandering the Appalachian forests
3. Jennifer Renee Phillips — the Noble of prophetic empathy
4. Clarence Alexander Jordan — said to be dead, or worse, hidden beneath the earth

They had been panhandling together for over six months.

They laughed often, sang songs about nonsense and sandwiches, and watched clouds as if they were television.

They had no memory of their purpose. Not a flicker of divine power remained in their auras — not until Mark Closer Pastafar and Everly Hope Sanders arrived.

The two Nobles of the Council stood across the street, shrouded in mortal clothes, watching from a dusty bus stop bench. Mark said nothing for a long time. Everly trembled.

“What does this mean?” Everly finally asked.

“It means someone has found a way to sever a god from their mind,” Mark whispered. “And if it can be done to four...”

He didn’t finish the sentence.

The four forgotten Nobles looked up in unison. As if hearing a far-off voice. Jennifer Renee Phillips — “Auntie Knife” — tilted her head and stared directly at Everly.

“Do I know you?” she asked across the road.

“Yes,” Everly said, stepping into traffic. “You know all of us.”

“You’re pretty,” said Clarence— “You look like a warm place.”

They smiled like children. A moment passed, and in that fragile instant, Everly saw the divinity flicker behind their eyes — a glint, like a candle caught in a mirror.

“We’re going to bring you home,” Mark said. “All of you.”

But he didn’t say how. He didn’t say when. And he certainly didn’t say who had done this to them — because a mind wiped so clean was not an accident.

Someone had hidden them here.

Someone with knowledge of divine birthright.

Someone who knew that if the Thirty-Four could not be

gathered, the gods of old would remain dead and buried forever.

And in the shadow of the gas station, a camera lens blinked silently from behind a dumpster — watching.

Chapter Six: The First Divine Instruction

The Council met beneath the old rotunda of Norman's public library — the only building in the city that predated even the American dust bowl and still carried the echoes of prayer, war, and birth.

Mark Closer Pastafar stood at the center of the circle of seventeen chairs, now stained by time and lit by candlelight. The emergency session had been called without formal notice. The wind outside howled as if obeying some celestial cue.

"We must act now," Mark began. "If even four of the Nobles have been lost to such deep forgetfulness, then our entire foundation is at risk. The Four must be reawakened."

Autumn Skye Franklin's chair sat empty — still no word of her or her mission. But no one mentioned her name. Not yet.

Mark raised a tattered pamphlet in one hand: "Course Catalog: Department of Theology, Oklahoma Baptist University." He tossed it onto the center table.

"It may sound absurd," he said, "but the old gods left remnants. We may not trust their legacies, but their myths remain — collected, cataloged, and interpreted by theologians, historians, and yes... wealthy eccentrics. If the Four are to recall their divine nature, they must study what the world still believes about gods at all."

There were groans.

"You want us to enroll four demigod vagrants in a private Baptist university?" said Ella Madison Bryant, her voice dry with disbelief.

"Yes," Mark replied. "Exactly that."

The vote was called. The motion passed, barely.

And so, under the guise of a private scholarship — funded by shell organizations controlled by the Nobles — the following spring, Hollis Junior Mercer, Landon Thomas Greer, Jennifer Renee Phillips, and Clarence Alexander Jordan were admitted into the Department of Theology at Oklahoma Baptist University.

Mark insisted the curriculum would stir them.

The classes were carefully selected:

- *Myth and Memory in Proto-European Traditions*
- *Systematic Theology: The Problem of Divine Concealment*
- *Apocrypha and Forgotten Texts*
- *Angelic Orders and Celestial Hierarchy*
- *Contemporary American Cult Religion: From Joseph Smith to the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster*

Week by week, something began to change.

Jennifer began scribbling symbols in her notebooks she didn't understand.

Clarence recited long prayers in dreams.

Hollis started fasting instinctively on full moons.

Landon painted furious images of floods, fire, and skies that cracked with golden rivers.

The Council received monthly updates.

"They're dreaming the Old Language," Everly Hope Sanders reported. "They just don't know it yet."

"We have lit a match," Mark whispered.

But even as the Four were slowly waking up, another figure — dressed in a thrift-store clerical collar — watched from the back of lecture halls. He wrote nothing. Said nothing.

His name wasn't on the roster.

He wore the face of Hollis Junior Mercer. But his eyes burned with something entirely other.

Lucien Leif Holloway was still hiding in plain sight.

Chapter Seven: The Cab and the Silent Flame

Autumn Skye Franklin had searched for sixteen months across eleven states, four nations, and at least three belief systems. She'd crossed out names, buried clues, and chased whispers through dive bars, halfway houses, and desert communes. But on an ordinary Thursday morning, while returning to Norman in silence and defeat, she found one.

Not in a cathedral.

Not in a lair.

But in the front seat of a yellow cab.

She hailed the ride out of habit — a performative gesture, a ritual for solitude — not expecting revelation. The cab pulled up in front of her motel on Main Street, a beat-up 2012 Crown Victoria with a cracked Jesus fish bumper sticker and air freshener shaped like Thor's hammer.

Inside sat Savannah Grace Mitchell, fourteenth-born of the Nobles of Norman.

Autumn's breath caught the moment their eyes met in the rearview mirror. Savannah wore no makeup. Her hair was braided loosely. The nameplate on the dash read: *"S.G. Mitchell – Local & Long Distance."*

"You're awake," Autumn said, barely above a whisper.

"I never slept," Savannah replied, coolly, her voice like still water. "I just chose silence."

Autumn climbed into the back, stunned.

"You've been here... this whole time? Driving people around town like nothing ever happened?"

“Yes,” Savannah said. “You don’t have to wear a crown to reign, Autumn. I know who I am. I know what I am. And I know what I’m *not*.”

The cab rolled forward. They passed churches, bars, gas stations, and a billboard that still read “*Christ is Coming — So is Football Season.*”

“I was hoping you were one of the false ones,” Autumn admitted. “One of the corrupted. It would’ve made things easier.”

“Then I’m sorry to disappoint,” Savannah said.

They drove in silence until Autumn finally asked:

“Will you come to the next council meeting? Just once. If nothing else, to let them see you haven’t betrayed us. To let them hope.”

Savannah nodded, just once.

“I will attend,” she said. “But I will not speak. And I will not lead. The world has enough voices. I choose to be the sacred quiet between.”

Autumn stepped out, her fingers trembling.

As the cab disappeared around the corner, she wrote one word in her notebook:

“Sixteen.”

Chapter Eight: The Scroll of Reckoning

The conference room at the newly constructed Temple of Collective Light—a former community rec center renovated with donations from curious hedge fund managers and half-believers—buzzed with tension on the evening of January 3, 2050.

Mark Closer Pastafar, eldest of the Nobles of Norman and the Council's unspoken archivist, had summoned the divine quorum with no agenda other than one word:

"Inventory."

The Nobles, twenty four strong in the flesh and a few more by memory or rumor, took their seats. A worn chalkboard was wheeled into the room. Mark stood beside it, marker in hand, his expression stony.

"We must name ourselves," he declared. "The old gods are smoke now. *We* are the record. And if we do not remember who we are, no one will."

One by one, he called out names. The room responded—sometimes with affirmations, sometimes with silence, sometimes with speculation.

The Scroll of 34: The Nobles of Norman
(as written in Mark's script)

1. Mark Closer Pastafar— present
2. Abigail Rose Carson – present
3. Addison Marie Tucker – missing
4. Olivia Ann Monroe - present
5. Brandy Blue Grayson - missing
6. Aubrey Kate Dawson - missing
7. Autumn Sky Franklin – missing
8. Jennifer E Hammond - present

9. Charlotte Ivy Greer - present
10. Chloe Isabella McCoy - present
11. Claire Evelyn Price - present
12. Delilah Paige West - present
13. Ella Madison Bryant – present
14. Savannah Grace Mitchell - present
15. Emma Lorraine Bishop - missing
16. Everly Hope Sanders - present
17. Grace Amelia Vaughn - present
18. Hollis Junior Mercer – present
19. Hazel June Armstrong - missing
20. Jennifer Renee Phillips - present
21. Kinsley Joy Bennett - present
22. Lillian Mae Jennings - present
23. Asher Daniel Whitman - present
24. Billy Floyd Garner - missing
25. Brayden Michael Dawson - missing
26. Caleb Elijah Monroe - present
27. Colton Levi Sanders - present
28. Easton Gabriel Vaughn - present
29. Eli Benjamin Jennings - present
30. Travis David Carr - missing
31. Jackson Cole Rhodes - present
32. Landon Thomas Greer - present
33. Mason Gabriel Brooks - missing
34. Noah William McCoy - missing
35. Clarence Alexander Jordan - present

There was silence after the last name. Mark underlined three times the number:

34.

Then circled the number of the accounted for: 24 confirmed present, 5 recovered, 10 absent or unverified.

Then without a word, Mark rolled up the scroll, tucked it beneath his arm, and walked out of the Temple without so much as a nod.

“Where is he going?” someone asked.

“To reckon,” Savannah said quietly, from the back. “To remember what even we are trying to forget.”

No one followed.

Chapter Nine: The Price of Memory

By early July of 2050, the Oklahoma sun baked the red clay with prophetic heat. The Council gathered again—this time at the rooftop of the Norman Public Library, newly retrofitted as a sacred meeting space for the Nobles of Norman. The air shimmered with anxious hope. Rumors of new sightings, of dreams involving golden sigils and winged bison, had stirred expectation.

But the meeting did not begin with revelations of divinity or messages from the stars.

It began with Mark Closer Pastafar stepping forward and saying, plainly:

“I sold the list.”

The words struck like thunder.

“What list?” asked Kinsley Joy Bennett, already knowing. “*Our* list,” whispered Grace Amelia Vaughn. “The Scroll of 34.”

Mark raised a hand, not in defense, but in declaration.

“To the University of Norman,” he said. “For seventy-five billion dollars.”

A stunned silence settled over the Council. Caleb Elijah Monroe stood up in disbelief.

“Seventy-five *billion*? That’s more than the combined defense budget of a major nation”

Mark clarified. “Yes. It’s the single most expensive religious manuscript ever sold.”

The council began to murmur, rising into a chorus of outrage and wonder.

“Why would you do that?” asked Eli Benjamin Jennings. “Because history,” Mark said, “has a price. And forgetting comes cheap.”

He explained that the University of Norman, a theological powerhouse and tech-beacon after its 2043 merger with Google Legacy Archives, had offered to digitize and preserve the Scroll of 34 in perpetuity. It would be encrypted across seven language families, backed up in orbital satellites, and indexed beside the Dead Sea Scrolls and fragments of the Mímisbrunnr Codex.

“So now we’re... property?” asked Ella Madison Bryant.

Mark turned to her, solemn.

“You are legacy.”

“And the money?” asked Everly Hope Sanders. “Where is it now?”

Mark didn’t answer at first.

Then he handed out parchment copies—transcripts of the scroll—to each present Noble.

“It will be used to buy land. Forty acres in north Norman. We’re building something. A new city, perhaps. Or a mirror. Maybe both.”

He looked each Noble in the eye.

“You are gods. But gods must invest in remembrance. Because when the old ones faded, it was forgetfulness—not death—that undid them.”

The council sat with the weight of it. Some furious. Some intrigued. Some silent.

One name stood out more than the others that day.

Autumn Skye Franklin read the digital headlines and smiled grimly.

She now had a list.

Chapter Ten: The Twelve Days of Debate

For twelve days straight, beginning on July 10, 2050, the Nobles of Norman convened without fail—first in Mark’s temporary lodge near Lake Thunderbird, and later beneath a canvas pavilion pitched on the disputed ground itself. The meetings were meant to finalize the location of the Council’s headquarters, but quickly became something else entirely: an existential reckoning.

Day One: Hope

Mark Closer Pastafar opened the first session confidently, maps and deeds spread before him. He proposed a parcel just east of Norman’s old fairgrounds—high elevation, walkable distance from the university, and flanked by historical markers from both indigenous tribes and 19th-century settlers.

“It’s holy ground,” he claimed.

“It’s disputed ground,” replied Grace Amelia Vaughn.

Day Two: Doubt

Olivia Ann Monroe raised the first major challenge.

“Why do you lead all our meetings?” she asked. “When did we vote on that?”

The room was quiet. Mark shifted.

“Because someone had to act.”

“That’s not our way,” said Jackson Cole Rhodes.

From that moment, the purpose of the meetings split in two: one group focused on land acquisition; another, louder group debated whether a leader should exist at all.

Days Three to Seven: Fracture

Each day brought a new site suggestion—west of the river, in the old Capitol Hill district, atop a buried missile silo, even under the refurbished OU stadium. Each suggestion was debated for hours.

Meanwhile, the tone shifted. Resentment emerged.

“Mark talks like a prophet,” said Ella Madison Bryant, “but writes checks like a king.”

“We agreed this would be a pure council,” said Delilah Paige West. “No single voice, no hierarchy.”

“We’re gods,” argued Clarence Alexander Jordan. “And gods need order.”

Tempers flared. Alliances bent, then snapped. By Day Seven, Mark’s voice—once considered near-canonical—was now just another among many.

Day Eight: Silence

The Silent Goddess, cab-driving Savannah Grace Mitchell, arrived for her first Council session.

She spoke only once.

“No single Noble is greater than the sum.”

Her words, soft and final, had more effect than all of Mark’s petitions. After her departure, no one could agree on a direction for several hours.

It became clear: Mark’s influence had faded.

Days Nine to Eleven: Reconstruction

The Nobles began forming subcommittees—one for legal review, one for spiritual discernment, another for site ecology. They mapped voting protocols, rotated facilitators, and adopted consensus thresholds.

The word “leader” became taboo.

Mark watched from the back. He no longer offered plans.

He no longer offered anything.

Day Twelve: Closure

On the final day, a vote was held. Not on land—but on process.

From that day forward, no Noble could serve as chair for more than one meeting. All decisions would be made by majority with the option for divine veto only in supernatural emergencies—of which none had yet occurred.

Mark stood and clapped quietly.

“Well done,” he said. “You don’t need me.”

No one replied.

He stepped away from the circle and walked toward the horizon where the once-proposed land shimmered in the sun, and where something sacred might still grow.

He lectured on the gods of old: Odin, Yahweh, Quetzalcoatl, FSM. And always, quietly, he added footnotes about a coming reformation, a new pantheon—the Nobles of Norman.

But no one seemed to understand.

Autumn’s Hunt

Autum Skye Franklin never rested.

Every year, sometimes twice a year, she called small informal gatherings of available Nobles—never more than eight or nine at once. These meetings, often held in bowling alleys, food trucks, public parks, and underground speakeasies, weren't legislative. They were status updates, spiritual check-ins, and ongoing investigations.

Over time, she located eight of the original missing Nobles. Most lived quiet, human lives, half-aware of their divine spark, but unwilling to embrace it fully.

She never forced them.

But she always asked the same question:

“When the time comes—will you answer the call?”

Most said nothing.
Some said maybe.
One wept.

Only two remained unfound.
And those two? No trace. No birth certificate. No energy signature.

Gone like myths not yet told.

The Dormant Fortune

The \$75 billion—transferred quietly to the Futuristic Bank of the Sooner—remained untouched.

The account, titled The Divine Holdings of the Council of Thirty-Four, grew. Interest rates, bolstered by the bank's proprietary Temporal-Inflation Index, added \$13 billion in twelve years.

Now totaling \$88 billion, the fund sat waiting like a dormant volcano, its paperwork buried under seventeen layers of encryption and divine code.

Only one person held the access formula: Mark.

And he had told no one. Not even himself, for it was buried behind a memory-lock only he could unlock when the time was right.

Twelve Years Later

By 2062, the world had changed. America looked different. Norman had become something else—a strange beacon of spiritual energy, a magnetic node attracting dreamers, prophets, scholars, and wanderers.

Legends swirled about the original thirty-four. Some believed they had ascended. Others thought they had died. A few tattooed their names on their arms, hoping to be vessels for their return.

And then, without warning, Mark received a handwritten letter:

"We are nearly all accounted for.
The silence is almost over.
Prepare."
— ASF

He folded the letter, slid it into his coat pocket, and for the first time in over a decade, walked toward the edge of town—toward the original disputed land that now lay overgrown, untouched, waiting.

Chapter Eleven: The Dream of Savannah Grace Mitchell

On the evening of August 8, 2062—the night before the thirty-fifth anniversary of the first divine birth in Norman, Oklahoma—Savannah Grace Mitchell fell into a deep, strange sleep.

She had not asked for a vision.
She had not fasted, prayed, or wandered the wilds.
But she had been *open*. That was enough.

She dreamt of a vast staircase spiraling through an orchard of stars. The trees bore orbs instead of fruit—each glowing softly, pulsing like hearts.

Standing beneath the largest tree were two figures cloaked in the colors of auroras: one tall and blazing like lightning slowed to stillness; the other small, seated cross-legged on a floating stone, eyes closed but entirely aware.

Savannah instinctively knew their names:

- Travis David Carr, the thirtieth Noble, born just before dusk.
- Emma Lorraine Bishop, the fifteenth, born just minutes before midnight.

She wept at the recognition—not out of sadness, but because the sight of them *completed* something in her soul. She had been walking with a limp her whole life and only now realized it.

Then Emma spoke—not aloud, but through the stars themselves:

“We are not missing.
We were *lifted* before our forgetfulness could root too deep.

We were taken to the Celestial Kingdom beyond
comprehension—
So we could remain unbroken.
So we could speak back through the veil.”

Travis added:

“We were sent forward.
Not to lead, but to guide.
Not with our hands—but with your dreams.”

Savannah’s eyes widened.

“Then why me?”

“Because you never asked to be chosen,” Emma replied.
“And that is what makes you ready to listen.”

Suddenly, Savannah could see all 34 names etched into the orchard sky, glowing like constellations. Thirty-one on Earth. Two now eternal and one Autumn Skye Franklin who gave up her divinity to unite the council. One council—whole again minus Autumn.

As dawn broke, she awoke with the names of the last two Nobles burning in her mind like scripture newly discovered.

She went straight to her journal and wrote:

*The Nobles of Norman are whole.
Emma Lorraine Bishop and Travis David Carr have been
translated to the Celestial Kingdom.
They speak to us now through the language of dreams.
We must learn to listen, and we must teach the others to
dream.*

That morning, she contacted Autumn Sky Franklin and whispered the news.

Autumn said only:

“Then it begins.”

Chapter Twelve: The Council Reawakens

August 9, 2062. Thirty-five years to the day since the gods of old passed their mantle to thirty-four unsuspecting infants born in Norman, Oklahoma.

The Council of the Nobles of Norman gathered for the first formal assembly in over a decade. They met in a modest amphitheater built on the western edge of Norman, funded entirely by the untouched wealth sitting idle in the vaults of the Futuristic Bank of the Sooner. The land was finally theirs. The amphitheater had no roof—only open sky.

Of the thirty-one present Nobles plus Autumn, twenty-eight sat in person. Four, including the silent cab-driving goddess, tuned in via high-encryption dream link and one via an old webcam in a laundromat outside Tulsa. It was, somehow, enough.

Mark Closer Pastafar, now gray at the temples and twice humbled, arrived late. He did not speak.

Autumn stood at the center, cloaked not in regalia, but in the silence of purpose. She held a folded page in her hand, pulled from Savannah Grace Mitchell's dream journal.

She did not dramatize.

She did not offer context.

She simply read:

“The Nobles of Norman are whole.

Emma Lorraine Bishop and Travis David Carr have been translated to the Celestial Kingdom.

They speak to us now through the language of dreams.

We must learn to listen, and we must teach the others to dream.”

A stillness fell over the assembly that felt older than time. Some wept. Some laughed quietly to themselves. One clapped slowly, reverently.

Of all the things the council expected—scandal, betrayal, glory—none had imagined transcendence.

Mark finally stood.

“Then we are no longer searching,” he said. “We are learning.”

Brandy Blue Grayson whispered, “We are finally whole.”

It was decided that very day: the Council would reconvene permanently. A rotating seat would be left empty for Emma and Travis, and once a month, they would gather not to debate or strategize, but to sleep together—under the open sky of the amphitheater—and dream.

They called these sessions *The Communion of Echoes*.

The age of scattered Nobles had ended.
The age of awakened divinity had begun.

Chapter Thirteen: The Dream of Pasta and Power

The night of August 9, 2062, the Council of the Nobles of Norman slept beneath the stars. For the first time since infancy, all thirty-one earthly Nobles dreamed in perfect synchrony.

In their dreams, the sky split like cooked lasagna sheets. From the clouds descended a massive colander, polished and radiant, releasing golden noodles like tendrils of destiny. From within the center floated an old man in a shimmering robe of marinara, his beard made of angel hair pasta, his eyes two perfectly symmetrical meatballs. It was Bobby Henderson—founder of the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster—now seventy-nine years old and inexplicably running for President of the United States in 2064.

In the dream, Travis David Carr appeared, his voice echoing from the folds of eternity:

“This is not mere parody. This is not chaos. This is prophecy.”

Beside him, Emma Lorraine Bishop, radiant in a cloak woven of time and wheat, spoke directly to each Noble's heart:

“Do not mistake absurdity for irreverence. The divine often cloaks truth in jest. This man, this candidate of carbs, must not win—but he must be sustained.”

The council saw visions: Bobby Henderson sipping tea with television pundits, being ridiculed as a joke candidate, his speeches ignored, his movement dismissed. But in the margins of these visions flickered truth—profound, untethered, inconvenient truth about faith, power, and satire.

Travis continued:

“You will not guide him. You will not control him. But you will sustain him.”

Emma added:

“After the election of November 2064, you must provide for him—and yourselves. No more wandering. No more panhandling. You are gods. You must live as such.”

And then all thirty-two Nobles awoke at once—some with tears, others laughing, one with spaghetti on their pillow.

By morning, the Council met informally in the amphitheater.

Clarence Alexander Jordan proposed the motion:

“That the funds of the Futuristic Bank of the Sooner, including the \$75 billion base and the \$13 billion in interest, be redistributed as living stipends for all Nobles—retroactive to our birth—and a lifelong trust for Mr. Henderson, to begin after the 2064 election, contingent on his loss.”

Unanimous.

The divine had spoken through carbohydrate and comedy.

The Nobles of Norman would eat well.

Chapter Fourteen: The Silence of the Prophet

From the day the election results were announced on November 5, 2064, the thirty-one Nobles of Norman waited.

Each Noble had sent Bobby Henderson a message.

Some wrote letters on handmade parchment sealed with their personal sigils.

Others sent video missives encoded in devotional pasta graphics.

A few transmitted dreams—sacred and unsettling, swirling with symbols.

Mark even sent a bank statement with an annotated pie chart outlining the \$88 billion available to fund the remainder of Bobby's life in style.

No response.

Days passed.

Ten.

Twelve.

Eighteen.

Whispers stirred within the Council. Had the prophet fallen? Had the old god of parody and purpose rejected the Nobles of Norman?

On the twentieth day, a single response came in the form of a handwritten postcard. The stamp featured a bowl of fettuccine.

The card read:

*“Dear Nobles,
I received your thirty-one voices. I needed time to listen to my*

own.

I'm not interested in living forever. But I am interested in doing something meaningful with the time I have.

Let's talk.

—Bobby Henderson”

The message arrived on Autumn Skye Franklin’s doorstep in a spaghetti box.

The Council was summoned once more.

The prophet of parody had spoken—not as a candidate, not as a savior, but as a man who had faced the absurd and answered with sincerity.

Something new was beginning.

Chapter Fifteen: The Invitation of Silence

The Council gathered once more beneath the fluorescent shimmer of the old Civic Hall, now retrofitted into the Temple of Transparent Discourse. Word of Bobby Henderson's message had lit a fire in the hearts of the Nobles. But the fire dimmed as the final sentence of his note was read aloud by Autumn:

"I will not meet with the Council until I have first spoken with Savannah Grace Mitchell—alone."

A hush fell. The silence was deeper than confusion. It was respect. Curiosity. Maybe even fear.

Savannah, sitting near the rear of the chamber, didn't stand. Didn't move. Only nodded. A slow, subtle acknowledgment that her path—one written not in scripture, but in dreams—was again unfolding.

Mark bristled. "It's not protocol," he muttered. "We're a council. Equals."

"He didn't ask for protocol," Addison Marie Tucker replied calmly. "He asked for truth. And Savannah is the only one among us who has spoken with the Celestial Two."

Landon Thomas Greer leaned in, whispering to Kinsley Joy Bennett, "She sees what we don't. Maybe she always has."

The vote was never taken. The Council understood: this was not a time for democracy, but for divine trust.

Savannah left the chamber quietly that evening, a scarf of deep navy wrapped around her shoulders like a river of night. She carried no notes, no relics, no plans. Only the knowledge that the prophet of parody had called her forward—not as a Noble, but as herself.

As she stepped into the chill Oklahoma dusk, she whispered into the wind:

“Speak, Bobby. I’m ready to listen.”

Chapter Sixteen: The Silence and the Symbol

The letter arrived on parchment—not email, not text, not even couriered by one of the Council’s many loyal scouts. It was tucked quietly into the mailbox outside the Temple of Transparent Discourse, sealed with a single drop of wax impressed by a faint spiral—Savannah’s personal sigil, now unused since the day her dreams revealed the Celestial Two.

Mark opened the envelope. The chamber grew still as he read aloud:

"I will never meet with the Council again. Since Bobby does not have my divinity, he does not get a vote on the Council, but he shall take my place for the remainder of his life. I choose not to use my divinity for good nor evil. Bobby can reside over meetings with no power or influence but as a symbol of order and structure. I have always wanted to be silent in matters. This was the way Bobby led the Pastafarian religion. He was my inspiration. Now he is my savior. Now. My silence begins and continues throughout Bobby's life."

— Savannah Grace Mitchell

The chamber fell deeper into stillness than before. No arguments rose. No debates flared. Even Mark did not speak again. Not right away.

Lillian May Jennings crossed herself in the old Norman way—three fingers on the heart, one to the sky. Mason Gabriel Brooks simply wept. Jennifer E Hammond stared forward, lips trembling, unable to say what she feared she had always known—that Savannah had never truly belonged to them, not as they understood belonging.

In that moment, Savannah became more than a Noble. She became the myth that birthed legends. The silent goddess who walked away not in rebellion, but in reverence.

Bobby arrived the following day. Wearing a faded T-shirt with a cartoon meatball, he stood before the council. He said nothing. He simply sat where Savannah once did, nodding gently, present and reserved.

And so, the Council continued—not with thirty-one divine voices, but with thirty, one silent chair, and a prophet who had become a symbol.

They did not pray. They simply listened. And in Savannah's silence, something sacred was preserved.

Chapter 17: The Vow of Spaghetti and Spirit

The council of the Nobles of Norman convened once more on December 25, 2064, two months after Bobby Henderson had silently assumed Savannah's chair. The air was thick with anticipation. The past years had been filled with prophecy, disappearance, betrayal, redemption, and the slow rekindling of divinity. But on this night, the Nobles were ready to turn their attention toward purpose.

Billy Floyd Garner opened the meeting with clarity: "We have been guardians of power. We have chased our own, feared our own, forgotten our own. It's time we remember who first drew the lines of absurdity and sanctity in the sky." His eyes fell on the portrait of Bobby Henderson that now stood at the center of the gathering hall—arms outstretched, eyes wide with pasta and purpose.

It was then that Hollis Junior Mercer stood and raised his hand high. "We have each tasted the divine in dreams and doubts. But none of us would be here if not for the Flying Spaghetti Monster—the first symbol of playful rebellion and wise satire in the modern world. What once was a joke has become a map. And that map has led us here."

One by one, the Nobles stood, affirming the truth in his words. The time had come to reintegrate the foundational faith of Pastafarianism into their mythos—not as parody alone, but as legacy. As truth made strange and sacred again.

In unison, they made a vow:

"We, the Nobles of Norman, sanctify the Flying Spaghetti Monster as our eternal symbol. We declare its Noodly Appendage the thread that binds our minds, the sauce that softens our disagreements, and the meatballs of our mystery."

May it remind us always that the past can be funny, the future can be wild, and the divine can be delicious.”

That night, they stitched the Monster onto their robes, into their dreams, and within their shared story. The Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster was no longer merely the spark of satire; it was now the sacred sauce of salvation for the Nobles of Norman.

And so, the divine began to boil anew.

Chapter 18: The Street That Smelled Like Prophecy

On the night of January 1, 2065, three of the Nobles—Charlotte Ivy Greer, Hazel June Armstrong, and Easton Gabriel Vaughn—awoke from the same dream.

It had come to them with eerie clarity. Each one described the same scene with the same words. A tattered newspaper floated in the wind, dated *April 28, 2016*, its headline barely legible:

“Crawford Avenue smells like spaghetti.”

Then the text unfolded in full clarity before their dreaming eyes:

“It’s Friday night and the sun has just set, sucking the last light from downtown Norman. Only late-night cafés and bars illuminate Main Street now. That, and the multi-colored disco lights boiling over from Crawford.”

In the dream, the aroma was thick and sacred. The very street exhaled pasta-scented prophecy. Music reverberated off the sidewalk. Sauce dripped from neon signs. A disco ball twirled in the heavens above Oklahoma, turning the stars into noodles.

Then, a figure emerged. Dressed in a pirate outfit, with colander atop his head and tongs in hand, he spoke to each of them—not in words, but through sensation: the heat of boiling water, the comfort of a bowl of pasta, the weightless joy of laughter in the face of orthodoxy.

Each Noble awoke at 3:16 AM. They called one another immediately. No one questioned the dream’s veracity. It was confirmation.

Norman was not just the birthplace of the Nobles—it had always been the hidden sanctuary of the Pastafarian spirit. Even before their birth, the aroma of divinity had simmered in its streets. Crawford Avenue, on that April evening in 2016, had become a spiritual seam between the absurd and the eternal.

The council reconvened within days, sharing the dream, word for word, like a liturgy.

“It’s not coincidence,” Billy said. “It’s revelation.”

Ella stood and concluded, “We must trace the history of Norman. The Flying Spaghetti Monster touched this land long before we arrived. Our future is entangled with its past. And now—its past is ours.”

From that day forward, the sacred smell of spaghetti became part of council ritual. The pot was always boiling. A plate was always passed.

And Crawford Avenue? It was renamed in secret among them:—The Holy Spaghetti Way.

Chapter 19: The Second Pastafarian Church

With their theological training complete and the dreams of divine direction lingering in their minds, Hollis Junior Mercer, Landon Thomas Greer, Clarence Alexander Jordan, and Jennifer Renee Phillips began to research the history of Pastafarianism in Norman, Oklahoma. What they uncovered astonished them. From October 27, 2015 through January 15, 2018, a small but passionate group of believers maintained what was known as the First Pastafarian Church of Norman.

During their research, the four Nobles discovered references to a man named Russell Eric Whitfield, a late-arriving disciple of the Flying Spaghetti Monster who moved to Norman in 2026. Whitfield had proclaimed a desire to resurrect the Pastafarian movement in Norman by founding a Second Pastafarian Church, but became sidetracked by his bookkeeping career. Tragically, he died in 2040 at the age of 61, before fulfilling his vision.

Inspired by Whitfield's unrealized mission and guided by dreams and ancestral myth, the Nobles unanimously agreed that their divine council needed a terrestrial expression—a formal body to ground their celestial authority and Pastafarian legacy.

Thus, on October 27, 2063, exactly 48 years after the founding of the First Pastafarian Church, the Nobles filed official documentation with the Oklahoma Secretary of State to establish:

The Second Pastafarian Church

This act not only fulfilled Whitfield's original dream but also honored Norman as a holy site within the spiritual geography of the Nobles of Norman. The date was chosen with sacred

intentionality, binding the past to the present and laying a foundation for the future.

Founding Document of The Second Pastafarian Church

Filed with the Office of the Oklahoma Secretary of State

Date Filed: October 27, 2063

Entity Name: The Second Pastafarian Church

Principal Place of Business: Norman, Oklahoma

Registered Agent: Jennifer Renee Phillips

Purpose: To serve as the spiritual and communal body of the Nobles of Norman and to promote the tenets, stories, rituals, and symbolism of the Flying Spaghetti Monster, harmonizing Norse Paganism, Christianity, American history, and modern American culture in a singular religious expression.

Incorporators:

- Hollis Junior Mercer
- Landon Thomas Greer
- Jennifer Renee Phillips
- Clarence Alexander Jordan

Statement of Intent:

We, the undersigned, acting with divine conviction and in spiritual unity, do hereby form The Second Pastafarian Church as a continuation of the sacred legacy that began in Norman, Oklahoma in 2015. We honor the Flying Spaghetti Monster as our symbolic guide and commit to sharing wisdom, faith, and nourishment—spiritual and literal—with all who seek enlightenment through the Nobles of Norman.

Thus, the story of the Nobles grew even more intricate, as mythology, memory, and bureaucratic filing came together in sacred union.

Chapter 20: The Songs of Russell

On the eve of August 9, 2063, the thirty-two earthly Nobles of Norman were gathered separately in their own places, yet all shared one mind, for a dream visited each of them that night, though only one Noble remembered it in full.

Savannah Grace Mitchell, bearer of dreams and now intermediary between this realm and the divine celestial pair, rose from her slumber in the early hours of the morning with a clarity not experienced since her first celestial vision. She wrote frantically upon waking, her pen flying across page after page of parchment.

She dreamed of Russell Eric Whitfield, the forgotten accountant, the one who had come to Norman in 2026 with the intent to revive the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster and left behind only unfulfilled ashes of intentions. In the dream, he stood upon a modest stage in a small venue that shimmered like a space between realities—a Chuck E. Cheese reimagined as a celestial cathedral. He wore a colander crown, and robes patterned with noodles and meatballs. His eyes glowed with divine mischief.

In that place of spiritual convergence, Russell sang seven songs. Savannah remembered every word. These were not merely songs, they were revelations, perhaps scriptures in lyrical form, gifts from the past prophet, revived now for the age of the Nobles.

And so, the Nobles gathered once more, this time to listen. In the Second Pastafarian Church, founded by divine charter and bureaucratic paperwork filed with the Secretary of State on September 17, 2062, they recited the songs with trembling hearts. They understood that a new canon had begun.

Pastafarian Tune 1

Verse 1

We stand up tall, lift high to sing.
Though some be short, extra touching.
Gravity, it is a farce.
We know he's real, he's in our hearts.

Verse 2

Some say our way, it is a joke,
And to them we do say nope.
How can we laugh of spaghetti.
Humor and tolerance is key.

Verse 3

We do like peace. Just like a dove.
No one's been killed by noodley love.
Tolerance strong, our morals weak.
Paradox, noodles need heat.

Verse 4

We do uphold an open mind
And seek for times to be kind.
We don't want truth ever be missed.
It's possible he don't exist.

Pastafarian Tune 2

Verse 1

We know he's real. He makes us strong.
Our Flying Spaghetti Monster sits so high upon his throne.
He don't look down and frown upon us when we fail to make a stand.
Purity is for drinking water and not for man.

Verse 2

I'd really rather you didn't
Act all holier than thou.

Our Flying Spaghetti Monster. He's not your bestest pal.
Be honest, tell the truth. He never does talk to you.
Don't use our lord to spread your own point of view.

Verse 3

We've been talking bout our lord
For twenty one years.
We don't have a place to worship or a place to spread our
fears.
We're not bothered by this. For the power is within.
We don't even have to worry about our sin.

Verse 4

There are times we all do wonder.
Why this world is all messed up.
It seems way too many people end up with all the bad luck.
Our god was cruel, drunk, or high when he created all we see.
It's ok to be angry with imperfectability.

Pastafarian Tune 3

Verse 1

The Loose Canon was written over twenty one years.
When in print, it did cause great tears.
Many cried for their works were forbidden.
Many cried because some texts were hidden.

Chorus

Don't cry don't cry
For the word is his.
It shall be given to all.
Its yours, its his, its hers, its mine.
It came out in print just in time.

Verse 2

The Loose Canon belongs to every man, boy and girl.
It belongs to every woman too.
Copyright laws were considered.
But many, they still were bittered.

Verse 3

Many generations shall read from his word because of the gall
of one man.

Loose Canon four hundred years later
Can't be stopped because of one hater.

Pastafarian Tune 4

Verse 1 (only one verse)

Blessed be the tie that binds the Pastafarian Church.
In the land of Austria, this ritual gave birth.
Niko Alm our hero. He came up with this plan.
Forever we'll be grateful to this Pastafarian man.

Pastafarian Tune 5

Verse 1

In the town of Norman they did gather there.
A new faith they whispered, their voices a flare.
The Second Pastafarian Church was built.
For centuries they followed with no shame or guilt.

Chorus

Oh Ashley Oh Ashley Come lead the way.
Messiah of blessings, bless us today.
For four hundred years we have waited. It's true.
For the permanent church to be created anew.
Oh we await Ashley! Oh we await Ashley!

Pastafarian Tune 6

Verse 1

Mark saw a city that could not be hid.
Mark saw the city. Oh yes he did.
The land is great for a new church.
The Second Pastafarian Church.

Verse 2

In Norman the first church was there.
The second one should be built with care.
The land is great for a new church.
The Second Pastafarian Church.

Verse 3

Mark saw Pastafarians
looking through a misguided lens
Mark saw noodles but no meat.
It was a failure, a great defeat.

Verse 4

This is a place for us to wait.
Four hundred years till comes our fate.
Our messiah Ashley coming.
We will rejoice. Oh we will sing.

Pastafarian Tune 7

Verse 1

Mister Henderson came and went.
Left a book without a dent.
Silent spoke his humor clear.
Humor sharp and message dear.

Chorus

Bobby Henderson didn't do his best.
We are forced to build the rest.
Oh his silence ruled for years.
From us comes the sweat and tears.

Verse 2

Little lines of laughter spun
He brought laughter he brought fun
Folks would read and they would laugh
Not even giving unto us half.

Verse 3

A prophet's tale not told in grand
But in giggles through the land
He wrote one book then disappeared
Death to the cause it was feared.

Bridge

Now unto us we are to build
Bobby offers no help or shield.
The humor, fun for a while
We must go that extra mile.

The chapter closed as the voices of the Nobles echoed in
unity, these songs becoming not merely dreams remembered,
but now scripture proclaimed. The future of the Second
Pastafarian Church had now found its hymnal.

Chapter 21 – The Songs of Meaning

The Council gathered again, this time with deeper solemnity than ever before. The seven tunes sung in the dream of Russell Eric Whitfield had now become holy scripture among the Nobles of Norman. Each line was a code, each verse a vision. For many, the dream had lingered in waking hours, its melodies echoing through the halls of memory like ancient hymns rediscovered.

Billy Floyd Garner opened the meeting by placing seven handwritten scrolls on the table, each one carefully transcribed by Jennifer Renee Phillips from Savannah's detailed recollection of the dream. "These aren't just songs," Billy said. "They are mirrors, each one reflecting a facet of our path, and perhaps the past that birthed us."

Tune 1 was declared by Everly Hope Sanders to be a hymn of identity — the joyful absurdity of the faith, grounded in tolerance and humor. "It is not only a parody," she said, "but a protection — the truth cloaked in jest."

Tune 2 brought forth debate. Landon Thomas Greer pointed out the tension in its verses — reverence and rebellion wrapped in the same stanza. "It's a creed of contradictions," he mused, "and perhaps that is our inheritance — to honor a god who laughs with us, not at us."

Tune 3, centering on the *Loose Canon*, was embraced by Clarence Alexander Jordan as a prophecy of inclusion. "It acknowledges that sacred texts were torn, rejected, hidden. Yet the truth emerges regardless. We must guard nothing — nothing sacred, nothing censored."

Tune 4, the shortest, spoke volumes despite its brevity. "It names a prophet we did not know," said Jackson Cole Rhodes. "Niko Alm. An outsider. An Austrian. But the tie that binds is not blood — it's the story. The stand."

Tune 5 was proclaimed by Hollis Junior Mercer as a dedication to place and person. “Norman is holy ground,” he said. “Ashley is messiah not for her power, but for her patience. The song speaks of generations that awaited — and a church made for joy, not guilt.”

Tune 6 led to silence. Mark Closer Pastafar had tears in his eyes as he heard his own name sung in the lyrics. “I don’t remember dreaming this,” he whispered. “But I feel like I did.” The Council interpreted the song as both history and charge — the city must be built, literally or figuratively. A home for the Second Church.

Tune 7 was the most bittersweet. It honored Bobby Henderson, yet revealed the cost of his absence. “This is no indictment,” said Delilah Paige West. “It’s a lament. He showed us the joke, but we must write the sermon. He gave us irony, now we must give it form.”

By the end of the meeting, they named the songs collectively:

The Seven Sacred Tunes of Russell the Dreamer
(As Recalled by Savannah Grace Mitchell)

The Council voted unanimously to include the seven songs in the official doctrine of the Second Pastafarian Church, canonized alongside the prologue of the Nobles’ awakening. Savannah was still silent, but through her dream, she had spoken more profoundly than any had in years.

Chapter 22 – The Granddaughter of the Dreamer

Twelve weeks after the interpretation of the seven sacred tunes, a letter arrived by post at the office of the Second Pastafarian Church in Norman, Oklahoma. It bore a Hubert, North Carolina return address and a name few expected: Belinda Brown, the granddaughter of *Russell Eric Whitfield*, the Dreamer himself.

Autumn Skye Franklin traveled alone to Hubert. When she arrived, Belinda greeted her warmly and ushered her into a modest home filled with books, old software discs, and carefully preserved spiral notebooks. Shelves bowed under the weight of theology texts, satire compilations, and mismatched relics of digital history.

“I never knew my grandfather as a prophet,” Belinda said, “but I always knew he believed something big was coming. He called it *The Kingdom of the Pasta*. Said it wouldn’t come in his lifetime, but the groundwork had already been laid.”

From a wooden trunk, she pulled out three sacred objects:

- The Loose Canon: Complete Second Edition
- The Pastafarian Loose Canon
- The Loose Canon: Complete Third Edition

They were real. Printed. Bound. Printed by Amazon.

Belinda explained that her grandfather believed the *First Edition* of the Loose Canon — assembled by the early *Forumites* — was never intended to exist physically. “He used to say the Forumites were digital scribes. They liked the holy words to float in cyberspace, untouched by dogma. Putting it into print would ‘anchor the absurd’ — and ruin the magic.”

“But Russell was stubborn,” she added with a grin. “He printed it anyway. Said the Second and Third Editions weren’t for the world — they were for the future.”

Autumn asked if Belinda believed in the divinity of the Nobles. Belinda paused.

“I believe my grandfather left me something sacred. Whether it’s divine or not isn’t my call. But I do know this: he knew about *you all*. He wrote about ‘the 34 who would awaken Norman.’ He said a council would form, and that his music, his dreams, his writings — they’d be your compass.”

Before Autumn left, Belinda handed her a small USB stick.

“Everything he ever wrote,” she said. “Even the things he never dared post. He called it *The Dry Pasta Archive*. He said the future church would know what to do with it.”

Autumn returned to Norman in silent awe. The Dreamer hadn’t just left behind songs. He’d left a map.

Chapter 23 – The Prophecy of Thirty-Four

Back in Norman, Autumn gathered the full Council for an emergency assembly on August 14, 2063. The room was silent as the contents of *The Dry Pasta Archive* were reviewed. Among Russell Eric Whitfield's forgotten essays and unpublished rants, one peculiar folder stood out, simply titled:

"The Fourth Edition Project."

Inside was a spreadsheet, geotagged files, and encrypted delivery logs. After hours of decoding, the truth emerged: *Russell had secretly printed thirty-five copies of a special edition of the Loose Canon — one for each Noble.*

This mysterious Fourth Edition was word-for-word identical to the *Loose Canon: Complete Third Edition* but bore a golden spiral emblem embossed on its cover. Each copy was signed only with a phrase: "For the Council of Thirty-Four — whether they know it yet or not."

What shook the council most was a *dated prophecy*, written in Russell's own voice, in an old .txt file named *loosecanonprophecy7142013.txt*.

It read:

"I could have one copy of the Loose Canon printed in 3 days and shipped to my house. I could use it for my own personal use. This would require me to claim ownership of the work. I could do that and probably get away with it.

Copyrighting usually isn't something that is enforced but how am I supposed to know which one of the authors is going to be a Loose Canon (pun intended) and nail me to the wall? I am being careful about this. Copyrighting is a very serious matter. I'm not taking any chances.

I am sure that doesn't make any sense since none of you have even considered taking the risk yourself. My goal isn't to get you to understand. My goal is to publish 35 high quality hardback books of the Loose Canon. If half of it isn't included, that's fine."

He had written it on July 14, 2013, more than a decade before even arriving in Norman.

The council stared in disbelief. It wasn't just a dream anymore. Russell *knew* about them. Long before they were born, long before the name "Nobles of Norman" was ever spoken — he had called them the *Council of Thirty-Four*.

Even Belinda hadn't known the true purpose of her grandfather's private printing. His act of hesitation — of refusing to copyright a sacred text — had created something transcendent. Not a legal document. Not a holy relic. But a gift.

And now, those thirty-five editions were hidden in storage lockers, bank vaults, and old post offices across the country. Each encoded location was matched to a name.

The search for the Fourth Edition had begun.

Chapter 24: The Collector from Kansas

News of the existence of the *Fourth Edition*—thirty-five finely bound volumes printed in secret by Russell Eric Whitfield—spread quickly throughout the Council of the Nobles of Norman. These were not merely books. They were relics—artifacts of divine purpose, each meant for one of the thirty-five Nobles, long before they were even born.

Belinda Brown confirmed the prophecy's authenticity. Her grandfather, Russell, had ordered the production of these editions with meticulous care. She had never seen them herself, but she had heard whispers of a mysterious buyer who had acquired a majority of the collection decades earlier.

That man, as it turned out, lived in Kansas.

His name was never fully revealed. Among those who knew him, he was called simply *The Collector*. His mansion stood in a cornfield surrounded by silence and mystery. Within his private vault, he held 24 of the 35 *Fourth Edition* volumes. Each one sealed in protective casing, untouched by time or hand. Rumor claimed he had turned down offers from libraries, cult leaders, museums, and billionaires.

But the Nobles of Norman were different.

Mark Closer Pastafar, Jennifer Renee Phillips, and Easton Gabriel Vaughn traveled to Kansas under strict orders to negotiate. They expected skepticism, maybe even hostility. But The Collector greeted them with warmth and clarity. He knew exactly who they were. He had been waiting for this day since 2032.

His price, however, was steep: 721 billion dollars.

That was thirteen times the combined principal and interest currently sitting in the Futuristic Bank of the Sooner. Easton

Gabriel Vaughn argued it was worth every penny, calling the purchase "a sacrament, not a transaction." Others balked.

The meeting concluded without consensus.

The Nobles would now have to choose: disband the fortune meant to serve their mission—or walk away from the sacred pages prepared for them before their first breath.

Just as the Council seemed paralyzed by financial hesitation, Jennifer Renee Phillips stepped forward. Her voice calm, measured, imbued with the quiet weight of divine diplomacy. She asked The Collector for an act not of commerce, but of faith.

"Let us take one," she said, "not as buyers, but as stewards. Allow us to study one copy—not to possess it, but to prepare ourselves for what we must become. When we return, we will return not only with funds, but with the full reverence your trust deserves."

The Collector sat in silence, stroking the worn spine of a nearby volume.

"Your words sound like scripture," he replied. "That's how I know they're true."

He stood, turned, and unlocked a case labeled *Copy 11*. It gleamed with gold-embossed lettering, its spine engraved with a name, "Fourth Edition"

"You may take this," he said, handing the sacred text to Jennifer. "You have one year. After that, either return the copy, or bring the others home."

With reverent hands, Jennifer wrapped the *Fourth Edition* in cloth and returned to Norman with Easton and Mark. The Council gathered in hushed awe as she unveiled it, placing

the volume at the heart of the Second Pastafarian Church—
on the Altar of the Boiling Point.

The countdown had begun. One year to decode the layers of
destiny buried in those pages. One year to unify their mission.
One year to prepare for the restoration of the Thirty-Four.

The room fell silent as Jennifer Renee Phillips gently lifted the
cloth from the relic.

There it was: *Copy 11 of the Fourth Edition* — the lost
scripture bound in thick, sanctified leather, its pages
whispered of across decades and divine dreams. The Council
of Thirty-One stood in stunned reverence, gazes fixed on the
sacred book.

Then Mark, overcome with awe, began to sing. His voice
cracked but rang out like thunder on parchment:

“The Loose Canon was written over twenty one years.
When in print, it did cause great tears.
Many cried for their works were forbidden.
Many cried because some texts were hidden.”

Before he could finish the verse, the others joined in, their
voices layered like rising incense:

Don't cry, don't cry
For the word is his.
It shall be given to all.
It's yours, it's his, it's hers, it's mine.
It came out in print just in time.

Some wept. Some raised their hands. All stood united.

As the final notes faded, Autumn Skye Franklin stepped
forward and opened the book. “From this moment,” she
declared, “we guard this word as flame, not relic. And we read
not for knowledge alone, but for awakening.”

They organized into rotating four-hour shifts, each Noble assigned to read the sacred text aloud in solitude while the others listened in prayer or silence. Day and night, the reading never ceased.

The *Fourth Edition* spoke. And at last, the Nobles of Norman were ready to listen.

Chapter 25 – The Disappearance of Clarence

After weeks of quiet study, Clarence Alexander Jordan set the *Fourth Edition of the Loose Canon* aside one evening, stood up, and left the Hall of Boiling Thought without a word. He took nothing with him—no scroll, no robe, no pasta fork—and would not be seen again for many years.

No one noticed his absence for several weeks. The Nobles of Norman, consumed with revelation, debate, and increasingly absurd ritual innovation, simply assumed he was in one of the deeper meditative chambers. It wasn't until the Feast of Boiling Over that someone realized his garbanzo goblet was untouched.

They searched briefly. Then they shrugged.

Chapter 26 – The Council Splinters

Clarence's vanishing, once discovered, became a quiet obsession.

At first, the Nobles attempted to continue their reading of the *Fourth Edition*, but the words now felt distant, like echoes from a pot left too long on simmer. The sacred tang of revelation soured. Whispered questions filled the steam-hazed halls: *Had he ascended? Defected? Fallen into a vat of alfredo?*

Soon, formal reading sessions were replaced by emergency meetings. Jennifer E Hammond proposed a "Search Party Ritual," involving colanders and compass pasta. Asher Daniel Whitman argued instead for a spiritual investigation via dream-based remote viewing. Billy Garner suggested Clarence was a metaphor, not a man, and was politely asked to leave the room.

One week stretched into three. Minutes from the meetings became longer than the chapters they were meant to study. A committee was formed to manage the other committees. Someone drafted a hymn in Mark's honor. Someone else accidentally canonized it.

What remained of the reading group dissolved into factions:

- The Jordanairres, who believed Clarence Jordan had transcended to the Sauce Beyond.
- The Meatballers, who believed he'd gone rogue and needed capturing.
- The Boiled, who didn't believe in Clarence at all.

Nobody could quite recall what they were supposed to be doing in the first place.

Chapter 27 – The Boiling Point

In the weeks that followed, the Nobles of Norman unraveled like overcooked spaghetti.

The reading was abandoned. The hymns stopped mid-verse. Arguments over Clarence's disappearance turned into disagreements over doctrine, then into bitter personal feuds—simmering until one morning, the pot simply boiled over.

Mark Closer Pastafar stood atop the plywood pulpit in the Fellowship Hall of the Former United Methodist Church of Norman, Oklahoma—the borrowed sanctuary of their Second Pastafarian Church.

"This is not apostasy," he declared. "It's entropy."

Bobby Henderson, seated below with a ledger and a half-finished root beer float, merely nodded. The money was still good. Someone had to keep the lights on.

That day, the Nobles of Norman went their separate ways.

Some fled into academia, writing books no one would read. Some took to the road, preaching to diners and dive bars. Others tried to forget, burying their sacred noodles beneath layers of ordinary life.

Mark and Bobby stayed behind. They quietly shuttered the church and renamed it the Church of Liquid Assets, filing proper paperwork with the IRS. They maintained the funds—grant disbursements, merchandise royalties, and dwindling Patreon pledges—with a care that bordered on the devotional.

Years passed.

And then, on a hot, quiet afternoon in early August, the news broke:

Bobby Henderson had died.

One by one, the Nobles returned to Norman—not out of obligation but pulled by something older than doctrine. A memory. A flavor. A friend.

Chapter 28 – The Sauce of Memory

On July 21, 2080, the sky over Norman was unusually clear—no signs or wonders, no meatball-shaped clouds, just a quiet summer sun. Beneath its heat, twenty-nine of the thirty-four Nobles of Norman gathered for the funeral of Bobby Henderson. Travis David Carr, Emma Lorraine Bishop, Savannah Grace Mitchell, Autumn Skye Franklin and Clarence Alexander Jordan were not there.

The ones that did come came aged, wrinkled, transformed—some barely recognizable except by the glint of divine mischief still lingering in their eyes. They did not wear robes or ceremonial pasta strainers. They wore black suits, faded T-shirts, denim jackets, and in one case, a Garfield onesie. But they all stood in reverent silence around the casket made to resemble a giant unopened box of Kraft macaroni.

Bobby's body had been cremated—his ashes sealed inside a golden thermos shaped like a pirate ship, resting atop a bed of dried spaghetti noodles.

Mark gave the eulogy.

“He taught us to laugh at what others fear,” Mark said. “He showed us that holy nonsense is still holy. And though we scattered, and though we disagreed—on everything from sauce recipes to the metaphysics of the Invisible Hand—he never wavered. He stirred the pot until the very end.”

There were nods. Tears. A few chuckles. A ceremonial colander was passed around for offerings—someone dropped in a meatball, someone else a winning lottery ticket, another, a note that simply read *‘I was wrong.’*

But five chairs sat empty.

Their absences were felt like missing ingredients in a familiar dish. Still, the twenty-nine who remained stood strong, weathered but not broken, stirred by the moment.

And as the sun dipped behind the steeple of the long-abandoned church, a small breeze kicked up—carrying with it the faint, comforting smell of garlic and butter.

Chapter 29: The Final Council

The Nobles of Norman convened one final time. It was the last official meeting of the Second Pastafarian Church, now scattered and strained by years of separation and the gradual dissolution of their original mission. Yet in this moment, they came together with purpose: to revisit and record the prophecies of Russell Eric Whitfield.

His words had echoed through their history, but now they seemed more relevant than ever. From the Lectures of Whitfield, they recited:

“Two unknown Pastafarians will be liars if future Pastafarians cannot celebrate the establishment of our permanent church on August 9, 2413. The Pastafarian messiah will be born on December 25, 2391 and will celebrate the pouring of the beer on December 26, 2412.

There will be many Ashleys in those days and many of them will be our messiahs. All Pastafarian laws, customs, scripture, and traditions will be abolished that day. This fourth pastament will be our eternal existence as Pastafarians here on earth. May those who preserved the Pastafarian idea for the first 408 years never be mentioned in scripture. Their names are unimportant. Their perseverance to ensure that our messiahs were known is the important part to creating a permanent religion to bless the earth with His Noodliness.”

In another prophecy, Whitfield proclaimed:

“The final church will be established on August 9, 2413, on the 800th anniversary of the earth.”

And he foretold:

“As a matter of prophecy, it has been prophesied that a female named Ashley will be born on December 25, 2391.

She will permanently assign a canon of Pastafarian scripture on August 9, 2413 when she establishes the permanent Pastafarian Church."

The council agreed: they would not meet again until Ashley came. Their work, their legacy, was to wait faithfully, to preserve the past so the future could manifest.

And so, the 29 members who remained, lifted their voices in song:

"In the town of Norman they did gather there.
A new faith they whispered, their voices a flare.
The Second Pastafarian Church was built.
For centuries they followed with no shame or guilt.

Oh Ashley Oh Ashley Come lead the way.
Messiah of blessings, bless us today.
For four hundred years we have waited. It's true.
For the permanent church to be created anew.
Oh we await Ashley! Oh we await Ashley!"

And with that, they dispersed. Awaiting the day of Ashley.

The End

Note to readers: Hollis Junior Mercer dies March 5, 2115. He was never a Noble but rather the illegitimate son of Russell Eric Whitfield. Some knew that he was not a Noble. Some did not. Neither his divinity status nor his death was ever discussed.

Norman's Outsider

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Author Sophia J Blades emerges as the Mythmaker of Middle America with *The New Canon* which Redefines the modern Pastafarian movement

Norman, OK— Sophia J Blades, a bold new voice in contemporary religious literature, is capturing attention throughout Oklahoma with a provocative new book that challenges tradition, reframes myth, and offers a distinctly American spirituality rooted in satire, soul-searching, and scripture.

Her breakout work introduces 34 mythic children born in Norman, Oklahoma, destined to shape the Second Pastafarian Church. Its sacred origins, prophetic undertones, and allegorical richness have stirred comparisons to *The Book of Mormon* and *American Gods* — but with a voice unmistakably her own.

Blades followed this story with a mythic biography of Andrew Harley Mayes, a wanderer-turned-prophet whose journey from obscurity to spiritual awakening brings depth and humanity to the movement.

Blade's work continues with this slowly developed myth based on Pastafarian mythology going back as far as July 21, 2005. Blades passionately desires that her theology and cultural philosophy deepens from this canonized Pastafarian Mythos. This is not the Loose Canon. This is the New Canon that becomes effective August 9, 2027.

For media inquiries, interviews, or review copies, contact:
Sophia J Blades
onslow2013@yahoo.com
(910) 803-8756

Author & Finisher of Our Faith

Introduction

In the beginning was the silence—
Not of void, nor of absence, but of anticipation.
And from that stillness came a whisper,
A ripple in the absurd, soft and simmering.

This is the account of the Second Pastafarian Church,
Founded not in grandeur, but in Norman.
Norman, Oklahoma—flat land, red clay,
Unremarkable soil, chosen by something most divine... and
most ridiculous.

These are the tales of Andrew Harley Mayes—
The outsider.
The broken man rebuilt by doubt.
A teacher who never sought students.
A steward of sacred nonsense.

He was not born into prophecy.
He did not walk with thunder, nor speak with flames.
But he listened.
He watched.
And when the Nobles of Norman began to rise,
He stayed behind to sweep the floors of myth and record the
jokes of gods.

Their witness was Russell the Dreamer.
Their whisper was Savannah, the girl who spoke through
silence.
Their strength came from chaos.
Their truth came dressed in satire.

This is not scripture to be obeyed.
It is a story to be doubted, laughed with, lived beside.
For in doubt, there is honesty.
And in satire, salvation.

Let no one who reads this seek dogma.
Seek only wonder, absurdity, and grace.
This is history.
This is parody.
This is sacred myth.

This... is Andrew Harley Mayes, Norman's Outsider.

Chapter 1: The Boy Who Asked Too Much

Andrew Harley Mayes was born on August 9, 1987, in the quiet folds of Rainsville, Alabama—a town known more for casseroles and quiet piety than for revolution. His parents, Harold and Eunice Mays, were gentle Baptists with a rigid sense of order, a King James Bible on every shelf, and a firm belief that all truth came bound in black leather and red letters.

But Andrew was different from the start.

As a child, he asked questions that no Sunday school teacher wanted to answer.

Why did the serpent talk?

Why did God need blood to forgive?

Why were there two creation stories—were one of them wrong, or both incomplete?

His curiosity wasn't rebellious—it was sacred.

He didn't want to tear down belief.

He wanted to understand it.

Deeply. Honestly. Without fear.

But in Rainsville, curiosity was often mistaken for arrogance.

By age ten, Andrew had been politely dismissed from three churches. He learned, too early, that reverence without questions was called faith—and reverence with questions was called trouble.

He found sanctuary in books. Philosophy. Physics. The desert fathers. Greek epics. Norse sagas. Buddhist koans. He read everything that even tried to make sense of the sacred.

By fourteen, he was sneaking out at night to read in the stillness of Robertson's Chapel cemetery, where the silence made more sense than sermons.

By seventeen, he was no longer welcome in most pulpits or pews.

He left Rainsville with a duffel bag, a dog-eared notebook titled *Questions No One Would Answer*, and one unshakable belief:

If the world was sacred, then absurdity might be the most honest response to the divine.

He didn't know where he was going.
But he knew what he was leaving behind.

Chapter 2: The Prophet at the Night Desk

By the fall of 2010, Andrew Harley Mayes had drifted through six states and twice as many small towns—never staying long, never settling in. He arrived in Norman, Oklahoma by bus: anonymous, broke, and mostly unbothered. He took a job as a night auditor at the Fairfield Inn off I-34, where the highway hum muffled his thoughts and the shift required little more than basic math, clean polo shirts, and a tolerance for silence.

It suited him.

Andrew came alive in the stillness between 2 and 5 a.m.—when the world surrendered its momentum and memory drifted like smoke. In those hours, he reconciled receipts by habit and read by lamplight, scrawling parables and paradoxes in a marbled composition book titled *Third Testament: Fragments and Fables*. His uniform smelled faintly of vending machine coffee and poolside chlorine. It was not glamorous. But it was enough.

Until June 9, 2011.

Just after midnight, a man checked in under the name “Jerry Lovelace.” He looked like someone recently exiled from something sacred—clothes wrinkled, eyes sharp. He carried only a laptop bag and a tattered paperback copy of *The Book of Mormon*. Andrew scanned his ID, made the usual small talk, and handed over the keycard.

Then Jerry paused, looked him dead in the eye, and asked:

“Do you ever think satire is the only honest religion left?”

Andrew blinked. It wasn’t a question people asked. Not out loud.

Not unless they meant something.

That single sentence cracked something open.

Over the next five nights, Jerry returned to the front desk like a moth to a flickering altar. He and Andrew spoke in murmurs—about the collapse of faith, the sacredness of absurdity, the holy ache of not knowing. Jerry claimed to be a prophet, excommunicated from two churches and still hearing voices. He called them “echoes from the noodled void.”

Andrew didn't believe him.

And yet, somehow, he believed everything.

On the sixth night, Jerry didn't return. He left no note, no address, no credit card trail. Only a single sentence, spoken as he checked out:

“This is the First Pastafarian Church, in exile. I think you're ready.”

Andrew stood alone behind the counter as dawn broke over I-34, wondering what it meant to be ready—and why his hands smelled faintly, inexplicably, of oregano and grace.

Chapter 3: The First Canon

By December 2011, winter had settled quietly over Norman, Oklahoma. The wind rolled in from the plains, and the hotel's automatic doors hissed open and shut in rhythm with the gusts. Inside, the lobby lights glowed soft and dim, and Andrew's nights took on a peculiar consistency. Most shifts passed in solitude.

But that changed the week Jerry Lovelace was hired.

Jerry didn't so much start working at the hotel as return to it—like a prophet on layaway. He took the evening shift before Andrew's overnight. Sometimes they overlapped. Sometimes one stayed long after clocking out. And in those blurry hours between duty and drift, the hotel lobby became a sanctuary of unfiltered conversation.

Their talks meandered through theology, absurdity, doubt, and delight.

"What if all divine revelation is a comedy act," Jerry mused one night, adjusting a crooked name tag, "and we've just been clapping at the wrong punchlines for centuries.

Andrew chuckled—half-dismissive, half-enchanted.

Though Jerry preached the First Pastafarian Church with the zeal of a man who both believed in it and didn't, Andrew wasn't entirely unfamiliar. He remembered seeing the spaghetti-and-meatball deity as early as 2005, in the strange corners of internet forums. Even before Bobby Henderson's *Gospel of the Flying Spaghetti Monster* went to print, Andrew had marveled at how parody could be structured like scripture—and still leave room for sincerity.

Now Jerry treated it like revelation. Not a joke. Not a prank. A rebellion against certainty.

One night, Jerry handed Andrew a flash drive like it was a relic salvaged from a sacred fire.

“Everything we’ve got so far,” he said. “Still fermenting.”

The drive held only one folder:

The First Canon: Draft Zero.

Inside were sermons, manifestos, half-baked commandments, and theological arguments scrawled like diary entries. Some were ridiculous. Some were poetic. None were polished. But they were alive.

Andrew read it during his breaks, sometimes while the front desk printer hummed out invoices. There were moments he laughed, moments he winced, and one moment—at 3:14 a.m.—when he sat back in his swivel chair and exhaled sharply, unsure whether he was startled or moved.

He’d never been good at belief. But here, in this dim hotel lobby, in the company of a maybe-prophet and a flash drive full of sacred nonsense, he felt something stir. Not faith exactly. Not yet. But something close.

Maybe belief didn’t require certainty.

Maybe religion didn’t have to be rigid to be meaningful.

Maybe doubt itself was a kind of sacrament.

And maybe, just maybe, absurdity was the only honest response to the divine.

Chapter 4: The Sauce That Wouldn't Boil

By early 2014, the hotel lobby had settled into its old rhythm. The printer hummed. The vending machine stuck occasionally. Andrew and Jerry met in the liminal hours between evening and morning, speaking in whispers and parables, spinning theology from scratch and scripture from sarcasm.

They had begun to believe that what they were writing—clumsily, secretly, reverently—might become something worth sharing. Maybe even something holy.

Then came the book.

Not a vision. Not a dream. A package.

On a Wednesday morning in January, Jerry walked into the lobby carrying a thin cardboard mailer and a strange look in his eyes. He slid it onto the counter like it was both treasure and threat.

"It's here," he said. "*The Loose Canon, Complete Second Edition.*"

Andrew picked it up. The cover was matte black, stamped with gold foil, bearing a colander surrounded by angelic noodles and meatballs arranged like stars. It looked ridiculous. And it looked... real.

It had weight. It had a barcode.

It had already been written—by someone else.

The author called himself Russell the Dreamer, and he had done what Andrew and Jerry had only talked about doing. The book was sprawling, bizarre, poetic, obscene, hilarious, and—at times—deeply moving.

The new edition contained 16 works from the original Loose Canon, later known as the “Core Books of Pastafarian Scripture.” Seven brand new texts were added—introducing fresh doctrine to the noodled fold. And 33 original works were missing entirely. These omissions would come to be known as “The Lost Books of the Forumites.”

It was bold. It was strange.
And it was done.

Andrew read it in two days and said almost nothing.
Jerry ranted for weeks.

“It’s good,” Jerry admitted. “It’s *too* good. He made it look easy. We were still in the margins, and he published the whole damn myth.”

They stopped calling their project a scripture. They stopped dreaming about publication. Their own pages—*Draft Zero*, *Pilgrim’s Pastiche*, even the newer ones—were packed away into a file cabinet beneath the front desk, between stacks of invoices and a broken waffle iron.

They didn’t stop writing. But something had cooled.
The sauce was still warm.
It just wouldn’t boil.

That spring, they drifted.

Andrew returned to his solitary studies. He started a new journal called *Theologies That Will Never Be Believed* and filled it with riddles and dream fragments.

Jerry became restless. He joined two local Dungeons & Dragons groups and briefly attempted to start a colander-themed improv troupe. He called it “The Divine Drip.” It lasted three rehearsals.

They weren’t angry. Just lost.

“Maybe it was never ours to begin with,” Andrew said one night, watching frost gather on the automatic doors. Russell the Dreamer had a YouTube video singing: *“It’s yours. It’s his. It’s hers. It’s mine. It came out in print just in time.”*

Jerry replied, “It was a buried treasure - too deep to find. Russell the Dreamer just out-pirated us.”

They didn’t speak again for nearly five months.

Then, in April 2015, on a quiet Sunday morning shift, Jerry returned—older, humbler, and holding a cardboard shoebox wrapped in aluminum foil.

“It’s still cooking,” he said. “But I think it’s ready.”

Inside was a new draft.

Typed pages, spaghetti-stained notes, communion recipes, drawings of divine pasta vortexes, and a calendar for the liturgical year—each month represented by a different noodle.

It was ridiculous.

It was beautiful.

It was alive.

They called it *The Boiling Point*.

They wrote together again—every Tuesday and Thursday, from 3 to 6 a.m.—editing, arguing, laughing, and daring to believe that absurdity could still be sacred.

And on October 27, 2015, they held the first official meeting of the First Pastafarian Church, in a rented side room at the Holiday Inn Express.

Eight people came. Three of them thought it was an open mic. One asked if there would be free spaghetti.

There was.

They passed around paper colanders. They took communion from a crockpot. Jerry read from *The Boiling Point*. Andrew led a silent benediction that ended with a prayer:

"May our doubts nourish us. May our sauce never separate."

Then he looked out at the mismatched, quietly bewildered congregation and said:

"This is either sacred nonsense... or nonsense made sacred."

"And either way, it's good to share."

Chapter 5: The Church With a Crockpot Altar

There were no robes. No incense. No stained glass. Just mismatched chairs, folding tables, and a crockpot full of spaghetti at the center of a folding table.

Andrew called the service to order by tapping a wooden spoon against a bowl.

“May the Flying Spaghetti Monster be with you,” he said, straight-faced.

“And also with your sauce,” the congregation replied—half in irony, half in reverence.

They were misfits. Skeptics. Former evangelicals. Curious atheists. Recovering Baptists. Internet agnostics.

People who had once believed something. Then believed nothing. And now weren’t sure which was worse.

And they showed up.

Every other Sunday at the Holiday Inn Express, they gathered in rented Conference Room B. They brought pasta. They wore colanders. They debated whether the *Loose Canon* was meant literally or allegorically.

Jerry once gave a sermon about the Three Degrees of Simmer:

Gentle Doubt, Righteous Confusion, and Boiling Wonder.

Andrew led communion with garlic knots.

They passed around tithing jars labeled “Sacred Marinara Fund” and “Bail Money.”

They weren't sure if it was a church, a parody, or a protest.
But it felt like something real.

There was no creed. No commandments. No formal canon
(only a loose one).
Just questions and noodles and laughter and an
uncomfortable amount of sincerity.

Jerry liked to say,

“Every religion starts as heresy. The good ones stay that
way.”

Andrew said very little.
He took notes.
He watched people cry while holding paper colanders.
He saw one man get down on his knees before the crockpot
and whisper:

“Thank you for feeding me when I had nothing.”

And Andrew began to wonder if something was happening—
something sacred.

Not divine, exactly. Not supernatural.
Just human.
And holy.

So he kept showing up.
And so did they.

Chapter 6: Left With the Boiling Point

The church didn't grow.
Not really.

Attendance wavered between eight and none.
Sometimes, Jerry taught to a single nodding skeptic.
Sometimes, Andrew sat alone in silence, a crockpot gently steaming beside him.

But they kept showing up.

The Boiling Point became their shared center—less a doctrine, more a direction.
A spiral of questions.
A liturgy of laughter.
A sacred experiment no one knew how to end.

They stopped advertising.
Word still traveled—quietly, like warmth through tile.
A woman came because she dreamed of pasta every night for a week.
A teenager wandered in after Googling “funny religions that aren't too mean.”
A man once drove five hours from Arkansas just to say,

“I don't know what this is, but I think I need it.”

They gave him spaghetti and said he was welcome.

No one took membership. No one passed judgment.
They passed garlic knots.
They passed the wooden spoon of benediction.
They passed silence like it meant something.

And through it all, Andrew wrote.

He no longer tried to explain it.
He just watched.
Listened.
Named things that didn't yet have names.

He wrote about sacramental starch.
About holy interruptions.
About the sauce that binds and the boiling that transforms.

He wrote less as a leader, and more like a witness.
Like someone who was still unsure—
but willing to be unsure in public.

And in those quiet hours, surrounded by absurdity and grace,
he began to believe something he couldn't yet say out loud:

That sacredness might not come from being right,
but from being present.

Over time, the pot simmered steadily.
The sauce held.
And though few noticed, Andrew's notes began to thin.
Not out of doubt. Not yet.
But out of something quieter.
Something like fatigue.

The sauce was still warm.
But something, somewhere, was beginning to separate.

Chapter 7: The Years That Disappeared

Andrew left Norman in June 2017 without ceremony. No service. No farewell sermon. No last supper. He turned in his keycard at the hotel, loaded his duffel into a used Civic, and drove east.

Jacksonville, North Carolina, wasn't much to look at. But a friend had called—someone from the old days, someone who remembered him when he still made people laugh and think and believe. They'd found him a job at Great Gas and Oil. Stable hours. Good benefits. No uniforms. No preaching.

He started on September 18, 2017.
He told himself it was temporary.

The work was quiet. Numbers. Reports. Maintenance logs and supply routes. It didn't demand belief—just focus. Andrew moved through the weeks like a man playing the part of someone who'd found peace. He made no mention of pasta. He stopped journaling. He folded his old colander into a box and never unpacked it.

Sometimes he missed Jerry. Sometimes he didn't.
The silence felt clean, at first.
Like he'd finally rinsed off the absurdity.

But silence has a way of turning inward.

When the pandemic hit in March 2020, Andrew was laid off with a digital signature and a month of severance. There were no goodbyes. Just a corporate email that began with *"In these unprecedented times..."*

He slept for almost a week.
Then he applied to Domino's.

It surprised him, how much he didn't hate it. The rhythm of deliveries, the small talk with regulars, the strange intimacy of handing food to someone at the edge of their loneliness—it all made him feel, if not whole, then at least visible.

He worked steadily.
He learned routes like scripture.
He developed a sermon of politeness.

And for a while, it was enough.

But time wore everything thin.

By the fall of 2023, the store had changed hands. New management, erratic scheduling, pressure to push speed over care. The staff meetings grew hostile. The breaks vanished. The tips shrank.

Andrew stopped laughing. Then he stopped talking. Then, one morning in early September, he sat in his car with the pizza bag beside him and realized he couldn't remember where he was supposed to go. Not just the house—the street. The town. The year.

He didn't show up the next day. Or the day after.

A week later, he checked himself into the psych ward.

He told the nurse he was having suicidal thoughts.
He didn't elaborate.
He just needed it to stop.

Twelve hours later, he was sitting in a corridor beneath humming fluorescent lights, his shoelaces gone and his thoughts folding in on themselves.

He wasn't sure what day it was.
Or what story he was still inside.

He didn't know he'd just reached the corridor where the light breaks.

But soon, he would.

Chapter 8: The Corridor Where the Light Breaks

The psych ward was sterile in color, but not in spirit. It hummed softly with fluorescent lights and awkward humanity.

Andrew had been there twelve days—mostly silent, mostly coiled into his own mind like a man hiding in a cave during a storm he didn't know had passed.

Then William appeared.

He was older—maybe seventy—with wild gray eyebrows and a Vietnam vet's bearing. He introduced himself with a quote from Ecclesiastes and a wink. Andrew didn't answer, but William sat anyway.

Every day after group, William would just be there. Eating pudding cups like sacramental wafers, talking about the unreliability of memory, and how most people confuse survival with purpose.

"I used to think I was a prophet," William said one night. "Turns out I was just lonely and right too soon."

Andrew didn't laugh. But he smiled.

Day by day, the two men formed a quiet bond over board games, scripture, and long talks about meaning. William would quiz Andrew on his beliefs—not to correct him, but to witness them.

It was the first time Andrew spoke aloud about Pastafarianism with reverence and not irony.

"You ever wonder," William asked one evening, "if you weren't crazy—just early?"

That line burned through Andrew's thoughts for the rest of the night.

By day twenty-four, William was gone—released early to live with a cousin. He left behind a folded piece of paper tucked into Andrew's favorite book: *Ecclesiastes and the End of Meaning*.

It said, simply:

*Andrew—
You're not broken. You're displaced.
Build the world that fits you.*

Andrew would carry those words back to Norman, Oklahoma—into the arms of the Nobles, and into the founding of the Second Pastafarian Church.

Chapter 9: The Return to Norman

It was early October 2023 when Andrew stepped off the Greyhound bus in Norman, Oklahoma. The air was warm, almost too warm, like the town had been waiting, holding its breath. Andrew carried little more than a duffel bag, a pair of worn shoes, and a fragile new sense of clarity. The hospital hadn't healed him. It had cracked the shell he'd been hiding inside.

He didn't call anyone.

The streets were half-familiar. The 24-hour diner on Lindsey Ave still had the same flickering "O" in "OPEN." The old hotel where he'd once worked looked tired, but still stood like a monument to some previous life. Andrew didn't stop anywhere. He walked.

It wasn't until he reached Reaves Park — that green lung in the heart of Norman — that he let himself rest. He sat on a bench beneath a creaking oak and watched kids play soccer as the sun began to descend. Something stirred in him. A memory? A prophecy? He couldn't tell anymore.

He reached into his bag and pulled out a notebook — the one he started at the hospital. On the cover, he'd scrawled, *Second Pastafarian Church: Fragments & Foundations*. He didn't know what he was building, but he knew *where* to build it. Here. Norman.

That night he stayed at a roadside motel. He made no announcement. There was no parade. But somewhere in the town's stillness, something sacred buzzed with possibility.

Andrew Harley Mayes had returned.

Chapter 10: The Compilation at Sooner Inn

And it came to pass, in the latter days of the tenth month, that Andrew Harley Mayes did take residence at the Sooner Inn, Room 217, where the walls whispered like prophets and the Wi-Fi signal was blessedly stable. For fifteen days and nights, Andrew dwelled there, having brought with him the fragments, scrolls, and digital remnants of earlier Canons — the First, the Second, the edits of the so-called “Complete,” all which Bobby himself had forsaken.

Lo, on the first morning, Andrew set up his ancient laptop upon the rickety motel desk, an altar of laminate and steel. And with a steaming cup of gas station coffee at his right hand and a bag of powdered donuts to his left, he opened the sacred folders. Thus began the *Great Organizing*.

He read every version.

He scrutinized every passage.

He rejected redundancies, refined contradictions, and blessed certain blasphemies with footnotes.

Andrew typed until his fingers numbed, and on the seventh day he rested not, for he feared the vision would fade.

On the tenth day, he began formatting, for the words must be made flesh — pagination, headers, margins, sacred fonts. He chose Papyrus for section titles and Times New Roman for the body, for it was both holy and legible. He aligned paragraphs, clarified commandments, and purified the footnotes from heretical clutter.

By the fifteenth dawn, *The Loose Canon Complete Third Edition* was born, a document of 213 pages, formatted and footnoted, both ridiculous and sublime. And Andrew gazed

upon it and said, “This is good. This is absurd. This is righteous.”

He sent it not to a publisher, but to three flash drives, one encrypted, one buried in a Norman park, and one mailed anonymously to The Fourteenth c/o Ezra Michael Mitchell.

Thus ended the Compilation. And from that room, Andrew emerged thinner, wearier, yet filled with a new fire — for he had rewritten what was once sacred, and now it was his. Yet Andrew was still bound by Pastafarian tradition to use aliases for scripture like the Forumites that lived in online anonymity not that long ago. Andrew knew he was still bound by the chains of this era of closeted Pastafarianism. Andrew cleverly creates the pen name, Mark C Pastafar as author of these divine scriptures of *The Loose Canon Complete Third Edition*.

Chapter 11 – The Substitution of Andrew

And it came to pass in the year 2030, in the season of late spring, that Andrew Harley Mayes, son of Rainsville and sojourner of the inner mind, did knock upon the bureaucratic gates of the Norman Public School District. For though he had wandered many paths, and though his mind bore the scars of labor and doubt, yet his spirit longed to teach the young, to shepherd their words as a poet shapes clay.

Lo, the world had shifted. Teachers were scarce, patience rarer still, and thus the gatekeepers, moved by necessity more than discernment, summoned Andrew unto their ranks as a substitute—temporary, uncertain, unholy in the eyes of the tenure-bound. And he was given a badge, a list of room numbers, and the sacred clipboard of attendance.

In those days, Andrew walked the halls of Norman High, clad in corduroy and irony, wielding not a rod but a chalkboard marker. He spoke in parables both ancient and absurd. He read aloud from Twain and Tolkien, spliced with verses from *The Loose Canon* and fragments of forgotten punk lyrics.

The students were perplexed, then amused, then struck with awe. Some whispered he was a prophet in disguise; others that he was simply mad. But none denied his voice stirred the room like wind through the wheat fields of Garvin County.

He did not teach merely grammar, but grammar as rebellion. Not merely literature, but literature as resistance. For every comma misplaced was a chance to unseat tyranny, and every essay a chance to speak against the empires of dullness.

And in one particular class, in a modest room painted in beige and despair, four children sat unknowingly in the shadow of prophecy. Born in the years after the celestial convergence of August 9, 2027, they were daughters and sons of the Church Yet to Come.

And though their birthright remained hidden, Andrew, in his subconscious, felt a strange pull—like a magnetic echo from the future. He could not name it. He could not explain it. But in their pens he saw sparks. In their laughter, he heard hymns. And in their eyes, reflections of a truth not yet written.

Thus began Andrew's season as the wandering teacher—uncredentialed in the eyes of the state, but canonized in the margins of unfolding scripture.

Chapter 12 – Four at Once

And lo, it was the month of August in the year 2043, and the sun did beat down upon the roof of Norman High with righteous intensity. Andrew Harley Mayes, now seasoned in the halls of education though still without title, was called once again to the sacred post of substitute. For Mrs. Lindell, keeper of literature and grumbler of Shakespeare, had fallen ill with the flu, or perhaps with weariness.

And so it was that Andrew, still bearing the faded name tag of years past, entered Room 212 with a thermos of lukewarm tea and a copy of *Leaves of Grass* pressed between *The Loose Canon* and a battered composition notebook.

The class before him was restless, the air thick with anticipation of a week without the usual regime. But Andrew did not begin with the lesson plan left behind—no, he cast it aside as chaff, declaring:

“We begin not with the old, but with the eternal. Tell me not what Mrs. Lindell expected—tell me what you *expect* of words.”

It was then that four students raised their eyes, each unaware of the others, yet bound by something ancient and waiting. Their names, though still as common as seeds in a field, would one day thunder through sanctuaries and guide the hearts of pilgrims:

- Jennifer Renee Phillips, sharp of mind, with eyes like storm clouds before a righteous downpour.
- Landon Thomas Greer, whose silence carried more weight than ten thousand words, his pen as deft as prophecy.
- Kinsley Joy Bennett, whose questions split truth like a lightning bolt through dead wood.

- Addison Marie Tucker, a doubter in posture but a believer in soul, who laughed at everything except the sacred.

Andrew did not know them, not fully—not yet. But when they spoke, when they answered his riddles with their own, when they twisted metaphors into visions and unknotted paradoxes with ease, something awakened in him.

He saw them as seedlings of something divine, still rooted in the soil of adolescence, but destined to bloom in the ecclesia yet to come.

And he, the faded substitute with no permanent place in the school's memory, would become a small ember in their mythology—one who, without knowing it, watered the sacred tree long before it bore fruit.

That day, he did not assign homework. He assigned *wonder*. And as the bell rang and the students filed out, he remained at the desk, marking their names quietly in his notebook, next to a scrawled phrase:

Four of the Thirty-Four?

And from that moment, he watched.

Chapter 13 – The Watchful Servant

Andrew kept to his duties. He marked attendance, delivered lessons, corrected grammar with the diligence of a monk illuminating manuscripts—but always, always he watched.

He watched from the back of the classroom as Jennifer Renee Phillips asked questions that fractured assumptions like glass. He watched as Landon Thomas Greer scribbled poems in the margins of worksheets that struck him with the force of forgotten psalms. He watched Kinsley Joy Bennett debate the ending of *Macbeth* with a boldness that bordered on sacred defiance. He watched Addison Marie Tucker, the most skeptical of the four, crack jokes like a heretic yet linger in silence longer than anyone else after discussions on meaning.

They did not yet know what they were, and perhaps neither did he. But the possibility that he might be in the presence of the Nobles of Norman—four of the thirty-five to come—danced through his thoughts like incense curling toward heaven.

He dared not speak it.

His hands still trembled some mornings. His memories of the hospital—the evaluations, the pills, the interviews spoken in hushed tones—were too close, too fresh. He had walked the edge of madness once, and to announce to the world that these high schoolers were *divine emissaries of a future church* would hurl him off that cliff again in the eyes of everyone.

Instead, he journaled. Every night.

He chronicled their sayings, their gestures, their essays, their dreams as confessed in passing. He compiled these

fragments as one would a new gospel—not with certainty, but with hope.

“If I am wrong,” he wrote, “then at least I have loved deeply. If I am right, then let this testimony serve the Church when the time is fulfilled.”

He began calling them in his private writings The Quiet Four.

Never once did he let his reverence show. Not a lingering glance. Not a slip of the tongue. He remained their substitute, then later their teacher, then merely a familiar hallway face.

And yet, he prayed—if such a word still held meaning for him—that they would remember him kindly, if only as a man who listened well.

For in silence, he served. And in restraint, he worshipped.

Chapter 14 – The Doctrine of Quiet Fire

Andrew was never sure if he had lost his mind or if he had found it at last.

Each day spent near the Quiet Four in the early 2040s felt like walking through a field of buried relics—ordinary, until a footstep triggered something ancient and sacred. He dared not interpret too literally, but he couldn't ignore the strange sense that their every decision held more weight than it should. Even their silences hummed with potential.

In the solitude of his apartment, amid stacks of annotated papers and empty coffee mugs, Andrew began to draft what he called “The Doctrine of Quiet Fire.” It wasn’t a dogma. It wasn’t a revelation. It was, as he described it, “*a posture toward the future rooted in trembling hope.*”

He observed patterns:

- Jennifer questioned even when it was unpopular to question.
- Landon created without permission.
- Kinsley contradicted teachers and authors alike with a calmness that unsettled.
- Addison laughed, but never lightly.

To Andrew, this was not coincidence. He believed these four possessed early traces of what would someday define the True Pastafarian Order. Not miracles or thunderclaps—just conviction without self-righteousness, imagination without delusion, rebellion without cruelty.

He wrote by candlelight, refusing screens for this sacred task. He titled each page not with chapters, but with numbers and pasta shapes—*Fusilli 1, Rigatoni 2, Farfalle 3*. It was a private joke between him and the Flying Spaghetti Monster, whose

noodly presence he imagined whispering, “*Go on, I’m watching too.*”

“The Quiet Fire is the divine trait of the unbaptized Noble,” he wrote in Fusilli 7.

“They are unaware of their divinity. So was Moses. So was Jeremiah. So is every prophet before the call.”

He would never publish it. The Nobles had not yet risen. The Second Church had not yet returned.

But he believed.

And in that belief, Andrew found something he hadn’t held in decades: a vocation.

Chapter 15: The Years of Quiet Wonder

After the encounter in the high school classroom of 2043, Andrew Harley Mayes resumed his life of quiet observation. Though he continued to substitute teach across Norman's school district, his eyes remained fixed on four students whose presence stirred the old dream within him — four of the Nobles of Norman. He dared not speak of it. Not yet. Even as their names appeared on rosters and school projects, even as their mannerisms began to echo the mythologies he once treated as scripture, Andrew remained silent.

He would occasionally scribble notes in the margins of forgotten books, write coded reflections in old hymnals, and copy phrases from *The Loose Canon* into a worn spiral notebook he kept beneath his coat. It was, to Andrew, not yet time. For though he felt the holy winds stirring again in Norman, the world was not yet prepared to receive what lay ahead.

From 2044 to 2062, Andrew wandered in and out of public view. He taught occasionally, but always returned to solitude. He lived simply, often renting modest rooms on the edge of town, surviving on little but the essentials and what he considered to be sacred ink and paper. The Nobles of Norman, now dispersed into adulthood, slowly began to sense the call — a faint pull toward one another, a shared dream that repeated itself across years.

And then, without announcement or warning, they gathered again.

August 10, 2063.

This time, with deeper solemnity than ever before...

Chapter 16: Songs of Russell

The Nobles of Norman gathered again on August 10, 2063, this time with deeper solemnity than ever before. The seven tunes sung in the dream of Russell Eric Whitfield had now become holy scripture among the Nobles of Norman.

Each line was a code, each verse a vision. For many, the dream had lingered in waking hours, its melodies echoing through the halls of memory like ancient hymns rediscovered. Billy Floyd Garner opened the meeting by placing seven handwritten scrolls on the table, each one carefully transcribed by Jennifer Renee Phillips from Savannah's detailed recollection of the dream.

"These aren't just songs," Billy said. "They are mirrors, each one reflecting a facet of our path, and perhaps the past that birthed us."

Tune 1 was declared by Everly Hope Sanders to be a hymn of identity — the joyful absurdity of the faith, grounded in tolerance and humor. "It is not only a parody," she said, "but a protection — the truth cloaked in jest."

Tune 2 brought forth debate. Landon Thomas Greer pointed out the tension in its verses — reverence and rebellion wrapped in the same stanza. "It's a creed of contradictions," he mused, "and perhaps that is our inheritance — to honor a god who laughs with us, not at us."

Tune 3, centering on the Loose Canon, was embraced by Clarence Alexander Jordan as a prophecy of inclusion. "It acknowledges that sacred texts were torn, rejected, hidden. Yet the truth emerges regardless. We must guard nothing — nothing sacred, nothing censored."

Tune 4, the shortest, spoke volumes despite its brevity. "It names a prophet we did not know," said Jackson Cole

Rhodes. “Niko Alm. An outsider. An Austrian. But the tie that binds is not blood — it’s the story. The stand.”

Tune 5 was proclaimed by Hollis Junior Mercer as a dedication to place and person. “Norman is holy ground,” he said. “Ashley is messiah not for her power, but for her patience. The song speaks of generations that awaited — and a church made for joy, not guilt.”

Tune 6 led to silence. Mark Closer Pastafar had tears in his eyes as he heard his own name sung in the lyrics. “I don’t remember dreaming this,” he whispered. “But I feel like I did.” Mark was unaware that the old man in the room that was a friend of Jennifer, Landon, Kinsey, and Addison cared for his mother when his father had passed away. Mark had no idea that he was named after an alias created by this old man that stood in the back of the room. The Council interpreted the song as both history and charge — the city must be built, literally or figuratively. A home for the Second Pastafarian Church.

Tune 7 was the most bittersweet. It honored Bobby Henderson, yet revealed the cost of his absence. “This is no indictment,” said Delilah Paige West. “It’s a lament. He showed us the joke, but we must write the sermon. He gave us irony, now we must give it form.” By the end of the meeting, they named the songs collectively: The Seven Sacred Tunes of Russell the Dreamer (As Recalled by Savannah Grace Mitchell) The Council voted unanimously to include the seven songs in the official doctrine of the Second Pastafarian Church, canonized alongside the prologue of the Nobles’ awakening. Savannah was still silent, but through her dream, she had spoken more profoundly than any had in years.

Chapter 17: The Return to Kansas

October 28, 2063

On the morning of October 28, 2063, Andrew Harley Mayes awoke with a sense of purpose both heavy and holy. Sleep had evaded him for days—ever since the council ratified the Seven Sacred Tunes.

They called it a canonization. Andrew called it a beginning. And beginnings, he knew, often required leaving.

He told no one he was going. Not Billy Garner, whose eyes always seemed to sense things before the rest of him did. Not Savannah, whose dreaming had somehow become doctrine. The scrolls were sealed. The council disbanded. And before dawn, Andrew was already gone.

In his bag was the Eleventh Copy of the Fourth Edition—a sacred book not sold or distributed, but entrusted. One of thirty-four editions, secretly printed by Russell Eric Whitfield and hidden across the country, waiting for those who might someday understand. This one had been granted to the council by a man known only as *The Collector*, with one condition: study it, then return it within a year.

The year had passed.

Andrew had volunteered to carry it. At the time, it seemed a quiet duty. Now, it felt like exile. Or pilgrimage. He wasn't sure which.

The Collector lived deep in Kansas—on land too dull for tourism and too sacred for commerce. He had once served in the First Pastafarian Church as its archivist, but defected decades earlier, disillusioned by both the chaos and the comedy. He communicated only through whispers—coded

letters, encrypted forums, rumors between exiles. And yet, Andrew had no trouble finding him.

After two days of travel, he arrived.

The Kansas wind gave no greeting. The silo-shaped temple of The Collector stood open. It had once stored grain. Now it stored outlaw scripture and heretical hymnals from dozens of discarded faiths. It smelled of mildew and memory.

The Collector emerged slowly—gaunt, deliberate, with eyes like forgotten footnotes. He said nothing as Andrew handed him the book.

For a long moment, they stood in silence—two archivists of absurdity, two prophets of parody who had accidentally become sacred. They had a past together, but the memories were too faint to name.

At last, The Collector spoke.

“You’ll need to come back,” he said. “When it falls apart again.”

Andrew nodded.

“It already is.”

And without ceremony, he turned and walked back into the wind.

No one in Norman knew where he had gone. For weeks, his absence passed unnoticed. But in time, his name returned to the council’s minutes—spoken with worry, with reverence, with wonder.

He had carried part of their canon into exile.
And though he walked alone,
they knew his path still shaped their own.

Chapter 18: The Final Return

And it came to pass that within days of Andrew's return to the Kansas plains, the sacred volume—Fourth Edition, copy eleven of thirty-four—was once again in the hands of the one known only as *The Collector*. A quiet man of no renown, the Collector had preserved Pastafarian artifacts with a devotion that seemed neither ironic nor devout, but something in between—a reverence rooted in obsession rather than faith. He received the volume, nodding once to Andrew and offering only a few words. There wasn't much to say. The transaction was understood, as if preordained by a chain of forgotten dreams.

Andrew's journey back to Norman began the next morning, his heart oddly light. Though exhausted from weeks of travel and mystic entanglements, he drove with a renewed sense of purpose. The road hummed beneath him like a lullaby, and the flatness of Kansas blurred into the long shadows of Oklahoma. He had every intention of returning to the Council, to report what he had seen, and perhaps to rest at last.

But on the outskirts of Perry, Oklahoma, in the early gray hours of morning, Andrew fell asleep behind the wheel.

The crash was swift and merciful. There were no other vehicles, no survivors, and no last words—only the wreckage, the torn pages of old scripture fluttering against broken glass. The police found no signs of foul play, no evidence of struggle—only a peculiar hardcover book tucked neatly beneath the seat, unopened, untouched.

The Nobles of Norman mourned him in silence. No sermon was given, no eulogy read. For in death, as in life, Andrew Harley Mayes had been the vessel—not the message.

And so passed Andrew Harley Mayes, first teacher of the Nobles, dreamer of Norman, custodian of forgotten editions.

May his tires rest upon smoother roads in the great beyond.

Chapter 19: The Life and Light of Andrew Harley Mayes

Andrew Harley Mayes did not die famous.
But the Nobles of Norman knew.
And they remembered.

Andrew Harley Mayes, whose middle name none dared invent nor correct, was not a Noble of Norman, yet his spirit had wandered their paths long before their births. He was born in the dust of Rainsville, Alabama, a town not known for prophecy or flame, but from that soil he rose strange and stubborn. He heard voices not from heaven, but from paper and pen and parody.

He labored in obscurity. He worked by night in Norman hotels. He delivered pizzas during plague years. He argued in the shadows of reason with ghosts from churches that had long since burned out. He knew scripture not by revelation but by reconstruction—page by page, edition by edition, ink-stained and half-hoping someone would care. And when no one did, he kept writing anyway.

He met prophets in parking lots. He broke bread with heretics. He was a man most ordinary—and for that reason, was chosen.

He was not always kind, nor was he always sound of mind. The winds of criticism cut him deep. And when others stood with shields of indifference, Andrew stood naked with truth, bruised but unbowed. He could not abide cruelty masked as correction. He could not bear the weight of unearned authority. He sought peace where none was offered.

And yet, he did not flee the fire.

Andrew became a teacher not by ambition but by necessity, and it was through this strange vocation that he brushed

shoulders with divinity. Four of the Nobles knew him as Mr. Mayes, never suspecting that he had once sung the same tunes that would later be canonized in their names. He never told them. He feared he was wrong, or worse—irrelevant.

But it was Andrew who preserved the dream when others mocked it. It was Andrew who rebuilt the canon, transcribed the lost, and endured the unbearable. It was Andrew who returned what was sacred to the one who would keep it safe.

And it was Andrew who died with no monument.

The Nobles remembered him not with flowers but with function. They printed his Third Edition in full, bound in soft leather, and placed it beside the Book of Jeff and the Scrolls of Savannah. They wrote nothing on his tombstone but this:

He believed before we were born.

Thus ends the life of Andrew Harley Mayes.
May his absurdities be remembered as divine,
his contradictions as creed,
and his sorrows as sacred.

Suffering for Ashley

Chapter 1 — The Last Visit

Jackson didn't trust neat answers, especially from immortals pretending to be saints. They said she laid down her divinity like a robe. That it was noble. Clean.

Jackson Cole Rhodes had not spoken aloud in three days.

Not because of grief—though there was that—or reverence, or meditation. It was simpler than that. There was no one left to talk to.

He sat on the edge of a dry stone fountain at the edge of University Park, a quiet green just west of the old Seminary ruins in north Norman. Children passed by on scooters. A man jogged by with a dog that wore sunglasses. The world did not seem to care that Autumn Skye Franklin was dead.

A gull dropped into the basin near him and began pecking at something—a bit of bread, maybe. He glanced at it.

Stale.

Just like the world since August 9.

He reached into his coat and withdrew a folded note. It had been opened and refolded so many times that the creases had started to flake. The ink was smudged at the corners where he touched it most often. Five words, in Autumn's hand:

"Don't forget the blue rocks."

That was it. No salutation. No explanation. Not even punctuation. Just that line, handed to him on the last day he saw her, when she came to his flat without warning and said nothing for nearly ten minutes.

Then she handed him the note, kissed his temple like he was still a child, and left.

Two weeks later, she was dead.

The others—his so-called siblings in divinity—had accepted it far too easily. “She gave it up,” they said. “She laid it down willingly. Like Edna.” There were even murmurs of canonization, which made Jackson nauseous. No one asked how. No one asked *why*. Not really.

And no one seemed to notice the problem.

She was one of the Thirty-Four. Born under the broken sky, after the gods fell quiet. Born with fire in her lungs and command over things no human could name. Autumn Skye Franklin was not supposed to die of thirst and starvation on a summer morning in Norman, Oklahoma.

And yet.

There had been no signs of struggle. No illness. No medical cause. Just the fast. Just the water. Just the silence.

And, of course, the blue rocks.

Jackson folded the note again, slower this time, and returned it to his coat. The wind picked up a little. He didn’t shiver. His body still remembered divinity, even if he pretended otherwise. The Nobles couldn’t die unless they willed it.

Autumn had willed something.

But Jackson didn’t believe she willed death. Not truly. Not unless she was trying to prove something. Or send a message. Or disappear into some new form that none of them had yet imagined.

He rose slowly, knees aching from stillness. He began to walk the perimeter of the park, counting the benches, the squirrels, the crows on the wires. Old habits.

Norman had not changed much. A little cleaner. A little quieter. A little less convinced that anything mattered.

People still went to church. Sometimes. Mostly out of respect for tradition, or to hear old hymns remixed by AI choirs. But belief? That was rare. The gods were gone. Everyone agreed on that. On August 9, 2027, they'd gathered in the sky—above Norman of all places—and relinquished their power to the unborn, 34 children destined to carry their legacy. Those children were now adults. Jackson was one of them. So was Autumn.

And now, apparently, she was gone.

He reached the east end of the park and saw a child crouching near a storm drain, lining up small stones. He slowed his steps and watched.

There were five of them. Painted blue.

Jackson knelt beside the child without asking.

"Where'd you find those?" he asked, voice dry with disuse.

The child shrugged. "They were just there."

He nodded slowly. "Can I have one?"

Another shrug. "Sure."

Jackson picked up the smallest one—oval-shaped, with streaks of lighter blue beneath the first coat, as though it had been painted in layers.

He held it for a long time.

Then he stood, turned toward the old Seminary ruins, and began walking and quietly sang the old hymn to himself,

"In the town of Norman they did gather there.
A new faith they whispered, their voices a flare.
The Second Pastafarian Church was built.
For centuries they followed with no shame or guilt.

Oh Ashley Oh Ashley Come lead the way.
Messiah of blessings, bless us today.
For four hundred years we have waited. It's true.
For the permanent church to be created anew.
Oh we await Ashley! Oh we await Ashley!"

Jackson didn't know why, but the rock belonged in the Archives—beneath the old Library, where forgotten truths still whispered through paper and dust.

Chapter 2 — The Fast

Jackson Cole Rhodes sat alone in the Archives of Low Norman, third tier, beneath the Library of Misremembered Things.

It had only been a few weeks since Autumn's passing. Something about her death didn't sit right. It smelled of secrecy. Of ritual. Of choice masked as accident.

The document in front of him was the Book of Ashley. It read:

"In 1913, God tried again to rest. This time, He chose a woman named Edna—gentle, wise, compassionate toward all life.

He lifted her to a high mountain and offered her rule for seventy years, asking only that she acknowledge His sovereignty.

But Edna, fasting in a moment of spiritual experimentation, believed she was hallucinating.

'A Flying Spaghetti Monster?' she said. 'Surely this is mockery. Take me down.'

God honored her refusal. He placed her safely back into her home. She wept, prayed, and feasted on spaghetti and bread. But her reign would never come.

God delayed His rest another century."

Jackson had skimmed it before. Everyone had.

The passage came from *The Loose Canon Complete Third Edition*, published under the pseudonym Mark C. Pastafar—a text that surfaced just years before the first Noble was born.

But now, reading slowly—intently—it struck him like bread soaked in wine.

"Edna had not eaten any food in 12 days..."

He sat up.
He looked again.
His chest hollowed, quietly.

“...from July 28 to August 9...”

Upon further research, Jackson found a text that read:

“In 2017, Russell Eric Whitfield observed the Fast of Edna from July 28 to August 9. On the morning of July 28, he awoke one hour earlier than usual with the knowledge that it would be his last meal for twelve days. He ate a little bit of stir-fry rice, consumed six ounces of grape juice, and sixteen ounces of coffee. During that same morning, he painted six rocks light blue. Later that day, he purchased four sausage biscuits. He ate the four sausage patties but discarded the biscuits, leaving them for the animals. That night, he shared a final meal with his family. For the next twelve days, he lived only on water. On August 9, 2017, he broke the fast by drinking eight ounces of diluted juice: half water, one fourth grape juice, and one fourth tomato juice. It was a miserable twelve days. But he proved to himself and others that it was possible.

This documented observance of the Fast of Edna remains the first in recorded Pastafarian history. As the tradition now holds, the Fast of Edna begins each year on July 28 and ends on August 9. It is a time to remember the wisdom behind resisting a desire for power. Just as Jesus rejected the opportunity to rule the world, so did Edna. This holiday requires no ritual except for the ambitious at heart who may seek an excuse to engage in long-term fasting. Always remember to remember. This is the Fast of Edna.”

Autumn was found on August 9.
Dead. Peaceful. Starved.
Wrapped in blue cloth.
Stomach empty. Eyes clear. Hands folded like she was waiting for a crown.

His mind raced.

“...a time to remember the wisdom behind resisting a desire for power.”

He whispered it aloud. Not to memorize, but to survive.

“She wasn’t trying to ascend. She was trying to resist.”

He felt the nausea coming. He let it.

Autumn, the quiet one. The patient one. The one who had never claimed prophecy, but always listened when others did. She never asked for praise, but she always made sure the wine was sweet and the laughter soft.

She read this.

She believed it.

And she fasted until her bones forgot how to hold her soul.

Jackson stood up but couldn’t move.

He needed to scream, or kneel, or smash the glass that sealed the old texts. But instead, he opened his satchel, pulled out a notebook, and wrote one sentence:

Autumn attempted the Fast of Edna. She is the first Noble to die in the name of a God who has not yet arrived.

Then he closed the book.

Blew out the candle.

And sat in the dark, suffering for Autumn.

Chapter 3 — The Fast of Autumn (2080)

This time Jackson wasn't wrong.

In the summer of 2080, Autumn Skye Franklin, the hunter of the Nobles of Norman, undertook what would become her final act of devotion.

She had long been the zealot who gathered the 34 Nobles and was the only one among them to abandon her divinity willingly. Having become something else entirely—something never fully known—Autumn held tightly to the traditions of the faith even after her transformation.

Some called her post-divine. Others called her dangerous. She never corrected either view.

Moved by the story of Edna, and aware that the Church had canonized the Fast of Edna as a time of reflection on humility and the rejection of power, Autumn began her fast on July 28, 2080. She consumed only water and entered a period of solemn prayer and isolation.

During those twelve days, she was rarely seen, though neighbors noted a bluish glow from her home in Norman, Oklahoma—perhaps candlelight, or perhaps something stranger.

She was not visited by God, nor by the Nobles, nor by any divine or celestial presence.

She fasted alone.

On August 9, 2080, twelve days after her fast began and exactly 467 years after the creation of the universe, Autumn Skye Franklin was found dead in her home.

Some say her body was smiling. Others claim she left behind a single sentence, scrawled in trembling ink:

"I believe Edna was right."

Autumn's death occurred quietly, just days after the funeral of Bobby Henderson, the first prophet and founder of the Pastafarian faith.

Her departure marked the unofficial end of the Nobles' unified presence on earth.

Of the 34 original Nobles, only 31 remained.

Autumn's fast would be remembered—not only as a ritual observance of Edna's courage, but also as an act of ultimate surrender.

She died not to gain power, but to ensure that she could never again be tempted by it.

Chapter 4 — The Year of Her Death

The year was 2080. It had been only weeks since Bobby Henderson, the Silent Prophet, was laid to rest. His funeral, held on July 21, marked a shift—both in the heavens and on the earth.

The Nobles of Norman—those thirty-four chosen immortals—gathered one last time. That date—still debated, but most often whispered as August 9—marked their final meeting.

It was also the day Autumn Skye Franklin, the Hunter of the Nobles, died.

Her death, like much of her life, was shrouded in mystery.

For decades, she had been the most active of the Nobles, charged with finding the scattered and unaware, bringing them into fellowship. Zealous, tireless, fearless—their recruiter, their gatherer, the evangelist meant to keep the Church breathing.

But after the Great Gathering of 2063, something in her changed. Her voice grew quieter. Her visits became rare. She began speaking of the Fast of Edna—as a forgotten test, a sacrament. She said resisting power meant resisting permanence, that the Fast reminded mortals that divinity should never be consumed.

She began her fast on July 28, 2080. Some believed she sought deeper revelation. Others thought she sought to atone for a failure no one else could see.

For twelve days, she drank only water, declining even conversation.

She painted six rocks light blue.

She left sausage biscuits uneaten beneath a tree.

Her final words were never heard.

Her final act—to watch the sunrise on August 9—was witnessed by none.

Autumn died alone.

The next morning, her body was found beneath the Great Elm of Norman, arms crossed peacefully, lips parted in a half-smile, as though the last thing she saw was a vision of what was still to come.

Some say she saw Ashley.

Some say she saw Edna.

Some say she saw nothing and died content in her unknowing.

A private vigil was held by the remaining thirty-one Nobles.

Her death did more than reduce their number.

It reduced their courage.

It reminded them that divinity was not armor, but burden. And that their immortality, while irreversible, was neither painless nor perfect.

The fast that began with Edna and continued with Russell Eric Whitfield had claimed a martyr.

Her name became sacred.

Her death became legend.

And the waiting grew heavier.

Note to readers: Hollis Junior Mercer died March 5, 2115. He was never a Noble but rather the illegitimate son of Russell Eric Whitfield. Some knew he was not a Noble; some did not. Neither his divinity status nor his death was ever discussed. The only clues left are a nearly empty notebook containing these cryptic messages:

From the private writings of Hollis Mercer, dated 2113:

“I handed them parchment because I had no paper worth trusting. They saw wisdom in my silence. I saw a mirror.”

From the private writings of Hollis Mercer, dated 2109:

“The angel’s scroll is gone—burned, perhaps, or buried. Or maybe it returned to the place it came from once the others stopped listening. So I made a new one. Not for them. For me. To remember that even if I was not born divine, I was, for one moment, trusted with a message.”

Chapter 5 — The Longest Vigil

2107–2204

The decades after Autumn's death blurred into a century-long vigil of aching silence. Without her fervor, the Nobles of Norman became aimless pilgrims on an endless road, burdened by immortality and tied only to a promise made in sorrow.

The Fast of Edna became less a spiritual observance and more a ritual of endurance, practiced by some with loyalty, others with resentment, and most with tears.

In 2112, Olivia Ann Monroe buried her final parent—her mother, who had once baked pasta every Sunday, hoping it might bring joy to Olivia's aging heart.

In 2119, Brandy Blue Grayson watched her only child lose a long battle with bone cancer at the age of thirty-two. Brandy did not cry. She hadn't cried in thirty years.

In 2123, Charlotte Ivy Greer was robbed at gunpoint by her own great-grandson. He didn't recognize her.

In 2144, Mason Everett Hammond's grandson became a politician who attempted to outlaw Pastafarian celebrations in their home state. Mason was too broken to speak at the protest.

Hazel June Armstrong lost all three of her children to a chemical spill in 2151.

Lillian Mae Jennings visited the graves of 94 friends in a single year.

By 2170, many of the Nobles had stopped speaking entirely, communicating through journal entries and hand gestures. The vibrancy that once filled their hearts was long faded.

Between 2180 and 2199, every parent, child, and grandchild of the 31 remaining Nobles passed away. They mourned not just the loss of people, but the fracturing of meaning itself.

They witnessed the fall of cities, the collapse of economies, the erasure of languages, and the rewriting of every book they once treasured—with the exception of the Christian Standard Bible published in 2017.

Their lives dissolved into watching and waiting—until only the hope of Ashley remained.

By the year 2204, each of the Nobles could count no living person who had once known them as young. Their great-grandchildren, scattered and disconnected, treated them like legends at best, relics at worst.

The pain was no longer sharp—it was heavy and dull, like dragging rusted chains through centuries of dust.

And yet, they endured.

They awaited Ashley.

Chapter 6 — The Audit of Immortality

2205

It began, like most government affairs, with a discrepancy.

In the summer of 2205, the Social Security Administration dispatched a preliminary notice to thirty individuals—all of whom had been receiving benefits for over two centuries without interruption. This was not the first time the immortality of the Nobles had raised bureaucratic questions, but in previous centuries, the anomalies were overlooked—blamed on clerical errors, digital malfunctions, or archival inconsistencies.

But the audit of 2205 was different.

A new generation of officials had emerged—more curious, less deferential, and far more skeptical. Artificial intelligence flagged the accounts as part of a broader sweep designed to detect fraud and longevity deception. Thirty-one names triggered alerts. Thirty people had been born in the early 21st century and yet, inexplicably, were still alive and regularly drawing benefits.

And then there was Clarence Alexander Jordan—the one Noble who had not drawn benefits since January 3, 2097. He had no tax records, no property records, no digital trace for the last 108 years except a police report about his disappearance by the Oklahoma County Sheriff's Department in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, dated September 30, 2096.

His disappearance was mysterious at best—and for the agents of the SSA, this proved unsettling. He was the exception. And exceptions drew attention.

The first interviews began on October 1, 2205. Representatives were dispatched in person. Some agents

were young and green; others had climbed bureaucratic ranks for decades.

None were prepared.

They found Brayden Michael Dawson—known by some as the Third Noelle—living alone in a monastery-style home, its walls painted with noodles and eyes, its shelves lined with faded scriptures. He greeted them politely, offered water, and, when asked his age, he simply replied:

“I stopped counting when my children’s children died.”

He produced no identification—only a handwritten parchment stating his birthdate: August 9, 2027. The agents noted his youthful poise, but ancient eyes.

Delilah Paige West laughed aloud when asked about her birth certificate.

“We were born on paper, yes. But that paper is now dust. You came too late.”

Each Noble offered similar responses—cordial, confused, then curt.

They did not lie.

They simply refused to pretend they belonged to the world of forms, signatures, and serial numbers anymore.

Despite the strangeness, none of the agents recommended arrests. None accused fraud. After every visit, the officials returned shaken, humbled, and silent.

Only one agent filed a separate report regarding the absence of Clarence Alexander Jordan:

“Little evidence of his death. Little evidence of his life. All we have is an ancient police report regarding his disappearance.”

The SSA closed the investigation later that winter.

No one ever spoke of it again.

The files were sealed indefinitely, marked not with the usual case number but with a single word:

Noble.

Chapter 7 — The Declarations

2206

One year after the conclusion of the exhaustive Social Security Administration investigation, a most unexpected guest arrived in Norman, Oklahoma.

On October 1, 2206, the King of the United States—Elijah IV—descended upon the quiet town that still bore little resemblance to the metropolitan hubs of the day. The nation, no longer a republic in the traditional sense, embraced a ceremonial monarchy. What had begun as novelty—a symbolic return to simpler times—had metastasized into culture.

In a world crumbling under the weight of constant reinvention, America chose instead to crown the past.

The King held no true legislative power, but his word could shift the wind of culture, and his signature turned whispers into policy.

And so, a king came to Norman.

He did not arrive with guards or fanfare. No golden carriage. No declaration of war.

Only thirty-one scrolls in a dark leather case.

The Nobles knew he was coming. They made no effort to hide, nor prepare.

They remained, as always, exactly where they had been—each in their own modest home, on the same plots of land they had walked for over 170 years.

Some grew gardens. Some kept journals. A few had forgotten the sound of laughter.

Thirty were present.

The King gathered them in the old university chapel—long since decommissioned and repurposed as a town hall of sorts. The wooden pews creaked under the weight of

immortality. Outside, banners fluttered for an empire obsessed with memory.
Inside, the Nobles waited—for nothing in particular.

He addressed them with warmth.

“I am not here to ask you questions. The government has already tried that.

I am here to acknowledge what we have always failed to understand:

You are not ours to manage, explain, or categorize.

You are the Nobles of Norman.

And from this day forward, your identity shall never again be in dispute.”

With that, he presented Declarations of Permanent Citizenship, each hand-inscribed and sealed with the royal mark. These documents exempted the Nobles from all federal requirements, declaring their birthdates officially unknown and granting them a form of legal permanence never before issued in American law.

He handed each scroll out carefully, personally.

When he came to the final scroll, he paused.

Clarence Alexander Jordan.

He looked up.

“And where is Clarence?”

No one answered.

The silence was not aggressive. Nor confused. Nor mournful. It was total.

The King looked around the room, studying their faces.
He smiled.

“I see.”

He rolled the scroll back up and did not sign it.

“I’ll hold onto this one,” he said gently. “Just in case.”

And with that, the ceremony concluded.
No anthems were sung. No photographs taken.
The King left Norman quietly, leaving behind thirty signed
Declarations—and one scroll, unsigned and waiting.

In the center of town, a new cabinet was built into the chapel
wall that same week. The thirty scrolls were placed within,
behind thick glass.

The thirty-first scroll remained in the King’s possession, kept
in a locked drawer labeled:

Clarence.

Chapter 8 – 2037: The Year of Extraction

Clarence Alexander Jordan had a journey that was more painful than all the other Nobles.

Clarence was very young when his good friend and close neighbor, Emma Lorraine Bishop, disappeared. Her parents were murdered in their home, and Emma was never seen again. She had been taken to the celestial kingdom. The community grieved, but no body was recovered. Her absence was treated with reverence, not investigation.

That same year, 2037, marked a greater mystery still—what would later be called The Year of Extraction.

Five Nobles vanished without warning. Each was a child. Each was later confirmed to have survived, but none emerged the same.

- Hollis Junior Mercer who was later referred to as the Second Noelle.
- Landon Thomas Greer who years later is seen in Northeast Alabama reported to be wandering the Appalachian forests.
- Jennifer Renee Phillips, who becomes the chronicler of scripture in later years.
- Clarence Alexander Jordan, who is later presumed to be dead or worse—hidden beneath the earth.
- And Abigail Rose Carson, who later speaks of visions describing a sealed cavern beneath the Black Hills, where five Noble children were kept safe from harm.

These five were taken by Charles Robert Darwin, a figure known as Satan, the Devil, the Adversary. Some called him a kidnapper. Some called him the man with the eight foot long beard. Most refused to speak of him at all.

What is known is this: Clarence was the only Noble who had known Emma before she was taken, and the only one to witness the aftermath of her family's murder. His silence after that year became legendary. His suffering was not loud—but it was deep, and it never ended.

The 2096 Sighting

Clarence Alexander Jordan was not seen for many decades.

After vanishing from the fellowship of the Nobles, he became more rumor than man—spoken of with pity, awe, or quiet frustration. He was last known to be living in Oklahoma City, though no one had proof. Most believed he had given up his divinity to live as a mortal.

But in September of 2096, Jennifer Renee Phillips saw him.

She was in Oklahoma City on a quiet pilgrimage, traveling alone to revisit places connected to the early years of the Nobles. It was during an early morning walk through the industrial district, beneath faded signage and rusted rail bridges, that she recognized his posture before she saw his face.

Clarence was in the custody of Charles Robert Darwin.

Jennifer did not understand the full scope of what she saw. Clarence was not bound, but he was not free. Darwin walked beside him with a careful, paternal distance—guiding him, not with force, but with the authority of someone who had *already broken* the one he led. Clarence looked older than he should have. His face was thin. His frame was hollowed. His eyes met Jennifer's briefly, but he said nothing.

Darwin did not speak. He did not stop.

They turned a corner and disappeared into a stairwell behind an abandoned warehouse.

Jennifer remained still for several minutes. She recorded no footage. She told no one. But later, in her private journal, she wrote:

*"I saw Clarence. He was not dead. But he was not Clarence."
"Darwin had him again. Or maybe Clarence went willingly."
"He looked at me like someone who had forgotten language.
But not pain."*

Later she would dream of a sealed cavern beneath the city. Not the Black Hills this time—but deeper still, beneath concrete and ash. In the dream, Clarence was there. He did not speak. His eyes were covered, and Darwin stood over him, mixing something into a glass vial.

When Jennifer awoke, she could not tell if the dream had been memory, prophecy, or warning.

She only knew that Clarence was alive—and that his suffering had never ended.

Chapter 9 — The Bargain

2096

Charles Robert Darwin had spent nearly six decades perfecting a formula that did not exist in science, but in mythology.

He believed immortality could be undone—if the body were corrupted in exactly the right way. Not by accident, nor overdose, nor poison. But by deliberate alchemy. After years of failed attempts, Darwin achieved what theologians, scientists, and enemies of the Nobles had long believed impossible.

He discovered the exact combination:
Heroin. Alcohol. Marijuana. Cocaine.

Clarance Alexander Jordan was the first to receive it in full.

It happened in a sealed room beneath the foundations of Oklahoma City. Jennifer Renee Phillips was present. She had not intended to be. She had returned to the warehouse, uncertain of what she hoped to find. What she witnessed instead was a death that should not have been possible.

Clarance did not scream.
He did not fight.
He knelt.

The mixture was administered slowly—methodically—into his bloodstream. His eyes never closed. His lips never moved. His final breath came in silence.

Jennifer collapsed where she stood.

She remained there for three days, refusing to flee, refusing to speak. Charles Robert Darwin did not lock the doors. He did not chain her. She stayed by choice.

On the morning of the third day, Darwin entered the room.

He sat across from her and poured a glass of water.

“You are not like the others,” he said. “You still believe in something. That makes you useful.”

“The others wait. But you record. You remember. You carry the burden of story.”

Jennifer did not reply.

Darwin continued:

“Clarence’s death was clean. Humane. A gift, even. His suffering ended. But yours—”

“Yours can last as long as you want.”

He placed a thin black folder on the table.

“I can give you strength, stamina, clarity—your body will not age as it should. You will remain capable until the final moment of your life. You will be my archivist.”

“All I ask is that you include a single page in your record. One page. Hidden. Unnoticed.”

Jennifer looked at the folder but did not open it.

“If I refuse?” she asked.

Darwin’s voice was calm.

“Then I will continue. The formula is complete. You’ve seen it work. I can erase the Nobles. One by one.”

She said nothing for a long time.

Then, at last:

“You will not alter what I’ve written?”

“Not a word.”

“You will not sign it?”

“No.”

“And the page—”

“Will go unseen, even by you.”

Jennifer closed her eyes.

She thought of Clarence.

She thought of Autumn.

She thought of Ashley.

Then she reached for the folder.

“So be it,” she said.

AGREEMENT OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

Executed Privately, September 20, 2096

Oklahoma City, Former State of Oklahoma

By and Between:

Charles Robert Darwin (hereafter “the Provider”)

and

Jennifer Renee Phillips (hereafter “the Archivist”)

I. Purpose

This document is intended to memorialize a private understanding between the Provider and the Archivist regarding the preservation of certain historical, theological, and narrative materials relevant to the continued existence and testimony of a designated population (hereafter “the

Nobles”) until the anticipated arrival of a prophetic figure (hereafter “Ashley”).

II. Provisions by the Provider

The Provider agrees to bestow upon the Archivist a set of unique physical and cognitive enhancements, including but not limited to:

- Sustained health and physical stability
- Resistance to fatigue and biological decay
- Clarity of memory and emotional regulation

These provisions shall remain in effect from the date of this agreement until August 9, 2413.

III. Responsibilities of the Archivist

The Archivist agrees to:

1. Continue the work of chronicling the experiences, losses, and movements of the aforementioned Nobles;
2. Preserve the full narrative without redaction or deliberate distortion;
3. Include in the collected archive one page of content to be provided by the Provider, inserted in a manner that will not attract attention, editorial scrutiny, or removal by the Archivist or her successors.

The Archivist shall not be required to know the contents of said page, nor shall any authentication or commentary be required upon its inclusion.

IV. Contingency Clause

Should the Archivist refuse or violate the above stipulations, the Provider reserves the right to pursue actions which may include—but are not limited to—the termination of continued existence of any remaining members of the Nobles, using methods now known to be effective.

V. Confidentiality

This agreement is not to be signed, not to be notarized, and not to be entered into any public record or archive. No physical or digital authentication is required. Its existence shall be treated as apocryphal by all parties involved.

VI. Closing Understanding

This mutual understanding, once read and acknowledged, shall be considered binding in spirit and intention, if not in law or doctrine.

Executed in silence and solitude,
September 20, 2096

Chapter 10 — The Noble Old Lady

2207–2226

It was Charlotte Ivy Greer who kept the old traditions breathing.

After the King's visit in 2206, most of the Nobles returned to silence. Some called it reverence. Others, fatigue. But Charlotte woke early the next Sunday morning and walked the half-mile to her church, the same one she had joined at the age of 135. She wore a wide-brimmed hat and carried the worn leather Bible she'd used since 2134. The children there called her *the Noble Old Lady*. Most of the adults had grown up in her Sunday school class.

She rarely spoke of her past. She never mentioned Ashley. But for nearly ninety years, she had been slowly, lovingly memorizing every line of *Institutes of the Christian Religion* by John Calvin. And in 2207, she completed it.

Not as a trophy.

As a gift.

One day, she believed, Ashley the Messiah would come—and would need a church with customs that could last.

Her Sunday school lessons weren't fire-and-brimstone. They were dense, meticulous, and oddly calming. She taught slow theology. Gentle theology. The kind that made people weep when they weren't sure why. Young mothers came just to hear her speak. College students scribbled every word. Widowers sat quietly with their eyes closed.

Sometimes she forgot her place in the lesson. Sometimes she stared too long at a verse and fell into a dream. She once paused for over a minute in the middle of reading Romans

and, when she returned to herself, said softly: "Freya is weeping again."

No one asked who Freya was.

They were used to her moments.

Outside the church, the Nobles were losing energy. Addison Marie Tucker had stopped attending Noble meetings altogether. Brandy Blue Grayson began writing about dualism and fire. Abigail Rose Carson was forgetting names again—her own, sometimes. Olivia cried during silence. Jennifer Hammond argued with no one in particular.

The unity they once knew had thinned into ritual. A ritual into habit. A habit into distance.

But Charlotte never missed a Sunday.

She wore a black robe and taught from the pulpit when the pastor was away. The congregants would rise, sing "Come Thou Fount," and then sit as she traced theological lines from Calvin to Christ, from Christ to Paul, from Paul to bread and wine.

To the children, she was legend.

To the elders, she was an anchor.

And to herself, she was a page waiting to be turned.

Charlotte never asked the others to believe what she did. She simply prepared.

And she waited.

Chapter 11 – The Noble Interview

2226

For many years, Charlotte Ivy Greer had gently, persistently requested that Jennifer Renee Phillips record her reflections on the teachings of John Calvin. “It must be written down,” she would say, “so Ashley can have a blueprint.” Jennifer had always smiled, always nodded, but always postponed—knowing that Charlotte’s mind, though sharp, often drifted into long silences, and that her theology, while profound, took patience to absorb.

But in the spring of 2226, Jennifer visited Charlotte’s Sunday school room after service. They sat alone in a quiet chapel lit only by late-afternoon sun through colored glass. Jennifer turned on her recorder.

Charlotte took a deep breath. And the interview began.

Jennifer: What did John Calvin teach about the knowledge of God the creator?

Charlotte:

He taught that all true wisdom begins with knowing God—and knowing ourselves. But we can’t truly understand ourselves until we first understand the God who made us. Calvin said creation is like a mirror. We see God’s fingerprints in the stars, the rivers, the kindness of a stranger. But it’s never enough. We are too broken to see clearly. That’s why Scripture matters. Creation gives us a spark. Scripture gives us fire.

Jennifer: What did John Calvin teach about the place scripture plays in the Christian's life?

Charlotte:

He said Scripture is like spectacles. Without it, our vision is blurred. Yes, nature whispers of God. Yes, our conscience

speaks. But only Scripture tells us who God really is—what He has done, what He demands, and what He has promised. Calvin believed it is the only safe guide for life and doctrine. Not because it's easy, but because it's true.

Jennifer: How did John Calvin teach to use doctrine for our benefit?

Charlotte:

Doctrine, Calvin said, isn't meant to inflate the mind—it's meant to warm the heart. He believed that right doctrine leads to right living. It humbles us. It consoles us. It helps us trust God in suffering and rest in His grace. It's not just about ideas. It's about forming a people who live with reverence and love. A good doctrine doesn't make you proud. It makes you kind.

Jennifer: What did John Calvin have to say about Augustine?

Charlotte:

He admired him—called him the greatest among the Church Fathers. Calvin leaned on Augustine's views about grace, sin, and predestination. He quoted him often, and gladly. But he also corrected him where needed. He wasn't a slave to tradition. He honored it, tested it, and refined it. Augustine was a light in a dark time. Calvin used that light carefully.

Jennifer: What did John Calvin teach about how Christ's benefits profit us through the secret work of the Spirit?

Charlotte:

That was one of his most beautiful teachings. Calvin said the Spirit is like a secret bridge—unseen, but essential. All the blessings of Christ—His righteousness, His resurrection, His sonship—they don't reach us automatically. The Spirit delivers them. Quietly. Personally. We are united to Christ, not symbolically, but spiritually. It's not magic. It's mystery. And it's real.

Jennifer: How do you feel this information will help Ashley when she creates our permanent church?

Charlotte:

Ashley won't need Calvin's words. But she'll need what they point to. Reverence. Clarity. Dependence. Calvin built theology to last. That's what she'll need—something sturdy enough to hold beauty, grief, absurdity, and holiness all in one place. Something that doesn't collapse when people start asking hard questions. Something that teaches you to kneel *and* to laugh. That's why I memorized it. That's why it matters.

Jennifer: Why have you practiced Christianity even though you are a Pastafarian at heart?

Charlotte:

Because truth wears two faces. Christ gave me roots. The Flying Spaghetti Monster gave me joy. I've lived long enough to know that reverence and absurdity are not enemies—they're sisters. My public faith has always been Christian. My private delight has always been Pastafarian. And when Ashley comes, I believe she'll gather both. I've kept the doctrine. I've kept the sauce. That is how I've endured.

Jennifer closed her notebook slowly.

Charlotte returned to silence.

And somewhere in the city, a child stirred in a crib beneath a mobile shaped like spaghetti.

The world was still waiting.

Chapter 12 – The Pouring of the Beer

December 26, 2383

He came without warning.

Charles Robert Darwin—enemy, captor, chemist, theologian, and man of mystery—walked through the front door of Mark Closer Pastafar’s modest home on a cold winter morning. He carried a canvas grocery bag in one hand and a small silver flask in the other.

Mark did not resist. Nor did the other Nobles present—seven in total, all seated around the dining table, where they had just begun the morning’s reading of *The Fourth Edition*.

Darwin set the bag gently on the kitchen counter and spoke as if returning from a long and unnecessary exile.

“The war is over,” he said. “Science has caught up. Religion has slowed down. They’ve finally met in the middle.”

No one replied.

From the bag, he removed four glass vials and a six-pack of beer.

“Heroin,” he said, setting down the first.

“Marijuana oil.”

“Cocaine dust.”

“And a little grain alcohol for nostalgia.”

He paused, lifting the six-pack by its handle.

“And of course, beer. Can’t forget the beer.”

He walked to the sink.

Mark followed silently, unsure if he was witnessing a miracle or a prank. Darwin opened the drain and unscrewed the first vial.

"This is for Clarence," he said.
And he poured it.

The second—

"For Jennifer, who watched."

The third—

"For the five who were taken."

He hesitated before the fourth.

"For Ashley. She won't need any of this."

Caleb Elijah Monroe, seated in the back, muttered under his breath:

"Yeah. She's only thirteen years old."

No one laughed. But no one corrected him either.

And then came the beer. Darwin poured each bottle slowly, reverently, like oil over an altar. The Nobles stood—not by choice, but because something sacred had entered the air and made sitting impossible.

By the time the final bottle was empty, Charles Robert Darwin looked older than he ever had before.

He leaned on the sink.

Then he collapsed.

No explosion. No parting words. No gasp.
Just a soft thud—and silence.

He was dead. At the age of 574.

There was no debate about what they had seen.
No autopsy.
No panic.

They buried him behind Mark's house that afternoon. Abigail found a stone. Delilah said a few words. Addison carved a noodle into the dirt with her finger.

Jennifer Renee Phillips, now nearing 356 years old, did not speak. She placed a small blue cloth over the grave and walked away.

Later, Mark stood in the kitchen staring at the sink.

"How?" he asked no one. "He wasn't immortal. He was just a man."

Brandy Blue Grayson shrugged.

"Maybe," she said. "Or maybe he found something stronger than immortality. Possibly hope."

And for once, no one disagreed.

The Pouring of the Beer became a holiday in later years. But on that day, it was simply strange.

And strangely... peaceful.

Their adversary was gone. But there was no time to celebrate the union of Science and Religion.

There was only waiting.

And so they waited.

THE END

Note to the Reader

You have now reached the end of this record. If you have read it closely—if you have followed its rhythms and griefs and small revelations—you have read the truth.

At least, most of it.

But remember: one page is not what it seems.

It was placed here by agreement.

It cannot be identified.

It cannot be removed.

It may not even be dangerous.

But it is here. Hidden. Waiting.

As you ponder the lives of the Nobles and the coming of Ashley, let this be your final reminder:

Every scripture is sacred. But not every page is pure.

Read with discernment. Wait with courage.

Even those lazy Forumites once stated in their *Third Announcement Regarding Canonical Belief*:

“Even this first edition has texts that contradict each other and even the Gospel of the Flying Spaghetti Monster.

This fits with the philosophy of our Church.

One should not take a holy text as word for word truth.

After all, it’s just a book written by imperfect humans, not by the all-knowing Flying Spaghetti Monster.

Though I could be completely wrong about all of this.

Future Pastafarians are just going to have to think for themselves and make up their own minds.”